

NAME

Ted Lasso MP#.mp3

DATE

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DURATION

19m 5s

2 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellspring's congregation.

[00:00:05] Speaker2

So way back in the 1980s, when I did my student teaching, I was asked to coach the seventh grade soccer team at the school I was placed in and. I had never coached soccer before. I had never played soccer before, and I'm pretty certain that I actually had never even seen a soccer game, but none of that mattered. The athletic director told me, just do it. The eighth grade coach does. Almost all the kids have been playing since they were like three here. You're all good. You'll be a good experience for you. It's not a barrier. And he was right. And I did what the eighth grade coach did, and it was overall a pretty good experience. So I had not thought too much about that experience until this past spring when we watched the Ted LASO series on Apple TV after hearing a lot about it. And so finally sat down and watched it and it was really good. So in case you're not familiar with it, this is a series in which an American football coach, American football, where you tackle pads and all this other stuff, the kind that I learned how to play in my small hometown in western P.A. growing up. So this guy, he's hired to manage an English Premier League soccer team and he doesn't know anything about soccer. And there's a lot of sight gags about this throughout the game, throughout the series and a lot of fish out of water type things.

[00:01:43] Speaker2

It's very funny and very amusing and it's a good time. And what he does not know is that he's being hired as the fall guy for the team's new owner. And she is seeking revenge on her ex-husband, who owned the team previously but lost it to her in the divorce. So there's a lot of really good pieces to it, but that's not why it's a good spiritflix for us, Wellspring's, because this is a hopeful and earnest show at its core. And when I was thinking about what I wanted to say about this show, I had to kind of work through about why it felt so hopeful and why it was so earnest. And two things kind of came up for me as to why that was the case. But first, so this past week, I didn't get my act together in time to get information and update for a prop that you'll need for this. So what I want you to do right now is pause for a moment and go to the kitchen and get a little snack item, you know, cookie piece, fruit, bagel, whatever. Maybe something healthy, you know, sit somewhere. I don't know, get that. Don't eat yet. Bring it back and then resume with us. I'll give you a minute. Go. All right, so welcome back. So as I was saying, two things come up for me with this series and the first is really that Ted demonstrates how to live the Buddhist concept of beginner's mind.

[00:03:31] Speaker2

And second, he also really lives out the principle. Our first principle is Unitarian Universalist, that of recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person. And I want to talk about that first. You see this almost right away when he interacts with the equipment manager and it's reinforced throughout the whole series. So Coach LASO and his assistant, the wonderfully named Coach Beard, they arrive for practice and the teams already out on the field on the pitch, doing whatever they need to do. And the manager is on the sideline watching. And Ted asked the guy's name and the guy's name is Nate. And Nate is surprised that you're asking for his name because nobody's really ever done that before, apparently. And it turns out that he's not been treated too well by some of the players and probably the previous coaches and stuff like that. And but his interactions with Nate really set the tone for how the rest of the show goes, in particular as it relates to our first principle. So when we think about the first principle, it can actually be pretty hard to live by if you think about it. And I imagine that all but the most saintly among us have walked away from some negative interaction they've had with somebody feeling pretty dim about the nature of humanity.

[00:05:00] Speaker2

And I know I have. So that that could be something that's hard to do. You know, in our congregation, we talk a lot about original blessing, not original sin. So like each time, for example, when Reverend Lee welcomes a new baby to our congregation, I almost invariably cry because it's so beautiful and it really encapsulates all that. That idea of original blessing means it's such a beautiful expression of our principle and really kind of an aspirational aim for us as humans. But, you know, if you live long enough and you pay attention enough, you sometimes have to wonder about the limits of this principle and you start to wonder, like, does evil exist? And what that means and what that means is that you knew what that means as a person. And how do you live out your values in the face of such things? So, for example, like in twenty seventeen, after the march of literal Nazis in the streets of an American city in Charlottesville, there was an essay in a New World magazine which asked this question and the writer said, If I had been there, would I have seen Worth and Dignity in the white supremacist who was swinging a torch at my head. And then he also goes on to recognize the impact this has on us, the individual trying to live that principle said As events chip away at my first principle practices, I have to wonder, is my faith just losing the fat build up by decades of comfortable living, or is this the steady erosion that will ultimately leave me with no real principle at all? And those are hard questions and it's hard.

[00:06:55] Speaker2

That's what I mean when I say it's I think it's sometimes hard to live by the first principle all the time. And in our DNA, we have this idea of original blessing and that we are born whole. And while, as beautifully put, while our life experiences and choices may fragment us, there's always potential for integration within each of us. So if you pass through that, or at least if I pass through it, what I come to is the idea of redemption for ourselves, but also a path to lead others to a space for redemption to occur in some fashion. That reintegration really. And so for Ted Lasso, each encounter is full of that space. So when he finds out that the team owner, for example, his boss, has transgressed against him from the start, trespass against them, as it were, his response comes from a place of understanding of her situation. And he simply says, OK, I forgive you. Then he knew who she was and he recognized that we all fall short of the mark sometimes and what she was in need of was forgiveness. And that was a powerful moment for me because that's where that principle comes into play.

[00:08:25] Speaker2

He was forgiving her, recognizing her common humanity. So that's the first part that came up for me, the second part is about beginner's mind. So the great thing about being here with you in this congregation is my growth in understanding the basics of Buddhism and how that can play out in daily life. So my current favorite podcast is the Secular Buddhism podcast from Noah Rasheda, and he's been published in the past five, six years, maybe longer, and has a website and everything else. So at the start of each episode, he says, don't use this podcast to be a better Buddhist, be it to use it to be a better whatever you already are. And I love that and I love that our faith provides that space to explore this aspect. And so in reading about the idea of beginner's mind, I came across that quote. You just saw the captures it, which says, assume that you are an idiot. And it's kind of a glib way of being funny and everything else. And I have no knowledge is the idea like you want to approach it with that sense of this is all brand new, even if you've seen it a hundred thousand times. I love this so much. And this is the starting point for all understanding. I think Ted LASO knows he's an idiot in all the ways of soccer.

[00:10:11] Speaker2

The read in the book, Soccer for Dummies on the Plane Over. He knows he's not the expert. And so he has to look at everything through the eyes of a novice. So, again, you see this with Nate, the kid guy. They ask him for ideas on plays. What would you do when you were faced if you were faced with this point? What kind of plays would you run? And Nate, Nate is surprised. He's been put down by other members of the team, other players. The star player has been bullied. He's probably been hassled by other folks on the team, including previous coaches. But here's this ridiculous American with this crazy mustache asking him for tips on what to do in this game. And it turns out Nate actually has some really good ideas. So beginner's mind is about an attitude of openness and a lack of preconceptions when encountering anything. So what I have taken away from a spiritual practice of meditation and studying Buddhism and reading about it, I listen to a podcast. Is that it can help you see what is truly there. It's not how you wish it to be, not how you want it to be, not how you expected it to be, but this is how it truly is. And you know, again, like the first principle, this is pretty hard sometimes, you know, all of us want things to be in a certain way.

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And when they don't turn out the way you wanted, you feel some degree of suffering. Right? And while suffering is normal and part of life, your response or reaction to it is what counts. So if you're grounded in beginner's mind, you might respond to that with curiosity rather than some feeling of upset or anger or frustration or sadness or whatever, you know, like, OK, so this thing occurred. And in previous times when I when I was expecting this to happen, a occurred, but this time Z occurred and I'm curious about that. Like what happened, what was different this time. That to me is a little bit of beginner's mind. Think of how and why people go on vacation, for example, or they go to restaurants. There's novelty in those situations. It's new and you want to experience something new and have a novel experience. You know, I went away last week, for example, and I went bike riding with a friend of mine through this place I'd never been to. I never went riding through this. This place hadn't been to this particular location in years. And, you know, it was made all the more beautiful because I had never seen it. It was just a lovely experience. But novelty's not necessarily a requirement to cultivate beginner's mind. So it was sparked within me, for example, the first time my son got to see the classic Christmas movie Home Alone.

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I had seen it hundreds of times, but sitting with him, who had never seen it, was just hysterical, seeing his reaction to all the things that occurred and he just laughing uproariously with him. It was just like it was like seeing it again, brand new for the very first time. So but my point is, you don't have to go off cycling or hiking or finding some brand new place to go to, a brand new restaurant to go to. And we kind of all experience that during the pandemic anyhow, which while it was a novel experience, it might not have been a preferred novel experience when you were hunkering down in your home. So how can you cultivate a beginner's mindset every day? Having a mindfulness practice is something that a lot of folks find helpful, including myself. So I want to try something now with you and I want to guide you through a mindful eating exercise. Let's try something new. Let's try something now, too. So I want to guide you through a mindful eating exercise if you're comfortable with that. So remember how I said at the start, get a little snack or something like that. You're going to use that now. Don't eat yet. So this this exercise can be used for a lot of different things. But today, my intention is really for you to focus on the newness or the novelty of eating the item, even though you've likely eaten this item a lot of times beforehand.

[00:14:40] Speaker2

So what I want you to do first, we're going to take a moment and we're going to settle in to find our breath, sit upright. If you're able to do as you're able to do so, put both feet firmly on the floor as you are able to do so and as it is comfortable for you, close your eyes and then you want to find your breath. You want to count? I often count one. Two, three, four, breathe out to three. For free, then, two, three, four. Reached out to three. For. And after you've done that, open your eyes and pick up your cookie or whatever you have, and we're going to engage all of our senses first before you eat it, consider that if you consider that you had never eaten this before, how would you examine it? And what do you see? What details do you notice? What is the color of it? Uh. Well, is it shape? And then holding it in your hands, you know, engage your sense of touch, smooth the bumpy, soft, squishy, hard firm, was it shape? How dense is it so light. Heavy. Is there a smell to it if you have bacon I'm jealous. What smells emerge if you break it in half, if you break a piece off. Maybe there's no break. Maybe there's that smell, rather no sound.

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And then last, take a small bite, small bite. Try to eat it as slowly as you can, taste it inside your mouth. What are the things that you taste? Sweet, sour, salty, bitter. Crunchie, do you hear sounds? Does it taste differently than you imagined it would taste, is there. Do you have curiosity about the taste of it? Maybe, maybe there's something in it that you've never tasted before. Maybe it sounds different when you're focusing on it and giving it your undivided attention. So as you finish your snack, let me finish by saying that my wish for you today is that you cultivate your beginner's mind and that you continue to be curious. Maybe you live in blessing, Ahmet. Will you pray with me? God of our understanding, the source of the divine that made us whole and perfect from the start, help us see the divine in each person that we encounter, help us guide each other to something like redemption when we need it. Help us see cookies slowly and mindfully and peacefully together. Help us remain curious rather than rigid. Help us be open rather than closed. Help us be respectful of expertise, but relentlessly re-examining all that we have been told so that our souls and flesh shall be a great poem like Walt Whitman promised for the prayers that I've spoken and unspoken prayers on the hearts that all are here. I say Amen.

[00:18:50] Speaker1

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END OF TRANSCRIPT



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