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**Recorded Message:** The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. A free flowing conversation with leaders in the HR community talking about themselves, the industry and their work. Brought to you in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association.

**Dave Hennessy:** Welcome to The Hennessy Report. I'm your host, Dave Hennessy. Before I tell you about this episode, a little housekeeping. We're bringing The Hennessy Report on location live at the NEHRA Conference, September 26 to 28th. One of my guests will be the new Chair of the Board of NEHRA, Lorraine Goffe. Lorraine is also the Head of HR at MIT. And we'll have another surprise guest for you down at the NEHRA Conference as well. Also, look for later this fall our Biotech Series of podcasts, where we'll be interviewing HR leaders in that industry, the very fast-growing biotech sector.

And now for this episode's guest, Mark Leary is the Head of HR for MFS Investment Management. MFS invented the mutual fund almost a hundred years ago. Mark's been there a long time, but not that long. And he started his career not in the HR function. He started in corporate finance. So he brings a unique perspective to this discussion. I've known him for almost 15 years and I think you'll appreciate Mark's candor and approachability and communication style.

With a lot of long tenure employees and executives, succession is something that Mark is very focused on. So he touches on that. And he gets really specific on how they are working with diversity and inclusion, in particular the work they've done on unconscious bias training and how that has specifically impacted the behavior of people inside MFS.

And now, I bring you my discussion with Mark Leary.

Mark, welcome to the podcast.

**Mark Leary:** Thank you so much. Great to be here.

**Dave:** It's great to be here on the 35th floor at 111 Huntington right here at the Prudential Center. We don't have the best view today with the fog rolling in, but these are beautiful offices here. And Mark, I first met you many years ago, probably 12, 13 years ago when you were at the 500 Boylston address which is...

**Mark:** That's right.

**Dave:** ...also a nice location. But this is definitely a beautiful space. You've been here, what, five years now?

**Mark:** Five years, yes.

**Dave:** Wow.

**Mark:** Yeah. Time has gone quickly. I think people didn't want to leave 500 Boylston 'cause it was a great location right in the center of Back Bay. But I think people have grown very accustomed to being here at 111 now. It's a beautiful building, close to the mall, easy access in and out. So it's all good.



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**Dave:** Yeah, it's beautiful space. I know you were very intentional and involved in the design of this space. And how has this impacted the culture of MFS? Is there anything that's – just the move here over five years now – looking back that's changed things?

**Mark:** Yeah. I think change is difficult. I think one of the things that we did, and it was intentional, is we put a lot of glass. So a lot of natural light. So most of the offices have glass fronts. Where at 500 Boylston, it was pretty enclosed. So I think people felt a little more exposed. I think they felt like they lost some privacy. And we do have a lot more open space, which is great for collaboration, which ties in tightly with our culture. So it's worked out well. But there was a little bit of a change process that went into getting people in and getting people settled.

**Dave:** Mark, it'd be good to hear about your early life experiences and how it influenced who you've become as a professional leader inside MFS.

**Mark:** Sure. So I am one of six children, and I fall as close to the middle of the pack. I'm number four. So I think I was always the peacemaker. I was always the translator. I was always trying to keep everybody on the right path. And as I look back at that now and think about my early family situation, it fits well into the HR, you know, mindset. Because it's about helping people. It's about keeping people on track. It's about developing and getting the best you can out of people. So I think there's a lot of synergy there, actually.

**Dave:** Yeah, keeping the team together, right?

**Mark:** Yes.

**Dave:** Well, tell a little about your career path. Because I don't think you started in HR when you joined MFS. You were not in that function.

**Mark:** I was not. And actually, I think that having worn multiple hats has lended quite a bit of credibility to the role I'm in today. So I went to Bentley University and I was convinced I was going to be an accountant. I learned quickly after my first semester that I did not want to be an accountant, but that I still was very intrigued and enjoyed finance and all the analytics. So when I graduated from school with a Bachelor's in Finance, I knew I wanted to be in finance. So my quest was, what do I do? How do I get into finance? And I had a couple of customer service roles, phone rep positions when I got out of school.

But when I joined MFS, I was focused on getting into a finance group. And I did. I enjoyed it and someone saw something in me at the time that I didn't see in myself. The Treasurer of our mutual funds ... This was many, many years ago ... Said, "You know, you'd be great in human resources. And they have a position that I think ... You know, it's got an analytic component." It was payroll and retirement plan processing, which was all done in-house at the time. But I went home and scratched my head and said, "But I'm a finance guy. I can't see myself in human resources." And I said to my wife, "Is he crazy or am I crazy? One of us is crazy."

But I thought long and hard about it and I decided that I would make the leap. And what I learned about myself, which wasn't apparent to me but to others, was that I was great with people. I had great people



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skills. I was big on relationship. I was big on helping folks. And that's what the Treasurer saw in me that in my early career I didn't see in myself. And it's served me very well.

**Dave:** That's great. MFS is known for just the consistent and strong culture that you have built here. People don't want to leave. You know, a lot of people say, "It's my final stop here..."

**Mark:** That's right.

**Dave:** "My final stop is MFS." And your very low turnover. Can you tell us a little bit about why people want to make this their final stop and why they love it here so much?

**Mark:** Yeah. And you know, it's funny Dave when you say that. I reflect on when I took the position at MFS, when I entered the firm 30 years ago. I've been here 30 years, which is actually frightening to say aloud because it's a long time.

**Dave:** But not unusual.

**Mark:** Not.

**Dave:** Not unusual at MFS, right?

**Mark:** No, not unusual. I met a woman at the firm that I was working with at the time that said to me, "You will love MFS. It's a wonderful place. People are great." So my response to that was, "Well, then why are you here if you worked at MFS?" And she had been at MFS for almost 15 years. And she said, "You know, I started right out of college. I felt like I grew up there and I needed to experience something else." But she said, "I have a special place in my heart." So going into MFS, I knew it was a special place.

But I think, you know, everybody talks about their culture of collaboration teamwork. So when you say it, it's just people want to roll their eyes and say, "I've heard that. I've seen that." But it is a very special place. I think we take great care when we interview and recruit people here. Because it is about fit. And when I say fit I'm cautious because we don't want people to think fit is you have to look like me, have gone to the same school as I. It's about, "Do I embrace teamwork? Do I embrace collaboration? Is it really about the team or is it about me?" We do not promote a star system here in any area, including our investment team. It's all about working for the betterment of the team.

And so if you believe that and you embrace that, you will have a very long and fulfilling career at MFS. And that's why people come and that's why they stay.

**Dave:** Yep. And I think humility is also one of the things I have recognized and heard from people on your team. Can you talk a little bit about how that shows up in work? Like, maybe examples of the teamwork or how humility is played out? An example of some sort?

**Mark:** Yeah. It's a very interesting thing. So our senior leaders ... We have no executive benefits here at MFS, so everybody is treated the same. Our executive floor, which is the 35th floor which we are sitting at today, is very different than some of the other floors. But we encourage people to come up. So



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there's a constant flow of people. Our executives work the floor. They are down in the trenches almost every day. And so it's open door policy, and what I mean, that anybody can come up at any time and talk to anyone provided they are available and not in a meeting. They make themselves available almost to a fault. Just nothing is off-limits. People feel comfortable speaking. Rob Manning, Mike Roberge, our Chairman and CEO. They're constantly down on different floors meeting and greeting. It just makes for a very comfortable not pretentious environment that people really feel compelled to be able to ask whatever questions they want.

We do also as we've grown ... We're almost 2,000 employees and, you know, most are here in the U.S. and most are actually here in Boston at our corporate headquarters. But we do multiple all-company meetings each year so that people have the ability to hear what's going on in the company. To actually ask questions. We have open mike. So people feel very compelled to ask questions and be open. And it serves us very well.

**Dave:** What are the behaviors of the leaders? That in addition to what you already said, going and being near people in the workplace, it sounds like they move around to different floors and they're right in the trenches as you said. What other things do the leaders do to make sure people know that it's an open door policy and that their ideas are welcome? In addition to being present? So what do some of those behaviors look like from a leadership standpoint?

**Mark:** Yeah. I think they actually participate in some of the work that's being done. So we have what's called a President's Council, which is a subgroup of senior leaders that really wrestle issues, you know, current issues to the ground in terms of, "What are we gonna do with this? How are we gonna solve this problem?" Mike and Rob and anyone from the Management Committee is welcome to join that group and actually actively engage in some of the discussion, the dialogue.

So they become part of the ... We're very proud of our player coach mentality. So it's not only do we need senior folks up setting strategy and goals and thinking about the long-term, the three, five, and 10-year commitment to where we're gonna be, but we also need them in the real day-to-day issues and understanding kind of the trials and tribulations and how are we getting stuff done. So they actively get involved.

**Dave:** So leaders don't leave the actual work? They're still ... They're connected to the actual work.

**Mark:** That's exactly correct. They're involved. They want to be involved. And now, I will tell you sometimes the player coach mentality gets in the way because sometimes we need some of our senior folks to do more of the leadership stuff and less of the work. But that element of being able to stay up at the top thinking about strategy and diving into the detail is a critical component to our success. But it is something that's sometimes more difficult for some to do than others.

**Dave:** Sure.

**Mark:** But everyone on our Management Committee is very, very good at that.



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**Dave:** You mentioned international growth and you're accelerating internationally and globally. Can you talk a little about some of the opportunities that's presented for MFS? And maybe some challenges from a leadership and human resources point of view?

**Mark:** Yep. We have been very deliberate in our growth abroad. So when I started, we were a domestic shop, so we had no overseas resources. We've grown now to almost 300 employees offshore in probably 21 countries. Now, some of those spots are small sales offices, but some of our bigger offices, obviously the UK is big. Canada is big. In Toronto, we've got a sizable operation, in Japan, and in Singapore and Australia.

I think the secret to our success has been organic growth. So we haven't done the merger and acquisition. We've positioned culture carriers in each of those locations so they can help foster support and grow the culture. All of our offices look identical. So if you were to walk into our Singapore office, the look and feel of the office is exactly the same. And the ... We've done a fabulous job of really porting our culture into each of these locations. I would tell you most of the folks now that sit in all those offshore locations are native to that region.

**Dave:** We produce this podcast, as you know Mark, in cooperation with NEHRA, The Northeast Human Resources Association. And we have ... They have a young professionals group called NEHRA YP and we have the NEHRA YP question of the podcast.

**Mark:** Great.

**Dave:** And this comes from Harleigh Durkin. She is an HR Business Partner at 128 Technology. And her question is, "What is your strategy for hiring more women? Especially in technology?" We might have a follow-up question for you based on your industry.

**Mark:** Sure. That's a great question, and one that we've wrestled to the floor on many different occasions. I think the secret to success on hiring more women is really casting a broader net. I think there's a stigma to be honest around financial services. And I think often times women de-select even considering asset management or financial services because they feel that they can't have it all.

And when I say have it all, have a really fulfilling career, be able to have a family, and all the other things that you do outside of work that provides that balance. So I think two things. One is, casting a broader net so that you're capturing more women in the candidate – and diverse, quite frankly – ethnically diverse candidates in the pool. And then education. Going out to these schools and talking about what this business really is so that they don't de-select before they actually become part of the candidate pool.

So we think education is critically important so people understand really what it is and what it isn't. And why they can have a fulfilling and successful career in this industry. We've actually had great success with that. So what we typically will do is we've got a great college intern program. But we get folks that are very connected to, you know, that ... to their colleges that will actually go out and help, you know, talk about MFS. What the industry is. What positions are available and what there is to gain from



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working in this industry. And it's been successful. But that's something that takes a long time to cultivate and actually nurture and grow.

As I mentioned earlier, our whole recruitment process is very elaborate because we look for fit. So we want people that embrace the tenets of our culture. But, especially on the investment side, they're put through a pretty rigorous stock pitch. And I think it's just inherent in gender differences that men and women present and pitch very differently. And I think, although difficult to really pinpoint, I think there is inherent unconscious bias in the way men and women view differences in the way someone would stock pitch.

So we've spent a ton of time teaching and pushing unconscious bias training. Not only to our investment team but throughout the firm. We're not completely done in hitting every area, but helping people grasp some of those differences that they will see when they're interviewing people, when they're meeting people. Things they're not even aware of and they're very simple, minor things that could immediately shift someone's opinion of someone.

So again, sourcing in broader pools, capturing unlikely candidates. You know, Rob Manning was first generation in his family to go to school. But he often says most asset management firms get stuck focused on, you know, the top 10 business schools in the country. And he said you find talent everywhere. So we're all about going much broader. It doesn't have to be someone from a top 10 business school. So digging in different, you know, in different pools and finding the appropriate resources.

So I think it's education, I think it's broader networking, and really being conscious of how we source. And I would tell you one of the things that's critically important to us, we are looking for the best talent. So we're not stuck with quotas or benchmarks in terms of we need X amount of women this year in our Investment Team. We want the best candidates, but we want to make sure we're pulling in the best men, women, all diverse candidates so that we have a great pool to pick from.

**Dave:** And then how does the ... How do you link that to a behavioral change in the organization? What happens next?

**Mark:** Well, I think getting managers ... just general manager comfort around unconscious bias and what they need to be thinking about and what they need to be doing with their teams is critically important. 'Cause it's not just about recruiting, it's about the workplace. And it's about the staff meetings. And it's about the interactions. It could be performance appraisal, it could just be a meeting. Understanding some of those tenets...

**Dave:** Much bigger than just recruiting, yeah.

**Mark:** Yes. Being self-aware of the discourse you have with someone and understanding you're pushing things aside and you're not even aware that you're doing it. We all have them. Everybody has certain unconscious bias. And I think the premise behind this training isn't for you to identify every unconscious bias you have, it's being self-aware in the moment so that you can catch yourself and say, "Hey, maybe I'm not being fair. Or maybe I'm dismissing something too quickly and I should step back."



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**Dave:** Right, right. And you have a diversity inclusion leader here. And maybe you can touch on what else you're doing in D&I in general?

**Mark:** Well, you know, I think back on our journey with D&I and to be honest with you we had quite a few false starts. So we ... 15 years ago we started a Valuing Differences Group at MFS. It was a very large group and it was a very diverse group, so we thought we were off and we were gonna change the world. Change everything we did at MFS. What we soon learned is that it was too big. We were trying to, as I like to refer to, boil the ocean. Which became a disaster.

**Dave:** Well, I'll try to do that.

**Mark:** Yes. And so I think what happened is we tried to tackle too many things. We really only hit surface. You know, we only got below the surface. And it ended up becoming more of a situation where people got together and complained about the things we weren't doing and not focusing on the things we could do. And what could we drive forward.

So we stepped back. We hired a woman to join the firm. Her name is Colleen Richards Powell. She's great. She joined us about two and a half years ago and her focus was diversity and inclusion and corporate citizenship. And we've got great corporate citizenship programs. So she helped broaden the work that's done there. But we put those two together because there is synergy around diversity and corporate citizenship in the work that we do...

**Dave:** Absolutely. And especially what you were talking about before about educating people about this industry, if they're not considering it...

**Mark:** Absolutely.

**Dave:** ...it's all connected. Right?

**Mark:** It is. It's all connected. But she's come in and what I love about the work she's done is: It's the ... it's not the ... people I think assumed it was gonna be immediate results. It's about building a strategy. It's about setting the tone. It's about putting a timeframe together. And it's about picking three or four things that you want to focus on. So for us, education was critically important. We want everybody to be at the same place. She would tell you that diversity and inclusion is often times very uncomfortable for people to talk about, because they just don't know what it means. It means something different to everyone.

So getting that common nomenclature and just that lexicon out there is critically important. That education is really important. And then doing some of these resource...these employer resource groups is critically important because you get that grassroots initiative about what's important and what do we need to focus on. And, you know, you could have 20 smart people sitting in a room thinking about it, but getting these resource groups together and really picking their brains and getting some really critical ideas that we can focus on has been very successful.



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So I think in order to really be successful in the diversity/inclusion space, you've gotta come at it from both ends. It's gotta be grassroots. It's gotta be what's important to the employees. And it's also gotta be driven from the top. You need to know that your senior leaders have bought into this, which ours have, and that it's critically important. And I think you meet in the middle. And that's just about where we are today.

**Dave:** Great. Broader in HR, Mark, what's your HR philosophy here at MFS? And you have great teamwork that you have built. What are the kinds of things that you're focused on and your philosophy in HR in general?

**Mark:** So it's strategic partnerships. So we ... You know, I think one of the biggest misconceptions around HR is we're administrative and we're paper pushers and we fire people and we hire people. And we do do all of that, but we do a whole lot more as well. It's how do we integrate ourselves into the business and add value, add resources? And so we're in the process here at MFS now of reinventing and transforming, which is a big word that everyone uses nowadays. Transforming our department. And that is, making sure that our business partners are equipped to be that strategic partner at the table. To be able to push back on something that doesn't make sense. To be able to add value to a topic when, you know, there's something involved in talent or performance, management related.

I would say two of the biggest things we're focused on now is talent management. Talent management is critically important. Continuing to build the bench so that MFS continues to be wildly successful long after I'm retired. So that's critically important. But what's most important about that is it can't be driven by HR. It has to be business-driven. They need to understand the value and they need to drive the business with our support and our guidance. So that's one thing that we're focused critically on.

Succession management, which ties tightly into talent management, is critically important. We are, you know, a majority owned subsidiary of Sun Life of Canada and the board is ... In fact, they just came back from an early-August meeting with the board to talk about our succession management and the work that we're doing in that space. So we continue to really push that because we do have a high population of folks at MFS that have been here a long time like myself that 10 years from now may not be here any longer. And so, how will we, garnering the resources and the bench strength of the folks below us to be ready to step into those roles?

**Dave:** Right. Mark, when your career's over at MFS, what do you hope to be remembered for? Or, you know, what are you proudest of so far?

**Mark:** Well, I think there's a lot to be proud of as I think about my role and even my tenure at MFS. So I think one of the things that has served me well, me personally and then I'll talk about my team. And HR is the ability to garner strong relationships and credibility with the business. And having that credibility affords you a whole host of opportunity to help in ways that, you know, maybe you didn't think you could do.

**Dave:** Of course, you had an advantage coming in being in the business, right?

**Mark:** Absolutely.



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**Dave:** So..

**Mark:** Yes, absolutely. I would say that's absolutely true. But I think what – in my tenure... So I'm the longest-standing HR – Head of HR at MFS – in the history of the firm. So 12 years I've been leading the group and I have a great team of people. So it's all about them and less about me. But what I think we've been able to do as a team at MFS is really secure a strategic position at the top. I sit on the Management Committee. I'm involved in all the communications and strategy discussions. I talk at length with all of my peers up here about what keeps them up at night and what we can do to support them. And I think that seat is very solid.

And I think. When I think about when I started in HR here at MFS and how we've transformed our roles, it's been quite incredible because we have senior business partners that sit at staff meetings every day that are called upon really for advice and counsel. And it's all about that. It's about building the relationship. It's about solving business problems. And it's really about helping them be as effective and as productive as they can be so that we continue to flourish from a business perspective. And that position has never been stronger and I have to give credit to our senior leaders here. But Mike and Rob, our Chairman and CEO, totally embrace and support the human resource philosophy. It's all about human capital, right?

And what Rob Manning told me when I took this position 12 years ago, he said, "You will have failed if you don't position someone on your team to take your place when you're ready to retire because MFS is a unique place with a unique culture and it has to be someone who has lived here for a period of time and really understands all the nuances and the quiriness to be quite honest of what we do. And I have thought about that long and hard and I've got quite a few very strong people that would be able to step into my role. So that's the good news.

**Dave:** That's great. Was there ever a moment in your career, Mark, where, your like, "Oh, this is a total disaster", and it ended up being the best thing?

**Mark:** At MFS we tend to be conservative and we – it's almost 10 years – I think it was 2000. Maybe it's eight years. We jumped off the ledge. We were a PeopleSoft Shop. And this is probably diving way deeper, Dave, than you want, but we made the decision that we were gonna go with Workday, which is a huge...

**Dave:** Oh, sure.

**Mark:** Was a huge success. But we were like – and I have the mug over there to prove it – client 139. So they were small and they were still kind of unknown. And I remember Rob Manning saying to me, "Is this a really good choice? To put all of our stuff out in the cloud and be like at the start of the..."

**Dave:** What year was this?

**Mark:** 2010.

**Dave:** So that is really early. We're starting to really hear about Workday.



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**Mark:** Yes, yes. Workday is huge.

**Dave:** In the last three to five years. So yeah, that was eight years ago.

**Mark:** But I did go home a few nights saying, "Oh my God, what have I done? We can't turn back." And it turned out to be one of the biggest successes. In fact, our Chief Technology Officer now uses us as the template of, "This is really a good thing. And HR is in the cloud. And we need to do more of this work." But there were some dark moments when we were in the middle of our conversion on, "This is either gonna make my career or break my career."

**Dave:** What else does MFS do to keep up with the leading-edge technology or thinking? What other stuff do you do in that area?

**Mark:** Yes. So we, you know, we ... For many years, actually, I think we probably took a very conservative approach on our technology and even in our marketing. I mean, we don't do a lot of splash. It's not who we are. But I think we spent a lot of time, money, and resources on upgrading technologies. Whether it's our CRM system in the sales organization or even some of our trading systems and platforms that support and serve our Investment Team. We spend a lot of time and effort there. We've even spent a lot of time in our marketing space. Digital's so critically important.

And, you know, like everybody else, we're in the middle of thinking about robotics. Robotic process automation. Where can we...

**Dave:** AI, sure.

**Mark:** Yeah. All the AI. I keep telling our Chief Technology Officer I want a Chatbot that can help us screen just on the, you know, recruiting side. Chatbots screen candidates. When you post a position and get 300 resumes, how do you weed them down to something that's more manageable? Chatbots can do that if you program them appropriately. So those are areas that we continue to focus on. And like everybody else, we're interested in data scientists and how do we really get in front of predictive analytics? And what can that do for us? So we're really pushing in that space.

**Dave:** Yeah. What would you recommend for HR professionals if you could give advice to HR leaders that are up-and-coming in the field? What would you recommend to them?

**Mark:** So my recommendation is – and not because it's how I grew up in this business – it is to really spend time in other parts of the organization. It lends itself very well. There's a high degree of credibility when you can openly say you've worked in a part of the business. Often times HR professionals get dismissed because there's a lot of theory around, you know, what they're thinking and how would you know you've not been in the business? Or, you haven't sat in my shoes.

So I think having pragmatic business experience somewhere else in the business is critically important. And I know it served me well, because I said earlier I've been at MFS for 30 years. But I really had five separate and distinct career opportunities here at MFS. Which only two were in HR. And the other three were outside in different business units. And I think that's lent itself well to the ability, my credibility and



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the ability to help people understand. And I get it. I get the challenges you have in your business and we want to help you.

**Dave:** Right. So get into other functions?

**Mark:** Yes.

**Dave:** Or other roles in the divisions of a company?

**Mark:** That's exactly right.

**Dave:** And get the exposure?

**Mark:** Right.

**Dave:** Great advice. This is a question I've been asking. I love this question. And one of my former guests, Beth Gross at TripAdvisor gave us this question, it's, "If you could give advice to your younger self, write a letter to Mark Leary at 30 years old, what would you write in that letter?"

**Mark:** I think if I were to give advice to myself now, I think maybe taking more time to step back and celebrate successes and maybe smell the roses. I think this industry is fast-paced. It's dynamic. It's constantly changing. You're always moving on to the next, which is very exciting. But I don't think we often take the time to celebrate successes, smell the roses, and enjoy some of the... You know, at different stages what you have accomplished and kind of think about where you're going. It...

**Dave:** So take stock along the way a little bit more?

**Mark:** Yes.

**Dave:** And...

**Mark:** Yes. I think we find ourselves moving on to the next situation, the next issue, the next problem and not really stepping back and really being grateful and thinking about all the things we've done.

**Dave:** Mark, how do you define success?

**Mark:** You know, that's an interesting question, Dave. And one that I often contemplate. But one of the things I learned from one of my mentors here at MFS is you don't always have to be the brightest person in the room, you don't always have to be the one that leads the discussion. You need to surround yourself with bright, insightful people and let them do their thing and everybody looks good. So again, it lends itself well to the culture here at MFS and the team orientation that we foster. But it is about letting everyone be their best self. And so not always trying to be the center of the universe.

**Dave:** What's at the top of your bucket list?



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**Mark:** Well, I just renovated a house on the Cape in Bourne and, you know, I still have young children. So we're in a fast-paced space where we don't get as much time. But really, a bucket list is spending, this probably sounds lame, but it is spending more time at this beautiful property that we have that sits on the water. That's number one. A second bucket list item is doing a bike tour in France. I've always wanted to do that. And I think...

**Dave:** Tour de France, Mark Leary style?

**Mark:** No. Yeah. Not quite as robust as that. But yes.

**Dave:** Yeah. Modified.

**Mark:** The rolling hills of Provence. I can see myself sipping a little wine. Riding my bike. What I'd love to do. That's on the bucket list and it will be checked off at some point.

**Dave:** Alright. That's great. Name a book that's changed your life.

**Mark:** So you know, I think about this and I read a lot of books as you would expect. In this business, it's always good to stay current. But I think ... And one in my earlier career that I loved, and it was quick, it was a quick read, it was called *The One Minute Manager*. And what it did for me back in my earlier career is really help me think about how can I be effective in small – you know, small, at different points. In and out quickly.

And I refer to it all the time. Even in, you know, in my career as the head of HR. And that is, how do you give quick feedback? Positive, negative, or you know, an opportunity if need be and how do you really drive certain points home so that people really understand and are connected? So that's helped me tremendously.

**Dave:** That's such a good point, too, because most of our interactions are these short ones. If you can make those effective...

**Mark:** Meaningful. And as you think about performance management today and the push to strip away some of the ratings, 'cause people get hung up on performance ratings, it's really that forward looking, you know, "Dave, you did that great. But here's something you could do differently next time." I mean, in the moment, quick, easy, not long and drawn out. And not something that you say, "You know, Dave, as we think about your year-end review back in January you did..."

**Dave:** Right.

**Mark:** Yeah. It's not as impactful.

**Dave:** So this was ahead of its time in a way?

**Mark:** Exactly.



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**Dave:** Right? 'Cause that's where a lot of performance is going...

**Mark:** Yes.

**Dave:** More regular check-ins and,,, Yeah. So ...

**Mark:** And it was a quick read. It was 80 pages. It was done in two hours. It was great.

**Dave:** Thank you so much for being a guest on the podcast, Mark.

**Mark:** It was great. Thanks for having me. I really enjoyed it.

**Recorded Message:** Thank you for listening to The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. Be sure to subscribe to listen to all of our conversations with leaders in HR. Go to [keystonepartners.com](http://keystonepartners.com) and click on the podcast button.

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