

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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Jacob: Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of the Future of Work Podcast. My guest today is Frances Hesselbein, President and CEO of The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute. Former CEO [00:00:30] of The Girl Scouts of the USA and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom among many other awards, including, from what I understand, 20 honorary doctoral degrees, which is just mind-boggling. Thank you, Frances, for joining me.

Frances: Thank you.

Jacob: Today we're going to be talking a lot about leadership, but before we get into some of those topics, I thought it would be really interesting to get some [00:01:00] background information about you. I know you have a pretty interesting background. You grew up during the Great Depression and you-

Frances: There is no question you cannot ask me.

Jacob: All right, all right. That's good to know.

Frances: Just open the door.

Jacob: Why don't we start with some background information about you. Maybe let us know where did you grow up and how did you get involved with all this stuff that you're involved with now?

Frances: [00:01:30] I grew up in the mountains of Western Pennsylvania. In Johnstown, a big coal, big steel, big labor, big hearts. And recently I learned that ... Way back then in our little mill town, railroad town, I was chairman of the United Way Campaign. [00:02:00] The gentlemen, the two bankers, that invited me thought that was at least normal and I of course said yes because I believed in the United Way and it's work. And recently I learned that the United Ways Campaigns were 100 [00:02:30] years old. The first woman who ever chaired a United Ways Campaign in 100 years was Frances Hesselbein, Johnstown, PA, 1976. The second woman was in New York City this year, and she was only the second woman [00:03:00] in 100 years. So it's sort of fun to look back and see how in that little railroad, steel mill town we all got together and had one of the highest per capita giving in the USA. Isn't that fun? So that's where I came from, steel mill, coal

mining [00:03:30] town where everybody worked together. And I had enormous opportunities to serve.

Then I came to New York. I was called, because then I was the CEO of the Girl Scouts in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and New York said, "Please come and talk to us." Well I knew I wasn't [00:04:00] ever going to leave Pennsylvania, but my adorable husband made me feel it would be rude not to speak to them. So I came, and I think because I didn't ask any questions the six members of the search committee were doing all the talking. And so finally one [00:04:30] of them said, "Frances, if you were in this job, CEO of the Girl Scouts of the USA, what would you do?" Well, I had to be open, so I described the total transformation of the largest organization for girls and women in the whole world. And when I came out [00:05:00] after the interview my husband, John, said, "How did it go?" I said, "I think I scared them. They asked me what I would do in this job and I described the total transformation."

Two mornings later I was back home in Pennsylvania and I had a call. "We want you to come to New York." And because [00:05:30] I had described this massive transformation, not only did they buy it, they made it their own and said there was no push back. And we had the greatest, it was a total transformation. We more than tripled racial, ethnic representation. We [00:06:00] had some of the most remarkable handbooks and leadership nights. And we even had Harvard Business School do a five day seminar for our community leaders. So I never wanted to leave Pennsylvania, then the Girl Scouts called and so for [00:06:30] 13 years I was the CEO Girl Scouts of the USA. 5000 days, and I never had a bad day.

Jacob: That sounds like a great place to work.

Frances: It was, and they were remarkable people. And you know when to leave.

Jacob: Wow. I understand that this year I believe you're turning [00:07:00] 103 this year?

Frances: Sure. What we never do, now I don't like to give you a lesson when we're on the air, but age is irrelevant. I'm quoting my grandfather who at 97 ran for his last three year term as Justice of the Peace in Pennsylvania. [00:07:30] And when someone would say, "Squire," as in esquire, "Squire [Wicks 00:07:37], do you mind telling me your age?" He would smile sweetly and in his lovely English voice accent he would say, "Yes, thank you, because age is irrelevant. It's what we do with our lives that counts." [00:08:00] So when anyone asks me my age I quote my grandfather. "Age is irrelevant, it's what we do with our lives that counts."

Jacob: That's funny, my dad always tells me the same thing. So he's going to be turning 70 soon and he still plays soccer. And every time-

Frances: Good for him.

Jacob: Yeah. So he's always telling me the same thing. He's like, "You [00:08:30] know what? Age doesn't matter, it's how you feel and how you think." So I totally agree with you.

Frances: Yeah.

Jacob: So what is a typical day like for you? I know even today you're still giving a lot of talks, you're traveling, you're running your leadership institute, you're consulting with companies. So what's a typical day like for Frances?

Frances: Well, first I'll tell you something wonderful. [00:09:00] We have these beautiful offices in the Mutual of America Life Insurance building at 320 Park Avenue. And I have two beautiful offices on the second floor. They have given us our offices, no rents. Given us our offices for 26 years. [00:09:30] And their CEO is very firm with me, I'm on his board, have been since 1980, and he has said to me, because their car picks me up in the morning, brings me to work, takes me home, all seven blocks. He had said to me in front of the board, "If I ever hear that you [00:10:00] have taken public transportation not only will you disappear but your body will never be found." So far, if you come to my office, and I would welcome you, around below the ceiling are 26 books that we have published. And we have [00:10:30] published them in seven languages. Our journal, Leader to Leader, I hope you get it, if you don't, tell me, I want to send it to you. Quarterly journal, Leader to Leader, there are 1500 journals and magazines published in the USA. Our Leaders to Leader has been number [00:11:00] one with the Apex Award for 10 years.

And we made a wonderful life with offices on Park Avenue, and so far I've worked in 62 countries speaking. Now, I've [00:11:30] discovered Skype and it's amazing how I can travel the world and not move from New York or Pennsylvania, wherever I happen to be. And our journal, as I said it's quarterly, and for 10 years it has been the [00:12:00] best journal out of 1500, the best magazine or journal published in the USA. We do a great deal of work with [inaudible 00:12:10], with young people. I spent two years every other month at West Point teaching a class, no speeches, teaching a class at West Point. In this chair, [00:12:30] class of '51 chair, the first leaders to serve in that chair was General Eric [Cinseky 00:12:47], and then there was another great leader, community leader, who serves. Both were graduates of West [00:13:00] Point and both were men. I was the first woman and the first non graduate to serve. And I decided no speeches, just teaching a class of 24 cadets every other month, I decided it would be a lot more fun and far more interesting if [00:13:30] each time I took with me a great thought leader and the two of us would do a dialogue together and then answer all the questions. I thought that would be a lot more exciting than just Frances alone.

When I was assessing this with Officer [Keem 00:13:57] at West Point and say, "I would [00:14:00] like to, instead of coming in alone, bring a great thought leader with me." One of the officers said, "What kind of great thought leader were you thinking of?" I said, "Well, my first would be General Loyd Austin the third." Who then reached commander of all five branches [00:14:30] of the military. And then Alan [Malali 00:14:34] who then at that moment was president of Ford. And Jim Collins, who is my contemporary hero author. And he interrupted me and said in a hushed voice, "Do you really think you could get General Austin [00:15:00] to come with you?" I said, "If he's free. We've worked together since 2005 and we've done all kinds of work. If he's free, yes." He was, and we opened it. And what was so inspiring for me was that the civilians, not the officers I took, the civilians I [00:15:30] took with me for the dialogue, when we

left they all said something like, "This changed my life." It was something about the campus, 1802, the first classes were held. And in our bloodiest wars and battles [00:16:00] those years the same number of young men, they tried to register for West Point. They wanted to be at Missis, so the same numbers didn't matter, they were ready to serve.

So that's part of what [00:16:30] I do. I make a joke sometimes when I'm speaking and I say, "I have several tattoos." And the audience gasps, "What? This lady? Tattoos?" Then I add, "Well, they're in invisible ink. You can't [00:17:00] see them, but I know they're there." One over here, and this is Peter [Druker 00:17:11], I'm quoting him for the first two. First one is, "Think first, speak last." Over here my invisible tattoo is also [Druker 00:17:29], " [00:17:30] Ask, don't tell." And my own battle cry, what I live by, my own mission, "To serve is to live." And every day I try to serve in some way. When I go to bed at night I ask myself, "What did I do today [00:18:00] to make life better for anyone? What did I do that I could call serving?" If I can answer that one I sleep well.

Jacob: Those are great tattoos to have. And you mentioned Leaders to Leader, which I also recommend people check out. I have the opportunity to contribute to that, it's a great magazine, great journal.

Frances: Thank you, I'm glad you like it.

Jacob: [00:18:30] Yeah, yeah, there are some wonderful articles and contributions in there so it's definitely recommended. I wanted to ask you about your first job, what your first job was, what you remember about your first job, and I'd also be really curious to hear how you've seen the world of work change since your first job. So what are some of the biggest changes you've seen?

Frances: Well, long [00:19:00] ago in Johnstown, Pennsylvania where I grew up, was born, went to school, and never wanted to leave, I loved my hometown Johnstown. I was the first woman in that town, I didn't know, first [00:19:30] we knew it was the first in Pennsylvania, I didn't know I was the first woman in the world to chair an United Way Campaign. And when I was invited, and two bankers invited me to chair it, they didn't know I would be the first woman in the world to chair a United Way Campaign. But [00:20:00] they knew I had raised a lot of money for Girl Scouts and they were sure I could raise a lot of money in my hometown. So I chaired the United Way Campaign, and when they said, "And you may choose your vice chairman and next year he will be the chairman." And I said, "I would like [Herney Wordsworth 00:20:28], president [00:20:30] of a United Steel Workers in Johnstown." They looked shocked, they said, "We've never had one of them. We'll have to ask Bethlehem Steel." I said, "And I would like to have as the opening kick off speaker the national president of AFLCIO. I've seen him speak and he is so inspiring." They [00:21:00] looked even more shocked and said, "We will have to ask Bethlehem Steel."

They came back wide-eyed and said, "Bethlehem Steel says they'll pick them up at the airports and bring them down to the plants and have a kickoff big luncheon and the executive dining room to kick [00:21:30] off the campaign." So we had corporations, and we had organized labor. In that year, the highest per capita giving of any United Way.

And I did not know until last month when I read in New York Times that in 100 years only two women had ever [00:22:00] chaired a United Way Campaign. One was Frances Hesselbein in 1976, and one was a remarkable woman this year from New York who chaired the New York campaign. Isn't that amazing? 100 years.

Jacob: Yeah, that is amazing. 100 years is a very long time.

Frances: And we publish a journal, Leaders to Leaders, and it's award [00:22:30] winning. Apex Award. And so far 22 books. And I have worked in speaking in 62 countries. Never, as I mentioned, never one bad moment.

Jacob: That sounds like a fun career to have. But do you remember your very first job that you had growing up?

Frances: My very first job growing up, yes, I can. I was 17 years old going to junior college at the University of Pittsburgh. In Johnstown they had two floors of a high school building for their junior college. I was there [00:23:30] seven weeks. To me, those two floors were a cathedral of learning. My father then died. He had been in the army and his heart was effected. So I had a choice. My little brother, and sister, and mother, and I would all live with different relatives who were happy to have [00:24:00] us, or I could get a job and keep my family together. And I thought that's what my father would want, so I got a job and the gentlemen who interviewed me forgot to ask my age, which at that time was 17. But I dressed very well [00:24:30] with my mother's wide brimmed hat and high heels, he forgot to ask me my age. So I got the job, responsible for this whole floor of model rooms with furniture, rugs, and everything. Quite wonderful.

So one day the [00:25:00] manager stopped by and said he was pleased with the way things were going. He thought I looked very well, he says, "By the way, how old are you?" I said, "I'm 17, but in November I'll be 18." He looked at me and in this wonderful Pennsylvania manner says, " [00:25:30] What? My God, you're nothing but a god damned baby." And I just smiled and we continued our wonderful relationship. So I went to junior college at night, did my job in the day [00:26:00] time, and when I was 30 years old, by that time married with a little boy, I was still taking an evening class at Junior Pitt. So I was having lunch, my husband and his best friend, who taught at Junior Pitt and was our mayor. So I said to George, " [00:26:30] Oh, I've just seen the program for junior college coming up in the fall, and I am so thrilled. I can't wait to register." He looked at me and said, "Frances, when are you going to stop this blankity blank crazy stuff? You could teach the blankity blank course." [00:27:00] So that was the end, I was 30 at that time, and all those years Junior Pitt, whatever the subject was for those evening hours, that was mine.

So I had the most remarkable husband who supported me in everything I did. And when the Girl Scouts in Johnstown asked me to take their [00:27:30] job he thought it was the things you do, so I was there a couple years. And then New York called, "Come to New York and talk to us about the national CEO job." Largest organization for girls and women in the whole world. So I said to John, " [00:28:00] I'm writing a sweet note that I would never leave Johnstown or Pennsylvania." Well he says, "Frances, I'm a journalist and I'm a film maker. I've always wanted to live in New York. I'm driving you to New

York, the least you can do is speak to them. Listen to them." So we went to New York, and [00:28:30] I think after a few hours the six of the search committee realized they were doing all the talking and I wasn't saying anything. So they said, "If you were in this job what would you do?" And I described the total transformation and two days later had the job. [00:29:00] Largest organization for girls and women in the world.

Jacob: I heard an interview you did with Marshal Goldsmith, who was also a guest on this podcast. And he asked you a fun question that I want to ask you, and that is what is your blood type?

Frances: Oh, Marshal Goldsmith. Well, I don't think it's polite to tell people in public what your [00:29:30] blood type is, but mine is B+.

Jacob: Exactly.

Frances: And my husband was different from me, he was very cool and did not gush much. When I would talk about something that was so wonderful I would be gushing my head off he would look at me and say, " [00:30:00] You can tell that even your blood type is B+."

Jacob: Yes, I love that, that's a great story. Now I know you have spent a lot of time in leadership, so I wanted to ask you a little bit about the future of leadership. And I'm asking for selfish-

Frances: [crosstalk 00:30:28] I spent a great [00:30:30] deal of time where?

Jacob: In leadership. Thinking about leadership, writing about leadership. And so I am actually working on a new book on the future of leadership. So what will leadership look like in 2025? And I have a couple questions I wanted to ask you about that. The first one is what are some of the big trends that you think will impact the future of leadership?

Frances: [00:31:00] First, doing what you're doing is proper and appropriate. First, you have to define leadership in your own terms. And you have a mission, and my definition of leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do. We [00:31:30] spend most of our lives learning how to do, teaching people how to do, and yet we know that in the end is the quality and the character of the leader that determines the performance, the results. So leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do.

Jacob: I love that definition.

Frances: Thank you.

Jacob: [00:32:00] And so when you look at the future of leadership, what do you think some of the most important mindsets are going to be? So how should leaders of the future need to think?

Frances: Well, people are surprised when they ask me what I think about their future and I say, "I see a very bright future." A friend of mine, [00:32:30] a gentlemen who heard me say

that, says, "Frances, what are you drinking?" And I said, "All the caffeine free diet Coke I can find." And I said, "No, I mean alcohol. Whoever heard of bright future?" So I told her, "It's very clear. [00:33:00] We have the millennials with us, born between 1980 and 1995, and the Pew study center and they are fantastic. They have found that today's millennials, that age, 15 to 23, they are more like the 1930s and the 1940s than [00:33:30] any cohort since. So how could we not have a bright future when the leaders of the future, our millennials, are the kind of leaders our times are crying for? And we have seen them in the '30s and '40s, the millennials are with us [00:34:00] again."

Jacob: I love your optimism about the future. I definitely think we need more optimism. We don't see enough of that today. Any other important mindsets that you think are crucial for leaders of the future? Anything else they should be thinking about that you recommend?

Frances: I think we all work on that mission statement. [00:34:30] Has to fit on a T-shirt Peter [Druker 00:34:35] says, so that's about seven words across your T-shirt. We manage the mission, the mission is solely why we do what we do. We manage for innovation, we manage for diversity. And those are the three things we [00:35:00] focus very sharply. And we move into the future, and I think we have a very bright future because of the millennials. Here they are, ready to move. Right now they're volunteering all over the world, they're doing remarkable things, and we are so fortunate.

Jacob: What do you think about skills for the future for leaders? Is [00:35:30] there anything you think leaders of the future need to know how to do as far as skills go?

Frances: Yes. First, why do I do what I do? Why do we do what we do? We're passionate about our mission. Then, we say, "How are we doing this? What are we [00:36:00] doing to further that mission?" It's innovation. We opened doors, Emerson says in 1667, "Be an opener of doors." So we open one door we close another door, and we move into the future. And we open those [00:36:30] doors. Mission focus, value based. We know what are our values, and don't tell me you have 15. We have this little handful of values we live. They are who we are. And then mission focused, values based, demographics driven, which is the diversity, the power of it. [00:37:00] And we look out the window, we see what is visible, but not yet seen as Peter used to say. And we make sure that we are moving right across all five groups. And, right now, one of the saddest problems we have [00:37:30] is the lack of education of all of our children.

Recently I read that if you look at boys who are 15 years old, black or Hispanic, in a certain big city one out of seven is in school. 15 years old, [00:38:00] black or Hispanic, and one out of seven is in school. Now what happens to those 15 year olds when they're 16, 17, 18? We know what it costs to keep one of those young men in a prison. What we need to do [00:38:30] is see that they have a place to live, food to eat, a school to attend. They are our future.

Jacob: I think that's well said. I'm sure a lot of people listening would agree with you.

Frances: Thank you.

Jacob: What do you think about the greatest challenges for the future of leadership?

Frances: [00:39:00] I look at the great challenges of the future, and because of these young people I've just described, the millennials, I see only a bright future. They will open doors that have not been opened before. They will be in leadership positions where to lead is to [00:39:30] serve. So I make speeches about bright future and I comment on bright futures to the degree, as I mentioned, a friend asked me what I was drinking because I was so positive. Look out the window, as Peter says, look at what is visible but not yet [00:40:00] seen. And you see this new generation coming forward. And they will sustain the democracy, and that's one of the great challenges. How do we sustain the democracy? And it's up to each of us [00:40:30] to do our share. And that's the wonderful part about our millennials, our 15s to 23, they're so positive about that bright future.

Jacob: Yeah, I think it's definitely important to be positive about the future. I try to be positive.

Frances: Yes.

Jacob: But it's hard today, because every time you turn on the [00:41:00] news you hear something negative. Whether it's about politics, or technology taking away jobs, there's just so much fear and negativity out there that I think it's hard for a lot of people.

Frances: Yes. When I turn on, and I won't mention stations or people, but when I turn on [00:41:30] TV and it is negative about my country, our people, our democracy, our future, I don't listen to it. I go to another station. And there are other stations that are not singing the blues, and so I find them. And everywhere I go if I'm making speeches or just [00:42:00] in a little group commenting I am very positive about my country, our democracy, and the millennials who are coming forward. And they will sustain the democracy.

Jacob: I'm really curious about how you have seen work change. [00:42:30] Because when you had your first job, when you mentioned you were 17, the world was very different. Obviously there was no internet, no phones, no social media. None of the stuff we use today inside of our organization. So what have been some of the greatest changes that you have seen in work?

Frances: Could you speak a little louder, please?

Jacob: Sure. What were some of the greatest changes that you've seen [00:43:00] in the workplace during the course of your career?

Frances: During the course of my career doors opened that were never opened before. We saw the workforce including women at every level. [00:43:30] We included all of our people. We consciously did something and do something about racism. Respect for all people has become a battle cry. Respect for all people because when we see famous leaders speaking out [00:44:00] each other or to each other in such a derogatory way you wonder, "How do we sustain the democracy?" So we go out, we find leaders who care



about the country, who care about sustaining the democracy. And in many speeches I talk about the [00:44:30] two institutions that since the beginning of our country have sustained the democracy. And what are these two institutions? The public school system and the United States Army.

Think about it, since the beginning of the country. Public education, and [00:45:00] I use that term not the other one, public education is one. The United States Military is the second. And these are the two powerful forces that help us sustain our democracy. And we don't let anyone put us down.

Jacob: [00:45:30] What do you think about the current state of work today?

Frances: State of work?

Jacob: Yeah, the current state of work. What do you think about work today?

Frances: Well, because my blood type is B+ I also say, "Work is love made [00:46:00] visible." There is something about working with people, for people, working to sustain something, to open doors. To work is to live. We find what we love to do and pour everything we have into it. And work is love made visible.

Jacob: [00:46:30] That's a great quote.

Frances: Thank you.

Jacob: A lot of people today really struggle with trying to find meaningful work. We see very low engagement numbers at companies around the world. Why do you think that is? How can we create more better places to work, more optimism, more engagement? Where does that come from?

Frances: [00:47:00] Well I think right now, and we've been talking about this generation now coming into the work place. I think we will see a great change. They're bringing in a new kind of enthusiasm, a new kind of relief, and a new kind of inclusion. When you look at the work force, they don't all look like you or me. [00:47:30] We are representative, you look at us you're looking at the country. So I have such faith in this generation now coming into the work place in positions of responsibility. So I just see a bright [00:48:00] future. Now ask me another question to support your first one.

Jacob: Oh my goodness, no pressure. Well, I suppose the other question would be what role do leaders need to play in order to help create that kind of environment?

Frances: What roles?

Jacob: Yeah, what roles should a leader play-

Frances: Well, I think [00:48:30] at every level a CEO, we hope will be the kind of person I've been describing. A CEO brings on a team that respects its people. The organization has a

mission, short, powerful, compelling. They live it. And [00:49:00] they live their values. The leaders live the values, and you can't fake that, and it inspires all of us. And then we look out the window, we look at all the people in our communities, and we make sure that as we bring people in [00:49:30] we can answer this question. "When they," whatever group you're talking about, whatever race, "When they look at us," our organization, our officers, our workers, our sources, [inaudible 00:49:54], "When they look at us, can they find [00:50:00] themselves?" And if your answer is, "You bet they can." Your part of the future. If your answer is, "Well, not yet, but we're getting there. We're going to do better." That's, sorry, you're already part of the past. So when they look at us, can they find themselves? [00:50:30] If your answer is, "You bet they can." Right across the organization then we can say to you, "You are part of the future."

Jacob: I love that test. I think that's something a lot of people should be asking. What advice do you have for leaders today inside of organizations? How can they become [00:51:00] better, more effective leaders?

Frances: Three things. Not 15 pages, one. You're totally committed to the mission. So I call it we manage for the mission. Why do we do, at the organization, why do we do what we do? Our reason for being. Manage for the mission, we [00:51:30] are mission focused. Values based. We are conscious of our values, what we value most, and we share it. And we all share those values and as leaders we live them. And there are few things more inspiring than a leader who is living his or her values. [00:52:00] And then demographics driven, the doors are open. This is a wonderfully diverse country, and so we find ways to include our people. And when they say, "When they look at us," [00:52:30] meaning people of these all five groups, racial/ethnic groups, "When they look at us can they find themselves?" If your answer is, "You bet they can." At every level and in all our printage and visual resources, we are the future.

So I hope [00:53:00] that answers your question, and I am very, very positive about what I just said.

Jacob: I love it. Well, I have two last questions for you that people on LinkedIn just wanted me to ask you. And then I just have a few really fun questions, non work related.

Frances: Great. [crosstalk 00:53:26].

Jacob: The first one is from ... What was that?

Frances: I said [00:53:30] I'm yours.

Jacob: Thank you. The first question from Daniel Johnston, and he wants to know what are you doing to build a leadership capability to lead in an increasingly complex world where the future is uncertain and we cannot know all the answers?

Frances: So how do we prepare ourselves and our [00:54:00] people, right?

Jacob: Yep. Correct.

Frances: For a future we cannot yet describe?

Jacob: Correct.

Frances: All right. We look at ourselves. What do we bring? We look at, as Peter [Druker 00:54:21] used to say, "I never predict, I look out the window and I see what is visible but not yet [00:54:30] seen." We look out the window and we get out on the street. We find what are the greatest needs, and we find where we see our place. Where can we make a difference? Where do I make my greatest contribution? Right across the democracy. [00:55:00] So, we have to be mission focused and then we have those little five or six values, fit on a T-shirt, and we are conscious of living them. And we never say, "Well, today I can't live that value. I have [00:55:30] to do something that doesn't quite measure up. But tomorrow, I'll go back to being ..." No, no, no. We're mission focused. The values are there. We live them. And we know who the people of our country are. Demographics driven. [00:56:00] And we see diversity as enormous opportunity. We don't see it, "Oh, my, what a challenge." No, we throw out challenge and we bring in opportunities. And this is why I say to all of you, "You have a bright future. It is [00:56:30] yours to make, yours to sustain. It is your future."

Jacob: I love that message.

Frances: Thank you, Jacob.

Jacob: Oh, yeah. Next question from you is from Richard Buzzbee, he says, "I want to hear her perspective on the value of teaching entrepreneurship to youth to prepare for a future when workers are gonna be [00:57:00] contracted and maybe project based." So what's the value of teaching entrepreneurship do you think?

Frances: I'm not sure. Give me that first sentence, when you began.

Jacob: So the question was he wanted to hear your perspective on teaching entrepreneurship to prepare-

Frances: Oh, okay. [00:57:30] It is one of the most difficult subjects, issues, to teach. And it's also one of the most exciting and rewarding. So we distill the language, we become distillers. We distill the language until short, [00:58:00] powerful message. And we don't see this as a challenge, we see it as enormous opportunity. Bright future.

Jacob: Couple fun questions for you now.

Frances: Yes.

Jacob: The first one is what's the most embarrassing moment you ever had at work?

Frances: [00:58:30] Oh. I'll tell you, I've loved all my jobs and I've had such fun and such stimulation and enthusiasm that I'm having a hard time trying to find what was the word you used? Embarrassing?

Jacob: Embarrassing moment, yep.

Frances: [00:59:00] Probably the most ... It's awful, I can't remember when I was embarrassed in front of a board, in front of a staff team. I guess if there's an issue [00:59:30] that would embarrass me I'm right out in front battling it.

Jacob: Okay, fair enough.

Frances: [crosstalk 00:59:41] embarrass me, and I guess if you have sympathy for the person who is bringing on the embarrassment you have a different view. This is not your [01:00:00] problem, challenge, it's theirs and they're bringing it so it becomes yours. So we do not accept it. It is not our challenge. We are looking for opportunities. To serve is to live.

Jacob: If you were a superhero, which superhero would you be?

Frances: [01:00:30] What?

Jacob: If you were a superhero, which superhero character would you be?

Frances: Oh. Well, I guess I don't think in heroic terms. I think we get out there and we do what we have to do, but if I were going to [01:01:00] be a hero probably I would go back long, long ago when we were building our country. Or we go to the Civil War period, read the history of [01:01:30] what's happened to women and families during the Civil War period and how they worked to make a difference and keep their country. I'm gonna ask you for the third time, read that question.

Jacob: Sure, it's if [01:02:00] you were a superhero which superhero would you be? So we have like Wonder Woman, and Spider-Man, and Bat Man. Which superhero would you think that you identify with the most?

Frances: I guess when I'm looking at heroes I don't worry about gender, [01:02:30] they could be men or women. But if I wanted to be someone else, I think where I could make the biggest difference, I think I would like to teach school in a [01:03:00] very difficult community where not every school has a library and books, everything teachers need. So that would be the area I would like to improve, our public schools for [01:03:30] all of our children.

Jacob: I was gonna say what is a book that you recommend? It can be either a business book or a non business book?

Frances: Oh my goodness, I would say [01:04:00] any of Jim Collin's books and any of Peter [Druker's 01:04:11] books. And find the subject, they have a number of them, that is focused on your greatest interest. And they're all there. [01:04:30] We've published 22 books and most of them are articles by all kinds of leaders. We find that when you go out and bring in leaders at every level, leaders wherever they are, there is this richness when [01:05:00] we share the joys of leadership, the challenges of leadership, the future of leadership. And when I say leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do, it says

something about how we prepare ourselves. Living our values, mission focused, values based, [01:05:30] and we celebrate diversity.

Jacob: Last two questions for you.

Frances: Yes.

Jacob: If you could have dinner with anybody in the world, who would you have dinner with?

Frances: Oh, could I have a big table?

Jacob: You can have as big of a table as you want.

Frances: No, [01:06:00] you said who, that's a person. Today, I would like to have dinner with ... I'm looking at books in my office and people on my walls. [01:06:30] I think I would like to sit down, I want two dinners, I want to sit down with President and Miss. Obama and President and Miss. [01:07:00] Clinton. I have had a lunch and a dinner with President Reagan, so you can't ask for two times. But they have inspired me and I think sustaining the democracy is a [01:07:30] great challenge and I love leaders who see that as a challenge. They're not talking about themselves, they're talking about the future of our country, the future of our people. And when I read that one in seven boys 15 [01:08:00] in a large city, only one in seven is in school, I say, "How do we sustain the democracy if we do not see that all of our children receive an education?"

Jacob: Very last question for you is if you could live anywhere in the world, and I think I know the answer to this question, but if you [01:08:30] could live anywhere in the world where would it be?

Frances: There are two places. I'm going to spend part of my time in New York City, and then part of my time near the woods in eastern Pennsylvania near Bethlehem, Allentown, eastern. [01:09:00] Hour and 45 minutes away. Those are the two places that I would, to answer your question. And it's interesting, they're so close but I have such a wonderful life with people in [01:09:30] the communities in Pennsylvania and New York City for years and years. And to be CEO of the Girl Scouts for 13 years and never, never one bad day. And it's something wonderful about [01:10:00] all the opportunities there are in our community. Growing up in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and being first woman in the world to chair a United Way Campaign. Who would ever think of that as an enormous opportunity? But it happened to me.

Jacob: Definitely an amazing [01:10:30] accomplishment. Well, we're all done with the podcast. So maybe we can wrap up with any last parting words of wisdom that you want to share with all the listeners of the podcast?

Frances: Yes. It is very important, to serve is to live. [01:11:00] We all find a way to serve, to do something to help other people, to help our country, our community. To serve is to live I think is a great battle cry. And when people say, "What are the great challenges you see?" My reply is, "I [01:11:30] see only great opportunities." Jacob, for all the

challenges we've been looking at, every one brings an opportunity to serve that can change lives, including our own. So, as Emerson said, "Be an opener of doors." So we go on, we get the doors open. The serve is to live. [01:12:00] We manage for the mission. We manage for diversity. We manage for innovation. These are not challenges, they are opportunities. And we live in the greatest democracy, and it's our job, sustain the democracy. [01:12:30] Yes, thank you. Loved being with you and all your people, Jacob. I hope we meet again. And do visit our website, we have loads of things on it. We feed it every week.

Jacob: What's the website for people that want to check it out?

Frances: The website I hesselbeininstitute.org.

Jacob: [01:13:00] Hesselbeininstitute.org. And the last name is H-E-S-S-E-L-B-E-I-N.

Frances: B-E-I-N, yes.

Jacob: Perfect.

Frances: And we feed it every week and it's great fun to have the website as [01:13:30] we are very small. We have three people on our staff, and those marvelous people do the work of six. Every day it's a gift. And being with you and your people today is a great gift. Do visit our website, and we would just love to keep feeding things [01:14:00] we find, things we discover with all of our friends. Thank you very, very much.

Jacob: Thank you, Frances, for joining me. And thank you to everyone who's listening today. My guest, again, has been Frances Hesselbein, the former CEO of the Girl Scouts of the USA and the president and CEO of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute. I will see [01:14:30] all of you guys next week.