

John:

"Alright, welcome to the Redlist Distribution Download podcast, where we're dedicated to bringing valuable insights around strategy and leadership for distributor sales reps and associated staff in the fuels, lubricants and chemicals industry. As you know, we are always looking to shed some light on the often overlooked, yet essential sector that keeps the world turning. And today, we're really excited. We have a very personable and entertaining guest with us, Michael Sterling. Welcome, Michael."

Michael Sterling:

"Hey, thanks John. Glad to be here man. Thank you for having me."

John Keller:

"No, Michael, we're really glad to have you. You know, we've had a chance to circle up a little bit and talk before, but I'd love to just have you give the audience a little bit of background on your journey, and if you could include also some of the geographies, so people can get a sense of what that means and what your dreams look like so far."

Michael Sterling:

"Sure, sure. Well, I did my undergrad and some graduate work at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. I'm a proud Texas Aggie class of 2006."

John Keller:

"Yeah."

Michael Sterling:

"I met my wife here in College Station, actually in jury duty. Believe it or not, that's a great story. But maybe for another time or we can still go back to it later."

John Keller:

"I thought you only got \$17.00 a day. I didn't think you actually got a wife out of that, so."

Michael Sterling:

"Yeah, you know, it's funny. I even donated it to lunch or I donated my money to a charity program. But, you know, I was working for Xerox and doing some graduate work at the time. I just got called into jury duty. And I remember being really upset because I was on my BlackBerry back in that time, this was, I guess, 2010. So I was emailing my boss who was covering some meetings for me that day and he was having to ask me questions about the accounts and that sort of thing. And he knew that I was a young man who was single and recently single, as a matter of fact. And I was out on the town and it had, he said. He said, 'So, are there any cute girls running around there?' And I said, I said, 'I'm bringing down the average age in here by about 50%'"

John Keller:

No way.

Michael Sterling:

And then I'll be darned if a young lady walks by and then Casey walks past me, walks in not 30 seconds after I hit send on that email, and I messaged him back. I'm like, "OK, got a couple of prospects," and you know what? I'll be damned if I wasn't juror #2 and she was juror #3. And yeah, here's a story here. That was in 2010. This is 2023.

John Keller:

Congrats, that's great.

Michael Sterling:

Celebrating 10 years of marriage in July. So yeah, thank you. Thank you. The rest is history. But anyway, so getting back to the whole biography, we lived here in College Station for a couple of years while we dated and that sort of thing. And then that took us up to Dallas. My wife is a speech pathologist and works in the medical field, and she did her Masters and graduate work up in the DFW area.

John Keller:

Mm-hmm.

Michael Sterling:

I got into distributing while we lived up there in Dallas in the industry that I'm in anyways. Then about five years ago, we got the opportunity to move up to Kansas City. I got on with the company I worked for, World Fuel Services, and it took me up to KC for guess a little over three years and just under four years. Due to some restructuring that the company did and things like that, we got the opportunity to move back home to Texas. And so this is where I am. Actually, not only are we back home in Texas, but we're back home in Sweet Home, College Station, TX.

John Keller:

All right there.

Michael Sterling:

Yes, Sir. My in-laws live here in town and due to my travel schedule and things like that, whenever we moved up to KC, I kind of thought about it and prayed about it, and where we were gonna land here in Texas, we knew we wanted to be close to friends and family and that sort of thing. But we wanted to...

John Keller

Ohh nice.

Michael Sterling

One thing we really missed was that immediate family, you know, it's, different whenever you don't have, you know, your parents tend, you know, 1020 minutes down the road and yeah, that's where my in-laws live is about 2025 minutes away across town, close enough to where they're going to call. But, you know, if if the kiddo gets sick and you gotta, you know, a day full of zoom meetings or you're in Madison, WI, or wherever you're traveling to that day.

0:5:14.510 --> 0:5:21.370

Michael Sterling

You can call and cause your wife's gotta work or whatever it is. You can call and they can watch them in that sort of thing. So that's the that's gonna.

0:5:19.880 --> 0:5:23.750

John Keller

Now close enough, they can help, but not too close that they tell you how to cut your hair is what you're saying.

0:5:38.10 --> 0:5:38.760

John Keller

That's awesome.

0:5:23.440 --> 0:5:44.230

Michael Sterling

Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. They're not gonna come over and. And. And I didn't have that conversation with my mother-in-law because, you know, I wanted to. I wanted, you know, you gotta set the bar, you know, you gotta like, hey, this is the expectation level and that's where it is. But yeah. So yeah, that's where we're at now. And, you know, just living and loving life.

0:5:59.990 --> 0:6:0.590

Michael Sterling

Yes, Sir.

0:5:45.340 --> 0:6:9.70

John Keller

So your journey, I think one thing that you will have in common obviously with a lot of our listeners is travel. Travel is something you that comes along with the territory of being kind of in the distribution industry. So maybe talk a little bit about that like what are what is, what does travel mean to you and how do you actually balance that in your life?

0:6:15.510 --> 0:6:16.260

John Keller

Yeah.

0:6:10.320 --> 0:6:27.240

Michael Sterling

No. Uh, that is a that is a very broad stroked question because, you know, here's here's the honest truth. There are some months where you're gonna be gone. I travel somewhere in between 50% and 75% of the time.

0:6:27.160 --> 0:6:27.490

John Keller

Umm.

0:6:28.500 --> 0:6:59.500

Michael Sterling

One thing I make sure I'm always home on the weekends. Luckily I'm blessed to where I can make that happen. Most of the time my my company doesn't mind paying an extra flight. It's justified and and that sort of thing because they want you to be happy, you know, and I think that, you know, being an employer, you know, the quality of the quality of candidates you recruit to your company, you're going to, you're recruiting them for a reason because they're the best, right, or you want to develop them to be the best. That's probably a better way to private.

0:6:59.580 --> 0:7:12.560

Michael Sterling

That to describe it, you want to develop high quality individuals to be the best and that is you want somebody that is gonna wanna be home at some point in time. I mean there are certain.

0:7:34.820 --> 0:7:35.680

John Keller

Exactly.

0:7:13.480 --> 0:7:43.390

Michael Sterling

All of people are from all walks of life. I mean, there's different times in our lives where, yeah, we can travel more or less and that sort of thing. I've got a young son. My wife likes me. Believe it

or not, I don't know why sometimes I shouldn't say that there's sometimes where it's like, hey, hey, yo, don't you got somebody to go up and visit in Omaha or somebody like that? You need to get on out of here. But yeah, no, it's it's a, it's something that is important. You do have to keep that balance. So.

0:8:3.960 --> 0:8:4.430

John Keller

Mm-hmm.

0:7:43.510 --> 0:8:14.220

Michael Sterling

I do personally, I make sure that I'm here every weekend and I'm also here most of the times. On Mondays I'll leave other fly out on Tuesday morning or late Monday, I like. I'm a big, you know, I'm a big daddy's, my daddy's my most important role. Whatever I do in this world, Daddy's my most important role. I love talking to my kid at in at night. So I do my best to either to come home, be at the house by 8:00 o'clock.

0:8:14.330 --> 0:8:23.220

Michael Sterling

On Friday and I don't wanna leave until you know 7-8 o'clock. I mean, I know airlines and that's a whole other, you know.

0:8:23.280 --> 0:8:23.870

John Keller

Hmm.

0:8:23.360 --> 0:8:49.490

Michael Sterling

A you know topic of discussion, but you know just the travel industry. But I I that's what I try to do and and some regional travel it's super easy to do that. You know I growing up in Texas living in Texas a couple of hours drivers and anything I've got I've actually got to go so I'm in Kansas City I fly out Monday afternoon to Casey I'm there for meetings.

0:8:50.260 --> 0:8:58.990

Michael Sterling

Monday evening through Wednesday evening I fly, I actually get into George Bush Houston Intercontinental.

0:8:59.230 --> 0:8:59.630

John Keller

Mm-hmm.

0:9:5.550 --> 0:9:5.940

John Keller

Umm.

0:9:0.310 --> 0:9:13.40

Michael Sterling

At like 645 it's just before 7. I'd have to. I honestly gotta look it up, but it's just before 7. It's about an hour drive back to the house. I'm here at 8:00 o'clock Wednesday evening. Tuck medics in.

0:9:21.300 --> 0:9:22.40

John Keller

That's right.

0:9:14.50 --> 0:9:30.270

Michael Sterling

Get him off to school. We've got a we've got a. That's the other benefit about living in a college town is you got plenty of babysitters running around, and we've got a. Yeah, we've got some great girls that kind of split time picking them up from the house and then picking them up from school.

0:9:31.50 --> 0:9:35.620

Michael Sterling

And spent a couple of hours till my wife or I able to, you know, kind of take over.

0:9:36.560 --> 0:9:46.520

Michael Sterling

And yeah, we, you know, we got a I'll get him in an off with the nanny and get my wife off to the hospital and then I gotta go to Austin for some meetings.

0:9:48.130 --> 0:10:5.740

Michael Sterling

Uh, Thursday afternoon. I've got a dinner that I'm hosting and Austin Thursday night, and then I've got meetings and a lunch on Friday morning in Austin and then back here to College Station for the weekend and and so it's next week's gonna be pretty.

0:10:5.790 --> 0:10:6.950

John Keller

To work it sounds like.

0:10:6.430 --> 0:10:26.40

Michael Sterling

Yeah, yeah. What next week is going to be pretty jam packed. But you know, that's part of the part of the life. I mean, you, you know, it's it's what I signed up for, you know, we knew, you know, I knew what I was getting into. You know, whenever whenever I got the opportunity and within my company and moved back home to Texas and and, you know, somebody's got to pay the bills around here, right.

0:10:26.270 --> 0:10:28.160

John Keller

That's right. So.

0:10:27.590 --> 0:10:29.20

Michael Sterling

I mean, we ain't doing this for charity.

0:10:32.950 --> 0:10:33.190

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:10:30.380 --> 0:10:38.400

John Keller

Well, let's talk about this just a teeny bit, Michael. I wanna know why you got into distribution and then why you've stayed.

0:10:39.880 --> 0:10:42.170

Michael Sterling

So I had a I've got a mentor.

0:10:52.890 --> 0:10:53.240

John Keller

Hmm.

0:11:6.620 --> 0:11:6.980

John Keller

Hmm.

0:10:43.280 --> 0:11:9.380

Michael Sterling

And he got me into the I was kind of looking at different stuff. He actually has owned his own fuel distributorship at one point in time, he worked for Exxon for years, worked for Gulf Oil, it worked for Sunoco, and recently he is pseudo retired and he's actually into some real estate development now. And he's honestly, he just does it as a hobby, but.

0:11:19.140 --> 0:11:19.500

John Keller

Hmm.

0:11:10.240 --> 0:11:39.670

Michael Sterling

Mark has always, you know, he's he has told me, he said. You know what, Michael? You know, knowing you're, it's that honestly, I met him through some and M stuff, some some stuff from Texas A&M. You know, former student association kind of stuff. And he he said Michael, you know what? I think you'd be great at kind of what in in our industry what we what you do you're personal people kind of are naturally drawn to you they like you you can get along with all sorts of different people.

0:11:40.200 --> 0:11:41.720

Michael Sterling

And I.

0:11:42.850 --> 0:12:11.700

Michael Sterling

I don't know. I don't want to say I was looking for direction, but I was kind of looking for some direction. I was wanting someplace to kind of draw me in and and Mark said, you know, one of



his big customers who is actually a he was working for an oil company at the time a major oil company at the time. And he he said one of my big distributors is actually looking for some help. We were living. We were, I guess, about to move up to Dallas at that time and.

0:12:41.690 --> 0:12:42.70

John Keller

Mm-hmm.

0:12:12.700 --> 0:12:42.720

Michael Sterling

Said sure, you know, let me go talk to him. And I I had a couple interviews with them and got hired on and that was, you know, the rest is history. And here we are, you know, about a decade later and and that's part of the reason why he thought I would be good at it is are the reasons why I I do like it is because I get to talk and meet interesting and meet people just like yourself and.

0:13:6.30 --> 0:13:6.610

John Keller

That's right.

0:12:42.880 --> 0:13:13.790

Michael Sterling

You know from all walks alive, and I mean, it doesn't matter if you're a immigrant from the Middle East, you know, or just a good old country boy out in West, TX who's started up a, you know, gas station to feed his, you know, ranch hands. And he was already buying so much diesel for all the farm tractors and ranch trucks and things like that. He said, I figure I might as well just open up a gas station. I really do. I've, I've got, at least I had there with the, you know, under another Rep now. But.

0:13:14.190 --> 0:13:14.840

John Keller

Oh wow.

0:13:23.980 --> 0:13:24.480

John Keller

Wow.

0:13:13.980 --> 0:13:46.210

Michael Sterling

I I had some. Yeah, I had some customers just like that. Yeah. They farmed and ranched, you know, 20,000 acres or something like that. And yeah, his granddaddy or whoever started the farm, you know, started up a little corner store cafe in a 2 horse town out in the middle of nowhere and yeah. And the rest is history. And they still farm. And they still ranch. And he literally wanted someplace for his hands to eat. And so he started the cafe, got a little corner store going off of it. And I made it just turned it into a money making opportunity.

0:13:46.870 --> 0:13:56.20

Michael Sterling

Which, you know, he it's a it's just kind of kind of how the circle of life, I guess her part of it circle of industry maybe there we go circle of the industry.

0:14:15.160 --> 0:14:16.40

Michael Sterling

Ohh 100%.

0:13:56.560 --> 0:14:17.530

John Keller

So it's interesting to me like I from our conversations, I can tell that you actually kind of have an entrepreneurial spirit and that's not uncommon. I think I'm among, you know, the people that are out there in this field. They're at the crossroads of all these people needing goods and services that, you know, at this thing time, maybe tell me a little bit about.

0:14:18.970 --> 0:14:30.570

John Keller

So let me tell me a little bit about your entrepreneurial flair and and how you think your role in the field kind of feeds that interest and desire.

0:14:32.570 --> 0:14:32.960

Michael Sterling

Well.

0:14:34.760 --> 0:14:39.490

Michael Sterling

And my parents, they own their own business. I have always.

0:14:40.850 --> 0:14:49.440

Michael Sterling

I guess I get I know where I get it from. I get it from my grandfather. He owned his own company at one point in time and I've always.

0:15:8.350 --> 0:15:8.800

John Keller

No.

0:14:50.460 --> 0:15:14.0

Michael Sterling

Kind of saw that is, you know that you you know it's you working for yourself. You know we do farm and ranch a little bit my family does and you know I'm not used to hard work. I was driving in stringing barbed wire at 10 years old and you know driving a tractor and things like that and it's I guess it's always been.

0:15:15.740 --> 0:15:46.730

Michael Sterling

I mean, I I don't want to say it's been always been instilled, instilled in me, but those are the examples I saw and I think one of the most often overlooked way to lead is by example and it's honestly it's probably the easiest. You just take care of your business, you take care of your customers. You know that's what I tried to do. You know in my role because I've got we've got other reps we've got you know sales support guys under you know that are looking up to me or calling and ask questions and things like that and we can.

0:15:46.810 --> 0:15:49.370

Michael Sterling

Can I touch on some of that later, but.

0:15:50.570 --> 0:15:54.780

Michael Sterling

You know, whenever people see you doing and the the things.

0:15:55.880 --> 0:16:26.410

Michael Sterling

That, you know, need to be done and you do them the right way and you're successful in IT. People wanna follow you. They wanna they wanna. They wanna share best practices with you. They want you to be involved. And and I want to say, you know being not necessarily you know dip your toes in their business or you know see what they're doing or oversight or anything like that but they're going to pick your brain and they want to talk to you because you're a success story and that's and I think that.

0:16:26.830 --> 0:16:32.780

Michael Sterling

Uh, you know leadership, you know, all the way up the corporate ladder can learn from that.

0:16:33.820 --> 0:16:51.340

Michael Sterling

You know why I think one of the you know, communication is a lost art. It seems like these days. I don't know if it is just people are so used to, you know, picking up this device and, you know, texting somebody and then having so much immediate information right there at your fingertips.

0:16:52.960 --> 0:17:1.70

Michael Sterling

The you I don't know if that's part of people having that failure to communicate or or what you know, but.

0:17:1.150 --> 0:17:11.370

Michael Sterling

Uh, you know, I I ran into an issue actually last week where it was, it resulted in multiple zoom meetings, two different zoom meetings.

0:17:11.930 --> 0:17:15.760

Michael Sterling

I'm a laundry e-mail chain where.

0:17:16.430 --> 0:17:24.500

Michael Sterling

If somebody would have taken the time to pick up the phone and called somebody directly and say, hey, what's going on with X?

0:17:41.110 --> 0:17:41.420

John Keller

Umm.

0:17:25.990 --> 0:17:57.640

Michael Sterling

So solution was there and the situation would have been resolved. But you know people are unsure and then they you know they go to somebody else to to to ask what somebody else is doing and it just gets into this big circle where guys, let's just cut to the point and call them, you know, and not to say that texting and e-mail and none of that all that's good. It's a tool to trade but and it's and it's very much a necessity in today's you know world and society and everything like that.

0:17:57.980 --> 0:17:58.550

Michael Sterling

But.

0:17:59.330 --> 0:18:0.250

Michael Sterling

It is, you know.

0:18:13.360 --> 0:18:14.0

John Keller

That's right.

0:18:1.490 --> 0:18:25.260

Michael Sterling

The shortest we're in distribution, right? We're, you know, big supply chain and logistics and all of this in distribution and the quickest way to get, you know, to two points is a straight line point A to point B I mean like, let's cut to the chase, let's get there. And so that's, you know, I think that that is I think that's lost on some people at certain points in time.

0:18:25.940 --> 0:18:50.690

John Keller

No, I really like. I like what you're saying. I think I think something that everyone can relate to as well is because you're at this crossroads. You really do get to see into a lot of different stories

and to a lot of different businesses, you get to see what made them successful, see what didn't make them successful. And I'm hearing you kind of say like it's one of the things you see pretty clearly is as long as they're successful, are communicating.

0:18:50.100 --> 0:18:52.560

Michael Sterling

100% a 100% without a doubt.

0:18:52.130 --> 0:18:54.540

John Keller

They'll just tell you straight up how it is and what they need.

0:19:23.970 --> 0:19:24.540

John Keller

Welcome.

0:18:54.940 --> 0:19:24.920

Michael Sterling

Yeah, yeah. I mean, you know, there's no, I mean he, I guess you can add some you know, add some flair, add some pomp and circumstance to it. Whatever you wanna call it. But it is, you know, the bottom line, one of the guys that I'm actually going to dinner with an Austin, he's a he's actually one of the neatest people. And I'm just now really getting to know him. And he, you know, he's an immigrant. He's a new American and he he came here with.

0:19:24.620 --> 0:19:24.930

John Keller

And.

0:19:25.10 --> 0:19:28.270

Michael Sterling

Yeah, he came here with nothing and he owns.

0:19:31.490 --> 0:19:31.960

John Keller

Wow.

0:19:57.310 --> 0:19:57.760

John Keller

Wow.

0:19:29.60 --> 0:20:0.210

Michael Sterling

40 convenient store 40 plus convenience stores and truck stops, and the Austin metro area. He's built a hospital. He owns a ton of commercial developments, homes, apartment complexes, you name it. He's done a lot of real estate development, and that's what his real business or I guess one of his major businesses is is he's in real estate development now. But I mean, he cut his teeth, he came here and he started working for a guy in a convenience store. That's how he started. That's actually how he learned English.

0:20:17.310 --> 0:20:17.680

John Keller

This.

0:20:17.740 --> 0:20:29.960

Michael Sterling

Like he he he's he's he's really. And I'm just now getting to know him. I I really I really am kind of anxious and cause I'd love to pick his brain and want to hear more about him you know and with that kind of.

0:20:34.70 --> 0:20:34.660

John Keller

Oh yeah.

0:20:30.990 --> 0:20:43.100

Michael Sterling

Background. You know, he's got a ton of stories to tell. I mean, just all sorts. Yeah. So it's a it. It'll be. It'll be fun. He told you scene. He's a good. He's a good guy.

0:20:43.880 --> 0:20:44.630

Michael Sterling

He's a good guy.

0:20:43.580 --> 0:20:53.500

John Keller

That's awesome. It it kind of goes back to your point again of like saying, hey, you got two points to connect here guys, just just do it just get him connected next.

0:20:52.250 --> 0:20:53.860

Michael Sterling

Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

0:20:54.180 --> 0:21:0.150

John Keller

I think it kind of reminds me, you know, you're getting a chance to see all these people that are successful, you're obviously.

0:21:14.860 --> 0:21:15.140

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:21:1.400 --> 0:21:18.470

John Keller

Uh, you're successful in a lot of things that you've done. You're you're just growing up, it's rubbing off on you, you're, you know, in addition to meeting all these great people, you're investing in stuff, you're growing your own frameworks personally and your own, your own investments, maybe tell me a little bit about.

0:21:18.560 --> 0:21:31.900

John Keller

And you mentioned something that your your granddaddy always told you, and I wonder if you could kind of share that theme and how you think it ties into a lot of the different things that you've seen other people do and that you're trying to do in your own life?

0:21:32.530 --> 0:21:35.60

Michael Sterling

Yeah. So my.



0:21:35.910 --> 0:21:48.130

Michael Sterling

My grandfather, it was either my dad or my grandfather and I'm 90% sure it was granddaddy, but it's definitely something my dad could have stayed. He could have said he's he's a big philosophizer. That's a technical word, by the way.

0:21:48.650 --> 0:21:49.640

John Keller

Exactly.

0:21:49.230 --> 0:21:57.630

Michael Sterling

But he is a my granddaddy told me this was whenever I guess I was probably in high school and I was.

0:22:4.880 --> 0:22:5.210

John Keller

Ohh.

0:21:58.790 --> 0:22:17.160

Michael Sterling

And I was trying to come. I was playing select travel ball and I I wanted to be. I wanted to be a pitcher and I wanted to be the yard our our #1 starter. And and this and this, that and the other. And and he said well well, Michael, you just gotta find a way.

0:22:34.170 --> 0:22:35.100

John Keller

Ohh jeez.

0:22:18.50 --> 0:22:38.590

Michael Sterling

You just got to find a way, and I and I kind of picked his brain about that. And he said, well, you know, developed that curveball. Alright you you've been working on throwing the circle change now for how many years you've got a perfect it and and so sure enough I did and then two years later I told my rotator cuff and there went the pitching Courier but Oh yeah yeah fallen high school dreams right.

0:22:38.800 --> 0:22:39.450

John Keller

Oh geez.

0:22:40.130 --> 0:22:43.650

Michael Sterling

But that saying find a way.

0:22:44.290 --> 0:22:58.540

Michael Sterling

Has always stuck with me. It's it's always stuck with me and in a in one of our conversations, I guess earlier at this week, you know talk talking about you know, coming on and everything like that. I was like, man, what's something that I can.

0:22:59.510 --> 0:23:2.820

Michael Sterling

That I can say, or that's a part of me.

0:23:3.540 --> 0:23:12.770

Michael Sterling

That really equates cause I mean distribution is. I mean I don't care if you're distribution fuel, lubricants, widgets.

0:23:13.590 --> 0:23:14.540

Michael Sterling

Or toilet paper.

0:23:16.80 --> 0:23:44.150

Michael Sterling

It's all kind of the same logistics supply chain, A we're all delivering a product. We're all getting something from that point A to that point B. And there's a lot of changes there. There's always changes. There's a lot of hurdles to jump through, especially, you know, since I don't know about three years ago and it's been tough on us all across every industry and that, but however.

0:23:44.990 --> 0:23:53.620

Michael Sterling

People, you just gotta find a way. We did. If if a terminal shuts down unexpectedly. We had a a I guess this is.

0:23:55.100 --> 0:24:22.390

Michael Sterling

About a month ago, up in up in Wisconsin, where I've got some customers up near the Madison area, there was a unforeseen, you know, fire. I mean, it was an accident at at A at a BP terminal up there and all of a sudden we're scrambling and that's one of the only only points that we pull out of. And So what do we have to do? You know, we had to find a way, we got on the horn with some of our third party carriers who were pulling product like almost from Iowa.

0:24:23.170 --> 0:24:48.620

Michael Sterling

You know to to get it over to some of our customers in Wisconsin and and you know it's it's just something that you have to do. You've gotta find a way, you know, getting into like some of the personal life. If you've got life goals like if you want to if you want to if you wanna. I'm a big golfer you know I I've I've grown up playing golf played it since I was five years old and.

0:24:49.980 --> 0:24:52.70

Michael Sterling

If you if I want to lower my handicap.

0:24:52.880 --> 0:25:22.970

Michael Sterling

From A6 back down to scratch, you know, I know how to do that. There's there's things that you have to do. I have to find a way. If you want to have another child, if you know you and your wife are are ready to take that, take that level. But you don't think you can afford it. You might not have the right house, you know, set up your work life. You might be traveling a lot. You don't know if you could take the responsibilities on of bringing another child to the world. Well.

0:25:23.50 --> 0:25:37.160

Michael Sterling

That's a goal that you set for yourself, if that's something that you believe, you're called to, you know, I don't. We pray about it. Think about it. I mean, you can't just go off Willy nilly and, you know, throw and we're not throwing darts at the wall, you know, seeing where we're land.

0:25:38.190 --> 0:25:46.700

Michael Sterling

You gotta find a way if you know my my wife and I, we bought our first two investment properties here in Texas last year.

0:25:47.180 --> 0:25:47.330

John Keller

And.

0:25:47.430 --> 0:25:48.70

John Keller

Congratulations.

0:25:56.320 --> 0:25:56.660

John Keller

Man.

0:26:6.160 --> 0:26:7.10

John Keller

My goodness.

0:25:48.0 --> 0:26:17.440

Michael Sterling

Thank you we but my my it's very it's kind of a long complicated story, but the Texas housing market has just been incredibly hot. I was tired of getting out bed whenever we were moving back. I got we got out bid, we were trying to buy a house out of state and we got out bid three times in a row and the last two, two homes we went over asking price and I'm like this is just ridiculous. So and then of course we needed a roof over our heads. So we Long story short we leased a house out and we've got.

0:26:17.540 --> 0:26:35.590

Michael Sterling

A you know? But our goal for last year was, hey, by the end of the year, we're gonna be in our house like this is the house. This is the house we're gonna raise Maddocks in. Everything like that. Like this. Like we're gonna have that house whether we build it or we find the right spot or whatever it is. And.

0:26:36.370 --> 0:26:46.690

Michael Sterling

You know, these opportunities passed up and my and I took him to my wife and I said, hey, you know, this is part of our other life goals. We wanted some of that, some of that income coming in.

0:27:10.380 --> 0:27:11.150

John Keller

Absolutely.

0:26:47.330 --> 0:27:18.260

Michael Sterling

You know, we've got we've got the liquid cache, we can do this now. It's not like we're gonna live in them or anything like that. We're gonna rent them out to some college students. But. And we took advantage of those opportunities. However, we had to restructure some things. We had to pull some extra cash out of savings, especially with the, you know, the increase in interest rates and things like that. I, we actually, yeah, we actually had to put a little bit more down than I initially wanted to, but you got to find a way with because that was one of our goals. That was.

0:27:18.430 --> 0:27:34.230

Michael Sterling

That's something that I had to deliver on and we found a way. And you can apply that to anything you want to do. Whether. Yeah, like I said, whether it's your golf handicap, live goals, you wanna start your own business, you wanna start up a podcast.

0:27:46.440 --> 0:27:48.630

John Keller

You find a way you'd find a way. That's what you're saying.

0:27:34.770 --> 0:28:6.40

Michael Sterling

You know, I I wouldn't know John. The first thing had to start a podcast or to gain, you know, listeners and viewership or anything like that. I would have a clue. I'd have to Google it, you know? And, but yeah, that's exactly it. You know, you find a way, you use your resources, you know, you, you network, you ask somebody, that's the other thing that, you know, getting back to that communication point that I was talking about earlier. People don't ask anymore. They really don't. I mean, I tried to do my best. And I'm stubborn as a mule at times.

0:28:6.360 --> 0:28:6.830

Michael Sterling

But.

0:28:7.800 --> 0:28:16.710

Michael Sterling

You know, there's no real stupid questions. I'll I guess I shouldn't say that there might be some stupid questions out there, but that being said.

0:28:17.160 --> 0:28:38.660

Michael Sterling

You know you don't know until you ask, you know, just like in sales asking for the business. You gotta ask at some point in time or you know, because if you don't ask, then you're just sitting there spinning your wheels where you could already be on the road, you know, getting to that, you know, getting to that destination.

0:28:39.570 --> 0:28:42.40

Michael Sterling

But you just didn't fail to. You know you're failing to start.

0:28:43.180 --> 0:28:44.910

Michael Sterling

So that's, that's where.

0:28:45.670 --> 0:28:45.990

Michael Sterling

You know.

0:28:47.440 --> 0:28:48.70

Michael Sterling

Where you gonna?

0:28:47.490 --> 0:28:52.540

John Keller

I guess what? No, I think there's some good stuff there and I I think a lot of people.

0:28:55.90 --> 0:28:59.410

John Keller

You know what? When they're asking that question like why I want to find how am I gonna find a way right.

0:28:59.870 --> 0:29:0.180

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:29:0.70 --> 0:29:5.300

John Keller

What it what's the advice you give to people when they can't? They think they can't find a way.

0:29:9.540 --> 0:29:9.870

Michael Sterling

Yeah.

0:29:17.870 --> 0:29:18.170

Michael Sterling

Right.

0:29:5.990 --> 0:29:19.690

John Keller

Like you're you're you tore your rotator cuff. You couldn't. You now couldn't go and and maybe fulfill your high school dreams. So I no way, right? No way. So what do you do?

0:29:20.610 --> 0:29:23.220

John Keller

How do you find the way when it seems like there's no way?

0:29:29.910 --> 0:29:30.220

John Keller

OK.

0:29:26.750 --> 0:29:41.190

Michael Sterling

That's there's. There's always a way that is your mind over matter. You got. You got it. If you

believe it. Alright. If you believe it. If you want. If you want to do something, you might have to dig deeper. OK. Alright.

0:29:50.300 --> 0:29:51.170

John Keller

Exactly.

0:29:54.890 --> 0:29:56.240

John Keller

Yeah.

0:30:1.150 --> 0:30:1.650

John Keller

That's right.

0:29:41.960 --> 0:30:11.990

Michael Sterling

I I've I've got a I've got a goal. Alright. I gotta. I gotta get my hot dad. Summer bought on. Alright. Well, well in that. What they call it, call it these days. You know. I gotta. I gotta get my dad bod back. Back down. Alright. You know, because you know we bought a house with a pool. I mean, we're down here in Texas. Everybody's got a pool now, right? And and I, you know, I was like, you know what, Hun? About two months ago I said babe, I got it loose some weight. I was like, I kind of. I've got a you know.

0:30:12.70 --> 0:30:41.770

Michael Sterling

Stress, whatever it is. I mean, there's always excuses for it. I said I was kind of let myself go over this last year. I said I gotta we gotta tone it up. You know, I gotta look better with. I gotta look better without my shirt on and it sucks. It's not fun. It isn't. I mean, I'm not one of those guys that enjoys working out, and I don't like going on a run or anything like that. But you know what? I've found a way. I've got a routine. Now, even if it's just something simple like.

0:30:42.280 --> 0:30:57.590

Michael Sterling

I take the dogs for a walk, you know, I've got. I've got a couple of Labradors that are being incredibly lazy right now at my feet and they, you know, I take them, I go out and train with them, you know, because they're bird dogs and.



0:30:58.290 --> 0:31:20.520

Michael Sterling

Yeah. And you know, I I literally work out with the dogs. And, you know, I jump on the bike. I do. You know, I've got if I don't if I'm traveling alright hotel gyms they aren't the best. But you know what? You got it sometimes you gotta play the cards that you're dealt and right you know you gotta find that way you know you gotta find that way to get the workout even if it's.

0:31:20.920 --> 0:31:25.590

Michael Sterling

You know, you're just up running stairs or something like that. I mean, you know.

0:31:26.880 --> 0:31:34.900

Michael Sterling

You know, being goofy, I don't know. I mean, you just gotta find a way and that's that's, but that is that internal.

0:31:36.70 --> 0:31:55.660

Michael Sterling

Then we all struggle with it, so there's not. There's not a reason. I know. I've done it more times than I care to remember in my life, but you have to overcome that internal doubt that you have and it's, and we're all human, right? There's no, there's no. None of us are running around with an S on our chest wearing that red Cape. We're all human.

0:31:56.840 --> 0:32:7.360

Michael Sterling

And you know, we all have those self doubts and you know, but that's something that you have to just dig deep in and you gotta find your way because if you want something bad enough, if you want something bad enough.

0:32:19.550 --> 0:32:19.940

John Keller

Umm.

0:32:8.390 --> 0:32:38.620

Michael Sterling

There's no stopping you. There isn't. I've. I refuse to believe that. I think that that's one of the

great fallacies that is going on in America right now. And I'm not gonna try and get on a soapbox or anything like that. But I think that that is one of the biggest problems right now that our country is suffering from is because, yeah, people are dealing with self doubt and we've got, you know, we've got a lot of things going on and there's lots of people from all different walks of life that, you know, they've got their own personal struggles.

0:32:38.700 --> 0:32:40.980

Michael Sterling

And we don't need to speculate or get into that.

0:32:41.920 --> 0:32:47.80

Michael Sterling

Because we don't have enough time, honestly. But everybody's got their own things that they've got to deal with.

0:32:48.200 --> 0:32:49.80

Michael Sterling

And you know.

0:32:50.210 --> 0:33:4.920

Michael Sterling

But you just gotta find a way, alright. You, you go out there and you you find a way to get your education. One of my one of my cousins right now he went to go play college football. He went to a D2 school. He got hurt.

0:33:5.860 --> 0:33:35.410

Michael Sterling

He was, you know, he was still on the team. He stayed there for another semester and he was just at a point in his life. I mean, he was 1920 years because he was 20 years old at that point in time. And he just, he was like, you know what I just wanted. I'm School's out for me right now. And it's not because he didn't have the brains. He's incredibly smart, very, very intelligent and a hard worker. He knows what's going on, but he wasn't going to be able to play football anymore. And that's really the reason why he went to that school was because he wanted to, you know.

0:33:48.200 --> 0:33:48.590

John Keller

Wow.

0:33:36.100 --> 0:34:6.110

Michael Sterling

You know, he wanted to play football still and he so he went out, got a job in the oilfield. I actually hooked him up with a buddy of mine. And he was he literally moved out to West TX and started basically roughnecking. And he was making money hand over fence because fiska those guys, they make it's hard work. But man it you get paid for it and it is you know all of a sudden he's 2122 years old. He's done it for a few years and he's like man, you know.

0:34:15.990 --> 0:34:16.470

John Keller

Yeah, yeah.

0:34:6.310 --> 0:34:27.770

Michael Sterling

And his dad was like, why are you going back to school or why you want to go back to school? It would look, have you, have you checked your bank account? Now you see that new truck sitting out there in the driveway, that sort of thing. And but that was something that he wanted to do. So you know what he did? And, you know, First off, he asked. He asked for help. He started pulling and resources. He was gonna have to pay for it on his own.

0:34:28.990 --> 0:34:43.600

Michael Sterling

You know, he asked people how they did it. You know, he called his brothers. He called me. And, you know, he talked to some of his other friends that have done it and he's, you know, getting his engineering degree and now and here in College Station and it's.

0:34:44.750 --> 0:34:52.580

Michael Sterling

It's a. Yeah, it's it's, you know, he found a way so, but he wasn't, you know, there were a lot of struggles, you know.

0:34:53.280 --> 0:35:9.480

Michael Sterling

He was going to have to pay for. So how? How are you going to pay for it? Alright, you. You're leaving a killer job that a lot of people out in this world would absolutely kill for. You know you're doing all these things and you know you got so much and they're all and you know, some of them were positive, right.

0:35:10.220 --> 0:35:34.460

Michael Sterling

But he wanted to go and that he wanted to meet that he wanted to meet personally. You know, he he wanted that degree, even if he, even if he never uses it. He just wanted that degree to put up on the wall. And so he's found a way. And yeah, I mean, he still got a ways to go. He's not done yet, but he's found a way and he's pursuing that dream and that goal and achieving it. So he's I guess I should say he's on the way to find in a way.

0:35:39.980 --> 0:35:41.800

Michael Sterling

It is. It's. It's a total mindset.

0:35:35.130 --> 0:35:45.200

John Keller

But I think it sounds to me like finding ways that is really it's A-frame of mind, right? So as long as you're finding a way, you're finding a way. The 2nd that you stop finding a way you're you're.

0:35:45.910 --> 0:35:46.530

John Keller

You're lost.

0:35:47.0 --> 0:35:55.200

Michael Sterling

Yeah, 100%. I mean, you just gotta and it's alright to be lost. It is. We all get lost but we get our we get ourselves back on track.

0:36:10.500 --> 0:36:10.920

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:35:56.330 --> 0:36:18.950

John Keller

So let me ask you another kind of principle that I'm hearing come out and I think that a lot of our listeners are probably can relate to and they I'm hearing I'm here you talk a lot about proximity and you're kind of saying that you're not saying it directly in what you're doing. You're I'm

hearing you in the backdrop of all the different stories you're telling and what we mean by proximity is kind of you've all you know there's the adage.

0:36:24.790 --> 0:36:25.160

Michael Sterling

Right.

0:36:19.210 --> 0:36:45.210

John Keller

That birds of a feather flock together, you know, and you're the average of the five people you spend the most time with. And I hear you kind of when you when you talk about him finding his way, he's finding he's like trying to be proximate, trying to find people who are who are where he wants to be. And I hear you talking about how you're you're going to go and meet with this other gentleman who's, you know, started all these convenience stores and real estate developers like you are putting yourself into proximate.

0:36:55.580 --> 0:36:56.0

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:36:45.610 --> 0:37:8.210

John Keller

Uh, areas with people who are kind of on journeys that you wanna be part of. Maybe speak to me just a little bit. And of course, as a you're on the road a lot, so you get to see the type of people that you're around maybe tell me a little bit about your strategies personally for proximity of being around the type of people that are finding the ways you want to be part of.

0:37:10.870 --> 0:37:14.360

Michael Sterling

Well, I think part of it is you just gotta.

0:37:15.370 --> 0:37:37.500

Michael Sterling

You gotta you gotta find that inspiration. You gotta see, you know. See those guys that might have come here to? I mean, whenever I say come here, I'm talking about coming to America with nothing. You know, they they don't have a U.S. dollar to their name, but then they all of a sudden they start hearing, you know, a little bit of hard work and a little bit of luck. I mean, you know, but there's a Tiger Woods quote and.

0:37:38.510 --> 0:37:44.600

Michael Sterling

Ali and I cannot think of it to to save my life, but it's something about how he practices.

0:37:45.780 --> 0:37:56.690

Michael Sterling

Tiger Woods probably is not the most natural, you know, gifted golfer out there. I mean, look at John Daley. That's probably one of the most natural gradationally gifted golfers, right?

0:37:56.810 --> 0:37:57.180

John Keller

Yeah.

0:37:57.480 --> 0:38:10.830

Michael Sterling

But Tiger Woods, I don't think anybody. I mean, you can argue, Jack. Tiger, whatever. But you can argue against it. But he's probably the world's best golfer that will ever, you know, walk those eighteen holes.

0:38:11.490 --> 0:38:11.850

John Keller

Mm-hmm.

0:38:40.400 --> 0:38:40.700

John Keller

Yeah.

0:38:12.340 --> 0:38:42.190

Michael Sterling

And he didn't get that because he was the, you know, he was just, you know, God gave him these natural gifts. I mean, Dad, God did give him some natural talent. There's no doubt about that. However, he made the most of it by practicing and working hard and setting those goals and finding that way, you know, look at what he did, you know, I mean, granted, you know, there's some very human limitations on him. This past masters experience, but he wanted to come back from that car wreck. All right. He might be the very best.

0:38:42.300 --> 0:38:50.370

Michael Sterling

Example that I can give or anybody could give to find a way. He had these goals he wanted to do this he wanted do XY and Z still.

0:38:51.140 --> 0:39:11.370

Michael Sterling

And you know, after that car wreck, I mean, nobody would have blamed him. Guys got more money than he knows that he'll ever spend. Alright, it's not like he needs to work. It's not like anybody if he never played another round of golf in his life, he would still go down as one of the best of all time without a shadow of a doubt. I don't think anybody's gonna argue against that. I mean, Hall of Famer.

0:39:12.60 --> 0:39:22.540

Michael Sterling

And but he personally wanted to do that. So he had to overcome his own human limitations. He had to do, mind over matter. And he had to had to go there.

0:39:23.690 --> 0:39:24.840

Michael Sterling

So I think you know.

0:39:25.830 --> 0:39:39.900

Michael Sterling

You got to get inspired and I think the I think that, you know, sometimes people look to, you know, Hollywood or Tiger Woods of the stars of the world, stars of the world you using that very loosely, quotation marks.

0:39:40.610 --> 0:39:47.980

Michael Sterling

To try and look for this inspiration and all these success stories where you could, you could find that in your neighbor.

0:39:48.820 --> 0:39:52.110

Michael Sterling

You know, getting back to that point of communication, you know.

0:39:53.680 --> 0:40:6.850

Michael Sterling

Talk to your neighbor. Talked to people in church. You know, if you've got a son, you know, get to know his or our daughter, you know, get to know the other parents, see what they do for a living. I've always been a talker. It just came naturally to me.

0:40:8.0 --> 0:40:13.300

Michael Sterling

I I I like I like here in success stories. I think everybody does. Everybody should.

0:40:14.420 --> 0:40:38.670

Michael Sterling

It's a because you gotta find that inspiration and you know, I do believe that, you know, success rubs off on people, that it does, whether it's, you know, by happenstance or, you know, becoming involved. I mean, one of the reasons why I'm in the position I'm in right now and it's successful as I am is because of that buddy Mark.

0:40:39.630 --> 0:41:8.760

Michael Sterling

You know, he said. Michael, I think you'd. I think you'd be a really great fit in doing what? Doing what we do. And you know I said, you know, he said I've got a customer that's needing some help. He's looking to hire and he said and he's so I sent him in my my resume at the time. And the rest is history and you know that is and it was just it was just a buddy, you know, we tailgated together for football games, been to some dinners. I mean he's just a friend. And I mean it's not like he was one of my best friends you know.

0:41:8.860 --> 0:41:40.590

Michael Sterling

From college or or anything like that. He wasn't, you know, he he was just he was just a I don't want. He was more than a guy I knew. But, you know, he was a, you know, he's a he's a success story and you know he they hang out with him and just inspired me. It gave me the chance to do this and here we are you know ten years later and we're getting to do you know a lot of different things and and you know and and success is very arbitrary.

0:41:41.130 --> 0:41:52.810



Michael Sterling

It really is. I mean, if you wanna go of being a CEO of a Fortune 100 company, I mean that obviously that's very successful in my opinion. I don't have that goal though.

0:41:53.490 --> 0:41:55.580

Michael Sterling

I don't my success.

0:41:56.970 --> 0:41:57.870

Michael Sterling

Ultimately.

0:41:58.650 --> 0:42:13.400

Michael Sterling

Is going to be how my children are seen and how the the goals and the things that they achieve in their lifetime. That is what I'm going to be successful for now, because that's why.

0:42:15.10 --> 0:42:23.880

Michael Sterling

You know, that's why I work. How? As hard as I do. That's why I'm taking the steps. Yeah, I love the things I love the pool. I love going on vacations and.

0:42:24.630 --> 0:42:54.200

Michael Sterling

You know, enabling my, you know, getting my wife to do cool stuff with the, you know, with her friends and me going on vacations, you know, guys, golf trips and stuff like that, you know, we've we like the life that we live and it does cost money. So we have to work hard. It's not given to us but in the end my children and their success and how they are perceived and they're seen in you know, in this world that is where.

0:42:54.520 --> 0:42:56.70

Michael Sterling

That'll determine my access.

0:43:14.860 --> 0:43:15.750

John Keller

Happy birthday.

0:42:57.30 --> 0:43:17.710

Michael Sterling

Because that is what that's what matters most to me is is, you know, is if, as if Maddox has those goals, if he lives a good life, if he's a godly man. If people care about him. And I mean we celebrated his 5th birthday yesterday and you know and he was yeah. Thank you and he was.

0:43:18.790 --> 0:43:41.840

Michael Sterling

We let him pick where he wanted to go and I don't know if you all have a walk ONS where where you guys are at, but it's kind of like a sports bar cage in American type restaurant. It's really fun. You know, they've got, they've got a lot of cute girl waitresses and things like that. And if he, I guess he's like his dad, he's a natural flirt and.

0:43:42.400 --> 0:44:1.120

Michael Sterling

It it I think he wanted. He went and let every single waitress there last night knew that it was his birthday. And they, I mean they they just, you know he's I guess he you know he's never met a stranger he's a lot like his dad in that regard and I don't know if it's just because you know.

0:44:2.540 --> 0:44:31.330

Michael Sterling

And I do. I think that's, you know that's another thing and maybe that can be episode two with you and I, John is because I do think you know you just never meet a stranger and you go in, you give it everybody you're 110% and there's people that will prove you wrong. And I'm not saying you, I mean you can dial back but you know I think that I think you know that's a great mentality to go out into the world to communicate, to go out there and get inspired to help see other people success.

0:44:31.760 --> 0:44:33.210

Michael Sterling

To to help find your way.

0:44:34.630 --> 0:44:35.40

Michael Sterling

So.

0:44:43.10 --> 0:44:43.350

Michael Sterling

Umm.

0:44:44.420 --> 0:44:45.230

Michael Sterling

Yeah, yeah.

0:44:34.860 --> 0:44:52.660

John Keller

I think that's awesome. I think that's a I like it. So good. Simple message that actually goes really deep with regardless of what it is you're trying to do. Just just find the way. So I really do like that. So, Michael, I really appreciate you coming on today and kind of sharing your story with us.

0:44:55.100 --> 0:44:55.590

John Keller

No.

0:44:50.650 --> 0:45:0.60

Michael Sterling

Oh yeah, you got it, brother man. I had a blast. I had an absolute blast. Yeah, it was a. It was a lot of fun. And, you know, we'll do it again sometime.

0:45:0.460 --> 0:45:18.770

John Keller

Yeah, that's right. That's right. So to all of our listeners out there, if you enjoyed today's podcast, please be sure to subscribe, click that share, leave a review and you know, be sure to reach out to us with any thoughts or questions you have. If you have any questions for Michael, let's know we can forward those along. So again, Michael, thank you so much.

0:45:19.300 --> 0:45:21.680

Michael Sterling

You got it, brother. Thank you, John. As a as my pleasure.

0:45:22.120 --> 0:45:30.460

John Keller

Has put. The pleasure is mine. I share you. So until next time. This is John Keller signing off from the distribution download podcast and Michael Sterling. Have a good day.

0:45:30.960 --> 0:45:32.80

Michael Sterling

Take care, guys. We'll see you.

0:45:32.780 --> 0:45:33.510