

What is the best advice you've ever received?

Lily: So, tell us, what's the best advice you've received?

Michael: There's a couple of things that, as I tell my story, and kind of talk about the path that we've gone, not just as an individual, but as a team, and now as an organization. I've alluded to it already, the one that really drives everything that we do is this, "Every decision that we make does one of two things; it either complicates or simplifies." The majority of decisions that we make, complicate. They add more chaos, more complexity. Just as we're listening right now, we can think about the last meeting that we're in, and the decision that somebody made in the meeting for the rest of the people that were there. Maybe somebody decided not to do something, and that complicates things for the majority of people that are in the room. It's really a mind shift that we have to go through because the majority of decisions that we make complicate things for us. We create our own drama and then we complain about the drama.

[Laughter]

Lily: I have a good quote on that.

Michael: Yeah, and we do it in higher ed. Higher ed's a breeding ground for this. I was part of that problem.

I think that's something that really, it'd be good for all of us to get more thought to. The decisions that I'm making, are they simplifying things for me in the short term or in the long term? Are they complicating things for me in the short term or in the long term? What can I do to improve those decisions?

Number two, I was interviewing Mark Miller a number of years ago, he's a Vice President at Chick-fil-A. In fact, he'd be a great person for you to talk to as well.

Lily: Okay.

Michael: Mark, just incredible person. Sixteenth employee at Chick-fil-A, years ago, about 35-36 years ago, and I asked him, "You've seen all of this growth in Chick-fil-A from a few hundred-thousand-dollar company to multi-billion dollars now, 6, 7-billion-dollar company. What is the greatest need that you're seeing in organizations?" Without hesitating, he said "Everybody needs a coach. Everybody needs somebody or somebodies that is speaking into their life and is helping them to see things that they can't see and helping them achieve things that they don't even understand or believe that they can accomplish." That was a life-

changer for me. Not only to get help and feedback myself, but to become that person for leaders, high-performing leaders who're doing transformational work in the marketplace.

Then the third thing for me which is really good and helped me probably more personally than anything else is I heard Andy Stanley say, at some point of this time I was experiencing some significant dysfunction in my roles and in our family, I heard him say that, "You're greatest legacy may not be something that you do or you become in your lifetime, but it maybe is something that your children or your grandchildren or somebody that you've mentored or encourage or helped along the way, something they do or become." My work became less about myself and what I can accomplish and what I can even help organizations accomplish. They became more about becoming a student of those people who are closest to me helping them be successful and then helping, again, leaders who're doing transformational work, helping them be successful in their work.