Good morning everybody and welcome to our podcast, Digging Deeper. This is Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute.

I wanted to share with you today some of my lessons actually comes from one of our members who read the book *The Infinite Game*. *The Infinite Game* by Simon Sinek and I don't know if you've listened to any Simon Sinek podcast or read any of his books, but he really is a sensational author and he has a great sense of being able to crystallize things that we can take to help improve our leadership and management.

So, first thing that really struck me about *The Infinite Game* was just the whole concept. We have this business, and everybody wants their business to really be perpetual, to be able to create a succession scenario, to create a legacy, to create a long-lasting success. But I wonder sometimes how much we, as we're going through the day to day work of our business, we really keep in mind that we should be looking at this as an infinite game. It's not just winning the project today and finishing this project on time and making money on this project. It's really thinking years and years ahead about how you create a sustainable business and what's the difference between your day to day decisions and the decisions that you make that create that sustainable business.
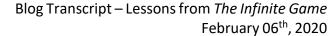
There were five items that he talked about in *The Infinite Game*, or at least that I capsulize that were important to that. Number one was to have a just cause. And again, that comes back to the mission, vision, values that you have with your company. Think about that. What is your just cause and do your employees understand your just cause? I mean if the idea is just to make money, I guess that is sort of the just cause for any business. But I think there needs to be something deeper there to develop a culture and keep a team of employees and keep them thinking about the right things as they go about their day to day business.

The second item I picked up from *The Infinite Game* was to trust in team and I think what he's talking about when he says trust in team is that no one person is going to make a business successful. You have to have a team of people and at some point, you have to trust in that team to carry their portions of the business forward or even to carry the business forward. Again, thinking of the infinite game and the concept of your business being infinite, you have to always be building for the future. You have to be building people who can carry the ideas forward, can carry the work forward successfully.

The third item he talked about was a worthy rival. It was hard for me to grasp at first, but his basic concept is you can't really have an infinite game unless there's a rival there. And what I found in hearing more about it was the purpose of the rival is really to point out your weaknesses. If you have a worthy rival, there are some things that they're better at than you are and that keeps you striving to be better. If there is no rival or you don't perceive a rival, then maybe it's difficult to keep finding ways to continuously improve and to as they say, sharpen the knife, that sort of thing as you go forward.

The next thing he talked about was the capacity for change and that one certainly hit home when you think of *The Infinite Game* because our industry is constantly changing. The technology is changing, the delivery methods seem to be changing a little bit and refining and so you've always got to be changing. So, if you don't have capacity to change, if you're not looking for change, it's likely to be left behind in the infinite game. So, change is always going to be important.

And then finally, the last point was having the courage to lead. Having the courage to lead I think meant a lot of things. First of all, the leader has to be sort of a learning machine. The leader can't be stagnant. You have to have the courage to be constant, be looking for a way to get a new edge, to do something better, to drive for a better culture, a better team,

to get a better group of people, to get better methodologies to improve your meetings, all of these things. And the courage behind that really is the courage to be able to look at yourself as not being flawless. You're somebody who is making mistakes as you go along, who needs to improve and should hopefully be looking for constant improvement.

And also, when we talk about courage to lead, you are the person that they're often looking for to make the tough decisions and to make the tough calls and to put yourself at risk first when that's necessary to, for you to take chances before the team takes chances and that takes a lot of courage.

But I think, I really encourage everybody to read this book, *The Infinite Game*. But I think again the thing that really, if you just capsulized all of this in one, it really is a whole different way of thinking about your business. If you think of your business as a perpetual thing that truly is infinite, it may make you change the way you decide for example, in a go-no-go whether this was the right project for the company. Whether you decide that an employee is the right employee for the company. Even policies and procedures, whether those fit in terms of the business that wants to be perpetual versus one that's just trying to win the game for tomorrow.

Anyway, think about that. *The Infinite Game*, and thanks for tuning in.