



## **SCOTT BOYES**

GOING BEYOND HARD WORK TO CHANGE  
PERCEPTIONS AND HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT

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**LEADERSHIP MOMENTS PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**



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# EPISODE 8



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[Start of Transcription]

**MURRAY:** Welcome to my podcast. I'm Murray Wright and this is Leadership Moments, real people stories about the people and the moments that have influenced and shaped their leadership.

I'm delighted to be talking with Scott Boyes today. Scott is the Vice President Operations for Accor Hotels in New South Wales and the ACT.

So Scott, we've got the three questions that I sent you. First question is, "Who in your life has influenced you the most around your leadership?"

**SCOTT:** Yeah, I saw the question Murray and thanks for your time too, and the opportunity. I saw your question and I don't think there's any one person that has influenced me the most. I've been very lucky to work with great hoteliers and to be honest, I think I learn a little bit every day from everyone. My current boss is a great leader and I learned a lot from him and he's had a very big impact on my style and my life.

From an influence perspective, my dad had a big role in influencing who I am. He was a hard-working man and he worked hard to provide for us, his family and that's an influence that I probably draw on. I'm notoriously hard-working and I try and do the right thing and I think that comes from my dad. Beyond my father... no, I had a pretty typical sort of upbringing. There wasn't any overriding...

**MURRAY:** So no one of major influence. Is there someone who you really learned what not to do? Was there someone you could... and you don't have to name them, but someone that you had an experience with and said, "Oh my God. That's one thing for sure. I'll never be like that."

**SCOTT:** Yeah, I think we've all got people like that in our lives. Yeah, sure. There's things that have happened or I've seen happen or been part of that I have packed away and said, "Well, you know, don't do that. Don't ever say that. Don't ever do that. Don't ever make people feel like that." I think the saying, "A whisper in the boardroom is a shout in the field," and that's so true. I've seen a lot that perhaps in our role as leaders, we're flippant with things that we say or things that we do. They are harmless in nature and harmless in context, but when it's witnessed by others that look on



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every and hang on every word we say, it has a profound impact. Yeah, I think every time the people that I've seen do and say and act in a way that's not aligned to my own, face it, and as a result I've sort of parked it and said I won't do that. It's generally about misunderstanding the influence and the power that somebody has over another person.

**MURRAY:** So the power of small words or actions that really resonate through can be really destructive.

**SCOTT:** Massive.

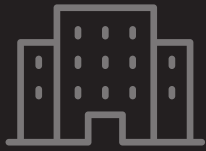
**MURRAY:** And people aren't aware.

**SCOTT:** Massive... Yeah, I think the real saying is, "A whisper in the boardroom is a shout in the office," and that's so true. Something over and over time and probably also based on some of the things I've seen done poorly, is the impact of words and actions are very important... very important.

**MURRAY:** Great lesson. So the next question was about the aha moment. The one moment in your career that you can think about that... it was at that point you suddenly said, "Now I get it. Now I understand what this is about."

**SCOTT:** Well there's one profound moment and it was probably 2004. We were in an internal meeting room and my then boss at the time, he came into our normal management meeting and so that's probably 12 to 15 department heads. I was the number two and my boss came in and he said, "Put your hands up if you want to do Scott's job," and no one put their hand up. Not one. And you can then go back to my example about my dad, I had got to that position in the hotel by working hard. I was working ridiculous hours. I was solving everyone's problems. I was a bit of a martyr. I would work weekends. I'd be working late nights and what the aha moment was for me is that, that wasn't really gaining anyone's respect nor was it aspirational. It became painfully clear to me that I had to make some very tangible changes to the way that I worked or I was going to go through life being that person of just working hard and not really being respected. So later and as a result, my ambition and my ability to be promoted was probably pretty limited.

**MURRAY:** So what did you change after that? What changed?



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**SCOTT:** I had to do a little bit of soul searching and I did engage a coach to do that who I still speak with today and I had to really break down everything that I was doing and how I was doing it and really do the opposite.

**MURRAY:** Okay.

**SCOTT:** So it was quite a confronting couple of years. I've learned a good skill over the years that if you want to change the perception of people, it's always good to write down the words that you want to be perceived as and then actually put some tangible behaviours that reflect it and then keep that close.

**MURRAY:** Nice. Nice.

**SCOTT:** And then, you know, every week, every day, whatever suits, take a look at those behaviours and make sure you're living them and then the perception shifts. You can try it.

**MURRAY:** Great, great tip. Great tip... advice. So... mistakes.

**SCOTT:** Mistakes, there are many.

**MURRAY:** We make many of them. Which is the one that you'd be willing to share that really, if you look back on, really informs you as a leader today? It really created that shift. A bit like your aha moment, but this was... this came from a mistake.

**SCOTT:** I mentioned that I work for a great leader in the hospitality space now and he's given me wonderful opportunities over the years and the one... and I saw this question. A variety of them. I've made so many of them I couldn't think of the biggest one. But there was a time when I... this is probably 2008-ish. Times were tough and I had to try and negotiate an outcome for us that didn't go so well. I remember flying back from this meeting and landing and ringing my boss and saying, "Look this is what happened. This didn't go so well and that person doesn't understand. They don't appreciate where we're coming from. They don't understand what it's like to be us. They've got no idea." And I probably used some adjectives as well to describe that person. My boss very calmly said, "Well, you know what, that might be true, but the reality is we haven't done what's required to get the outcome. We haven't done the legwork up front. We haven't handled the discussion well. We haven't influenced enough. We haven't given the right messages across. At the end of the day we got that result because of us not because of that person." That has fundamentally shifted my



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belief in my own ability to get any outcome out of any situation. I don't know whether it's true or not, but I fundamentally believe now that I can pretty much control most outcomes in any negotiation that I'm going into, in any discussion that I'm going into. I've just got to decide how much I want it and then how much work I'm prepared to put into it and I think that's the key, really. If you want to be ultimately successful, you've got to work out what you really want to achieve and then put the work in to do it and you can do it. You can get it done. It's just all about juggling time, effort, energy and outcomes. So that failure in effect has bred multiple successes because there's not one discussion now that I don't feel that I can go into or one outcome that we can't achieve. We just got to work out how much we want to do it and then what's required to get it done and then do it.

**MURRAY:** I love that example because it takes me to the model I use and I think you've probably seen it... the old ownership, accountability and responsibility. So really taking that and that's the above the line style as opposed to the blame, excuses and denial, below the line.

**SCOTT:** Yeah, that's exactly right and I think if you operate above the line, then you're going to achieve things that you never thought were possible if you believe it.

**MURRAY:** Yeah.

**SCOTT:** David Baskin, he started that company in Australia. He said... I asked him a question once. The question was, "What keeps you awake at night?" And I ask... whenever I get an opportunity to ask most of the people I ask that question. It's just interesting to see what concerns people and he said, "Look, I worry about the world that my grandkids are going to grow up into. I worry about that, but aside from that, I have a wonderful belief in my own ability to solve most of life's problems." That's a fantastic answer.

**MURRAY:** Yeah. Yeah, it's good.

**SCOTT:** And I'm trying to live my life that way, that I've got a belief in myself to solve most of life's problems and makes the world a different place.

**MURRAY:** Scott Boyes, thank you very much.

**SCOTT:** Thanks Murray.



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**MURRAY:** Thank you for listening. Clear and powerful insights from Scott about the importance of facing up to the reality of how others perceive you and intentionally committing to change to have a more positive impact.

For more information, resources and past episodes, just head to [murraywright.com](http://murraywright.com). Until the next time.

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