



Episode 90: Messy Middle Part 2

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Justin Herman & Robert Cortes

<https://thepodcast.com>

Transcript:

- Mingo Palacios: [00:06](#) Hey, welcome to the PD podcast. This is actually part two of an ongoing conversation between myself, Robert Cortes and Justin Herman. As we talk about that messy middle of it, God sometimes allows us to be in as we move from one season of ministry to the next. I hope you enjoyed the conversation.
- Justin Herman: [00:25](#) So I'm going to talk about something you may say, "That's it, we've got to end this podcast right now."
- Mingo Palacios: [00:32](#) Okay, tell me, here we go.
- Justin Herman: [00:33](#) Because I'm going to talk about something that I don't think that's ever been talked about on this podcast before.

Mingo Palacios: [00:37](#) Take your pens out. Here we go.

Justin Herman: [00:38](#) Here we go. I want to know about Howard Stern first.

Mingo Palacios: [00:40](#) Oh my. Hey guys. It's been a great episode so well. Ok guys go ahead and click the subscribe. [laughing]

Justin Herman: [00:47](#) So here's the thing. Howard stern, everyone knows him as the crazy guy that shot the guy that shocks unleashed and will say the most ridiculous thing. Okay? The guy the Christian right one would shut him down back in the day, whatever. He's 65 now. He just came up with a brand book.

Mingo Palacios: [01:01](#) No way.

Justin Herman: [01:01](#) Sixty-five, came out with brand new book.

Mingo Palacios: [01:03](#) Does he still have long hair?

Justin Herman: [01:03](#) Still has it.

Robert Cortes: [01:03](#) He did psychotherapy, right?

Justin Herman: [01:06](#) He did. So he points to that psychotherapy, which she started after his wife left him after things in his life blew up. He started psychotherapy and to get perspective on things he didn't have perspective on and he has undergone a transformation. Now I don't want to make it seem like it's transformation that he's not still kind of like this. He doesn't believe in Jesus. Like he's still saying crazy, insane stuff. I wouldn't want my kids to listen to it. But here's one important, really important thing. He talks about his earlier

interviews and he references one specifically with Robin Williams. Could you imagine, have the Robin Williams sitting right here?

Mingo Palacios: [01:37](#)

So good.

Justin Herman: [01:38](#)

The stories he would share, the journey he's been on like from Mork and Mindy all the way through making movies.

Mingo Palacios: [01:43](#)

Aladdin.

Justin Herman: [01:43](#)

Aladdin.

Mingo Palacios: [01:45](#)

The genie bro.

Justin Herman: [01:45](#)

Genie. But Patch Adams.

Robert Cortes: [01:47](#)

Patch Adams. Yeah.

Justin Herman: [01:47](#)

Good Will Hunting and so could you imagine him sitting here? So he references a time in his younger years when he had Robin Williams on the podcast or on his radio show.

Mingo Palacios: [01:56](#)

On his radio show.

Justin Herman: [01:57](#)

And he didn't give Robin Williams the opportunity to really speak. And if you go back and listen to the interview, it was Howard overshadowing at every turn kind of trying to lead the conversation at every turn and over talk the conversation at every turn. And he looks back at that time in his life with a lot of regret. He says, he looks back on his life and says, "How

selfish of me, how foolish of me that I didn't think Robin Williams could share a compelling story or hold the attention of my audience? How arrogant of me to think that only I knew my audience, only I knew my people, that it had to be about me." And he says it bluntly he did a podcast with Conan O'Brien. He says it bluntly, "That really sucks for me." Is what he said and really bluntly because that is true. How many young leaders, because he's looking back at his time in his thirties.

Mingo Palacios: [02:50](#)

As a young leader.

Justin Herman: [02:50](#)

As a young man saying, "Man, when I did that, I regret that I did that." How dumb was I to do that? Because I thought that everyone was tuning in to listen to me and that it had to be about me. And if it wasn't about me, then who is it about? And I think there's so much wisdom in that for us as young leaders, that we are not putting a. all the pressure on ourselves to think it has to be about us, but also the expectation that, you know what? Other people have really good things to say. Maybe we should listen a little more. I think I'm going to look back at, you've never met, how old are you?

Robert Cortes: [03:23](#)

Fifty.

Justin Herman: [03:23](#)

Okay fifty. Would you look back at your thirties or forties and say, "Man, I had it all together in my thirties or forties"? Or would you look back at your thirties and forties and say, "Man, I was crazy"?

Robert Cortes: [03:31](#) Yeah, it was crazy.

Justin Herman: [03:33](#) Okay. Do you know what gives you the ability to do that now and not just self awareness? It's the ability to over your years develop something that's very important. Book of Proverbs talks about it, wisdom. And young leaders don't have wisdom, which is okay, there's freedom in not having it.

Robert Cortes: [03:46](#) I would have done so many things different.

Mingo Palacios: [03:46](#) Dude. You're turning this episode into pure gold because that is such a huge thing.

Robert Cortes: [03:54](#) At thirty, I was actually opening up a restaurant in Hawaii with Jackie Chan.

Justin Herman: [03:57](#) Ooh.

Robert Cortes: [03:57](#) I mean I was-

Mingo Palacios: [03:59](#) Little known facts. [laughing]

Robert Cortes: [04:00](#) I was like, I would have made a lot better decisions.

Robert Cortes: [04:04](#) But 50 year old Robert would have told 30 year old Robert lots of wisdom that you just couldn't mine out. You couldn't mine that information.

Justin Herman: [04:14](#) Well, I'm 30 years old right now and I think I'm awesome.

Mingo Palacios: [04:18](#) Wait, did you say you're 30 years old?

Justin Herman: [04:19](#) I'm 34 right now.

Mingo Palacios: [04:21](#) Get the heck out of here. Are you 34?

Justin Herman: [04:22](#) Yeah. I'm 34.

Mingo Palacios: [04:23](#) I just turned 37.

Justin Herman: [04:24](#) Dude you look so young. Dude. 37?

Robert Cortes: [04:28](#) And my wife just turned 33.

Justin Herman: [04:31](#) Did she really?

Mingo Palacios: [04:31](#) Shout out to Liz Cortes.

Justin Herman: [04:32](#) The age of Jesus? Tell her watch out for the tax collectors.

Robert Cortes: [04:33](#) [laughing]

Mingo Palacios: [04:33](#) That's the age of our Lord. That's what I tell people who've turned 33. You've got lots to do. That's what I tell them.

Justin Herman: [04:39](#) [singing]

Robert Cortes: [04:39](#) [laughing]

Justin Herman: [04:40](#) But at 34 I'm looking at my life and thinking, "Yeah, things are great, right? Things are really cool. And I got a podcast going. I'm doing a job thing and that's great. Got two young kids, things are great." But when I'm 44 I'm going to look back at 34 and say, "Man, what was I thinking?" Because at 34 I look back at 24 say, "Oh man, what was I thinking?" But that's what wisdom gives us.

- Justin Herman: [04:59](#) That's so good.
- Justin Herman: [05:00](#) The wisdom I think is under utilized as a talking point for leaders and we talk a lot about leadership, but we don't talk enough about wisdom. We talk a lot about influence and how to get influence. Clay Scroggins's book "How to Lead When You're Not in Charge" is great at that, but we're not great at just talking pure wisdom. You can't talk about developing wisdom without talking about the freedom that you may not have wisdom at a young age and that's okay because wisdom comes with time and experience.
- Mingo Palacios: [05:28](#) Yes, yes, yes, yes. Wisdom is like Jeopardy knowledge, right? It's like there's no specific trajectory. There's no like, "Oh, I know about this topic." Wisdom just says, "I've been around something like that. I've seen something like that. I've been privy to something like that. Here's my perspective." And it only happens with time. The only qualifier for great wisdom is time and probably paying attention.
- Justin Herman: [05:55](#) Yeah.
- Mingo Palacios: [05:56](#) And I love what you said, "It's okay for a young person not to have wisdom." It's like, I would never expect my six year old to have a bank account. Right? It's just, it's not the season for him yet for that.
- Justin Herman: [06:09](#) Now the burden then falls on older seasoned leaders to say, "Okay, if young leaders aren't going to have the wisdom, how do I equip them, develop them, not

make allowances, like give a pass, but how do I create an environment of-" So I've been reading this book called Extreme Ownership.

Mingo Palacios: [06:25](#) Oh, uh, Jocko.

Justin Herman: [06:26](#) Jocko.

Mingo Palacios: [06:27](#) Yep.

Justin Herman: [06:27](#) This is incredible. And I had been listening to on Audible.

Mingo Palacios: [06:29](#) Navy SEAL dude.

Justin Herman: [06:30](#) Incredible book, okay. How do I create an environment where I can teach young leaders to be extreme owners, so to own their stuff, not make excuses and definitely not make excuses. "Oh, I just don't know. I'm young." Listen, that's not an excuse. Who did you ask? Who'd you go to? Who'd you get consultation from? That's a quick snapshot of how to combat the, "Oh, I'm young. I just don't know." "Well, you know how to ask people to do things like if you lost, you would know how to ask."

Mingo Palacios: [06:54](#) You would find someone to ask.

Justin Herman: [06:55](#) You know what I mean? So don't like don't mess around with that. But I've been reading through Extreme Ownership and so the burden falls on older leaders just like it fell on Jocko as he's training young SEALS. SEALS don't become SEALS just because they go through (BUD/S). Yes. They go through

(BUD/S) to eliminate the people who don't have the mental toughness to do it.

Mingo Palacios: [07:13](#) Yeah. (BUD/S) is the Navy SEAL training program in San Diego. Shout out.

Justin Herman: [07:16](#) In San Diego, California. I would not make it through (BUD/S).

Mingo Palacios: [07:20](#) Neither would I.

Justin Herman: [07:20](#) Okay. [laughing]

Mingo Palacios: [07:20](#) I would ring the bell.

Justin Herman: [07:22](#) I'd ring the bell. Yeah. I don't have the metal toughness.

Mingo Palacios: [07:24](#) Ding ding ding ding ding.

Robert Cortes: [07:24](#) [laughing]

Justin Herman: [07:24](#) But you know, the people that make it through, there's a lot of young people that make it through, you know, nineteen, twenty years old and they make it through and it's like, "Oh man, I made it through." The guys who don't know. The guys who know, like, you know, they know. But the guys who don't know, the young guys who don't know, who are like, "Oh man, I just made it through (BUD/S). And they walk into SEAL school day one and Jocko, I mean one of his podcast, he talked about it and he talked about in the book that you look at those guys and say, "Hey, just so you know, like before you even get started and get some

paperwork and just so you know everyone here made it through what you just made it through and no one really cares. So let's get to work."

Mingo Palacios: [07:55](#)

So good.

Justin Herman: [07:56](#)

And that thing just, it brings the pressure meter like you think an aggressive tone like that raise the pressure meter, it doesn't. That lowers the pressure meter because it's not like, "Oh my gosh, you need to x, y, z. You need to prove yourself. You need to show yourself." Getting through.

Mingo Palacios: [08:12](#)

It's been done.

Justin Herman: [08:13](#)

It's been done and everyone here did it.

Mingo Palacios: [08:15](#)

And everybody's on a level playing field.

Justin Herman: [08:17](#)

Yup.

Mingo Palacios: [08:18](#)

Yeah, a level playing field. But getting there-

Justin Herman: [08:20](#)

We're terrible at creating a level playing field within the church.

Mingo Palacios: [08:24](#)

Just take note. I'd actually love a listener to ask the question. How within their own influence can they create a level playing field? Because that would probably change dynamics inside of a team. It changed dynamics inside of a particular ministry. If you understood that everybody did a lot of work to get to where they're at, recognize that, but then level the

playing field and say, "Okay, we're all here now. Where do we go?"

Justin Herman: [08:47](#) Well I immediately look at three things and then when I would go to church, I'll look at three things. And it's not done in a week. This is done the course of a couple of weeks. And so part of it, it's like what you see up in front and part of it is kind of what you look and kind of consultant assessed behind the scenes. Who are the people they have on stage? So, you know, Saddleback, you know Rick's teaching and you know, Mariners, Eric Geiger, although he has people rotating in a lot, but I mean, is it the same person every single week or are they bringing in different voices? So, I mean you're talking over the course of two months. Some of the most difficult problems aren't solved with a week of assessment. The most difficult problems are solved with a couple of months of assessment and like really getting the full picture. So over the course of four months, is that the same guy every single week teaching because no one else knows the congregation, no one else knows the stage like he does. He has the Howard Stern problem, right? No one else can really-

Mingo Palacios: [09:37](#) Indispensable.

Justin Herman: [09:38](#) Exactly. Yeah. So are there other people on stage? And are there other people on stage during other times? They have announcement time or worship time. Like, who are they putting in front of the church and saying, "Hey, this is a reflection of representation

of who we are"? And being able to assess that. So I mean you're looking at the consultation side. Who are those people? Where do they fall on the org chart? Is it only director and above on stage? Well that's really going to minimize the talented coordinator on your staff and disenfranchise the talented young person who just needs a little bit of seasoning to get him to that next page. That despises me. The second thing is when we talk about mentorship a lot, I'm abhorrent to the idea that the only mentorship can come through reading the book or listening to the podcast of the person that's inaccessible to you.

Mingo Palacios: [10:21](#) Yeah. Accessibility is such a huge commodity.

Justin Herman: [10:25](#) You know, when I was at Mariners, there's a pastor there named Eric Heard. I don't know if you're familiar with Eric Heard.

Mingo Palacios: [10:30](#) Yeah.

Justin Herman: [10:30](#) He was at EvFree Fullerton forever with the guy who was there. The name escapes me, but he was a pretty well known pastor for a long time. I want to say Dallas Willard but I know that it's not Dallas Willard. It's something else, but it's one of those-

Mingo Palacios: [10:43](#) Chuck Swindoll started it.

Justin Herman: [10:45](#) It's Chuck Swindoll. He was there when Chuck was there. Okay. So he was there and he led a huge youth ministry there. Incredible, incredible leader. And when I came on staff, I was intentional, once I kind of got to

know people and found out, "Oh my gosh, you did Youth Ministry for 20 years? Can we spend more time together?" I was intentional about it and it's one of the things that ingratiated me to Eric and I built a great relationship. I still talk to him even though I'm not on staff at Mariners, nor am I on staff at Sandals anymore. I can still go back to Eric and talk to him. Well, that's because I as a young leader knew it was important to gravitate around older leaders. Not every young leader knows that and a lot of young leaders do. So I'm not trying to elevate myself in any way.

Mingo Palacios:

[11:22](#)

No, but there's a lot of young leaders who will just say, "Oh, I just listen to the podcast." And they actually fail to go the extra mile and say, "Hey, can I connect with you?" Strangely enough, one of our young leaders who was in our circle said, "Hey, I'd really love to get some quality time with some great youth people." I said, "Have you been listening to any podcasts?" And he said, "No, I read some books. I listen to a few things." I said, you know, you'd do really well actually, if you reached out to the host of that podcast. I actually teed you up. I said, "You know who you should call is Justin Herman. The guy's been a father of ministry for so long." And that was like a mind blowing reality of saying, "You know, you can actually call this person. You might be able to exchange a conversation back and forth." And I'm guessing on your end, a random kid comes to the table, says, "Hey, I'm the youth pastor of a church of 500 people. My youth ministry's 30. You'd respond to

a message on Instagram, eventually. You'd respond to a message through Facebook eventually, right? Yeah.

Justin Herman: [12:21](#) You know, I got connected with a guy named Matt Lewis. He's a writer for the Daily Beast and he's a commentator on CNN. During the whole Covington thing, I wanted to bring someone on the podcast to talk about the political side of, these things are happening in our country. So that's the only thing I'm going to say about the political thing. But I got connected to him because I reached out to him on Twitter. You know, that's an incredible tool to connect people.

Mingo Palacios: [12:46](#) True statement.

Justin Herman: [12:47](#) But it was looking practically when it comes to mentorship. If I was a senior pastor, which I'm not, but you are.

Mingo Palacios: [12:52](#) I am.

Justin Herman: [12:52](#) This is what I would want to see a senior pastor do. I want to see him identify if there's a problem in the church among staff, young staff, old staff, that they're not connecting with one another. If it's not a problem, great. But if it is a problem, get all the old staff together and give them a talk about the importance of truly mentoring, finding, seeking out and pouring into the next leader. Then I get the other half of the staff, all the young people and talk on the importance of reaching out to finding an older mentor, older leader.

And then I just wouldn't touch it for like a month, see if things organically happen. See if young leaders go and find old leaders or old leaders say, and if nothing's happening, you need to take a more direct approach. The best gift you will give a young leader is a mentor. And really, and I'm at an older leader yet, but I'm 34 and I've talked to younger leaders. I think it's a gift to older leaders too passing on the wisdom they learned. There's a verse I want to take out of context, but the lampstand; you taking a lampstand and putting it under the bed.

Mingo Palacios: [13:49](#) Right, right, right.

Justin Herman: [13:49](#) All right. So that's, that's about the Gospel, right? It's about, you know, sharing your faith and the whole thing.

Mingo Palacios: [13:53](#) So how will it apply?

Justin Herman: [13:53](#) I want to apply it to passing on wisdom, passing on influence and information and you know, experience. If you have all this experience but you just put it under a thing, that to me is a sign that you're a leader who's insecure, who's afraid that you're going to give away your secret sauce and then the young buck leader is going to take it-

Mingo Palacios: [14:13](#) Take it and then replace you.

Justin Herman: [14:14](#) And yeah they're going to replace you. And it's like that is an insecurity that needs to, there's an openness to insecurity needs to be talked about. It

might not be you, but if it is you, there's a lot of young leaders who probably would benefit from what you know.

Mingo Palacios: [14:28](#)

You know what it looks like practically is like if you occupy an office while everybody else is like in some corral of cubicles, just leaving your office door open. Or, making a space where anybody can kind of approach the bench at a particular point in time. That to me is like an easy way to have an open door for people to come and approach you. As a young leader in certain seasons, I actually did way better when somebody said, "Hey, can I take you out for coffee?" And that to me was like, "Oh my gosh, you know, I'm alive?" That was the first thing, right. I would say when somebody come from another department and executive pastor, a marriage pastor, somebody who had, it didn't matter what they did, it mattered how long they had been doing it. The big "aha" for me was like, "You've been at this church for 10 years and you see me in my corner. One. Thank you for recognizing that I'm alive and I'm a person here, but two yes, I'll meet with you. Yes. No, I won't know the right questions to ask you, but man, I'll entertain anything you say over a cup of coffee." Especially if I'm poor enough to not be able to afford my favorite cup of coffee. That's the leverage point for a senior leader to be able to like bestow upon a younger leader. And also for a youth pastor, 36, 37, you can do that with a person in their twenties and you don't have to be some gray haired, seasoned, "I've been through the

trenches." You can just recognize a kid who's been volunteering for maybe two months, three months and say, "Hey, I'd love to take you out." And Man, what could happen in an exchange there can be really precious.

Justin Herman: [15:55](#) I just find it so interesting. And so again, kind of going back to youth ministry, which is where I like to spend most of my life, every youth pastor in the country is pro getting interns. And if they don't know how to mentor, because they are not being mentored, they don't know how to develop because they're not being developed. Then these interns end up just being like worker bees.

Mingo Palacios: [16:15](#) Right.

Justin Herman: [16:15](#) They're not being poured into. The purpose of an internship isn't to get more worker bees. The person internship is to get a kid, guy girl that is passionate about ministry and give them a chance to test out the things that they have been learning about in a setting where it's safe to fail. But if you haven't created that safety for the staff, then they're never going to have that sense of safety to do that with interns.

Mingo Palacios: [16:34](#) They won't know how to emulate it.

Justin Herman: [16:35](#) And we're going to look at ourselves 10 years from now, you know, I'm not a magician. I'm not a prophet. But if these things continue to be things, we're going to have a very shallow future of leadership if we're not actually developing the future of our leaders.

- Mingo Palacios: [16:51](#) Really good.
- Justin Herman: [16:51](#) That's a concern. It's a concern for everyone.
- Mingo Palacios: [16:54](#) Well and relationship because of a high tech, low touch culture that is probably, I think, you can tell there are people who are good at developing relationships and then there are just people who are good at managing their social media account and there is such a difference man. Beware as an emerging leader, you might be able to land a job at the guy who's got 30, 40,000 followers on social media thinking that that's a good thing, but man, if it's void of relationship, it's not going to pay you any personal dividends in your own ministry life. You're just a part of the process. You're just a part of the thing. And that as a leader who has a few followers, I've seen both sides of that coin. And just because somebody has a ton of followers doesn't make them a great leader when it comes to social. I'd be very keen to ask those questions. Like you said, you should have asked, what is their circle say about operating inside of their organization? Where's the evidence the people who have been mentored, who have been brought into proximity, even though they didn't have something to offer, right? Where's the evidential trail of being a, a discipler or a mentor that would give you reason to believe that you've got something to benefit from being inside of that organization also?
- Justin Herman: [18:06](#) Really good stuff. So this is me being critical myself. Every young leader wants to say something, wants to

be heard, self promotion, they kind of are promoting their thing. And there's such a misunderstanding of when should you speak up? When are you going to have a voice?

Mingo Palacios: [18:26](#)

Good questions. Yeah.

Justin Herman: [18:28](#)

I was joking about it before. There's so many leaders that speak up when they have nothing to say, but, but just because they just want their voice to fill the space. They don't want to be left out.

Mingo Palacios: [18:36](#)

Yeah. I'm raising my hand now.

Justin Herman: [18:38](#)

And I'll raise my hand too.

--- END ---

<https://thepodcast.com>

