THE TRULY AMAZING LIFE SHOW
with Aaron Kennard

The Role of Money in a Truly Amazing Life.

Episode #45 – with Bob Lotich

Aaron: Hi, welcome to the Truly Amazing Live Show. I'm Aaron Kennard your host and today I've got a special guest on the line Bob Lotich who runs the blog, christianpersonalfiance.com. It's over at christianpf.com and he's been running that blog since back in about 2007 and has a pretty big following over there, and is really focused and passionate about helping people improve their lives and specifically when it comes to finance and how they look at that particular topic. But so, I'm excited to have you on the line today, Bob are you there?

Bob: Yeah. I'm here and excited to be here.

Aaron: Awesome. Thanks for jumping on the line. And obviously this is the Truly Amazing Live Show and we're just going to discuss…I want to get into your story and kind of how you came about doing what you're doing, and what it means to you. And the first thing I'd like to start off with though is just to ask, what does it mean to you Bob, to live a truly amazing life?

Bob: You know, for me I think what I aspire to and what I feel like I get the most joy out of is living a live, being true and just giving life. Living a life where the abundance, you know, I just feel so blessed myself in so many different areas in my life that I feel like the best way to continue that and to really enjoy it is to give it and to share it with others. And that's a constant challenge and a goal to always be striving for in different areas of my own life but that's what I'm going after.

Aaron: That's cool. And a little bit more personal intro, tell us briefly where you live and a little bit more about you personally before we dive in.

Bob: Sure. I live in Lake St. Louis which is a little kind of suburb outside of St. Louis, Missouri. I've been here all my life. I've bounced around a couple times to different areas but, born and raised here. And I started Christian [inaudible] in 2007 and I've been doing it full-time since 2009. And I think I have the best job in the world.

Aaron: That's awesome. And then you just recently had…you're married and you recently had a child, right?

Bob: Yep. We had our first and he's about six months old now. So, he's fun.

Aaron: That's awesome. How're you enjoying parenthood?

Bob: Yeah. It's great. It's a whole new phase. Very interesting phrase. We were married for quite a while before we had him. It's very, very different. And very exciting and you know, just seeing the world in a new child's eyes is pretty interesting.

Aaron: Yeah. It definitely changes things, doesn't it?

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: That's cool. So, you've been doing that. Tell me, as far as what it means to live a truly amazing life, it sounds like you just feel blessed and in order to continue that, you mentioned you feel the best way is to continue to serve and give and to help others experience that. Is that a good recap of what you just said?

Bob: Yeah. Absolutely. When I think back on some of my most joyful moments in life, they were almost…I can't think of very many of them where I was just by myself. So most of the time, I'm with other people. And most of the time I'm involved helping them in some way or serving them or mutually serving each other. And so to me, that just seems to be where I've gotten a whole lot of joy. So, yeah, that's kind of what I'm trying to go after.

Aaron: Yeah. So, just building a life of service essentially?

Bob: Yeah. Yeah. Well put.

Aaron: That's cool. Well, I think many can relate. I don't know if there's any people that have been involved giving or serving other people that haven't felt that feeling of fulfilment or joy that just naturally comes with that. And I think that's cool. So, I like asking that question and kind of seeing the different answers that I get. But I think a lot of the time, what I've noticed is that, definitely service and giving to others plays a huge part in that. So, what is your life like right now? Would you consider your life truly amazing right now?

Bob: That's a difficult, challenging question. Yeah. I think so, you know. It's not perfect. No one's is, I assume. And maybe someone has a perfect life…

Aaron: I doubt it.

Bob: … but yeah, at the end of the day when I sit back and look at what I have and what I've been blessed with, and family, and everything that truly matters in this life, yeah, I really do think I'm living a truly amazing life.

Aaron: Yeah. That's cool. You know it's interesting. I like to confront people with that question. And I like the fact that you said it's a difficult question because I don't know that it should be. It generally isn't necessarily an easy question to answer. Some people can answer right away and be like, absolutely not, I'm discouraged, I'm sad. I want life to change, you know?

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: And others like yourself, you seem pretty happy but even still, it's kind of like, uh, it's kind of a stumping question for a minute but as you just thought through it there, I didn't hear any reason why your life isn't truly amazing, right?

Bob: Yeah. And you know, and it's not perfect by any means like I said. And I definitely still have goals and aspirations and things that I'm still striving for that I haven't, you know, gotten hold of yet. But, you know, I think that's part of it. I think that if I had achieved every single goal that I ever wanted to achieve in life, I think that'd kind of be the opposite. I think it would feel discouraging in a sense if there's nothing else to strive for. So, you know, kind of those challenges or those obstacles to overcome actually, I think may…now that I'm kind of thinking through this with you, as we're talking about it …

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: …I think that kind of makes life more enjoyable, you know?

Aaron: Yeah. Yeah. And also just for the people listening, I didn't prep Bob at all for this conversation. I said, hey, we're just going to talk about what it means to live a truly amazing life. And I told him that right before we started, and that's why I actually like doing it that way because it causes us to think more spontaneously about really digging into these things. Not with prepared answers which I really like hearing. I think it's just more valuable for us to have just a real conversation kind of off the cuff and stuff which is very cool. But you said, you had the obstacles to overcome. As you think about it, it's actually part of what makes your life truly amazing?

Bob: Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

Aaron: I mean, I totally agree. It's like, if I didn't have…one of the pillars that I teach is, 12 Pillar of a Truly Amazing Life, and then one of them is this pillar of growth. The sense that if you're not growing, you're dying. And if you don't have obstacles or goals to be striving for, or the ideals to be going for, then what is there? Like what is there to be fulfilled in, right?

Bob: Yeah. Yeah. That's good.

Aaron: And yet, so often, it's just interesting because you bring us well, I still have goals I'm striving for. And there're things that I want to achieve and so it took a second as you're thinking that like, I don't have some of these things that

I want but that doesn't mean that life is not amazing right now, this moment. In fact, having those things actually contributes to it, it sounds like.

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: Cool. I like that. So, you've got a young child. You've got a business that you work in. Tell me more about Christian Personal Finance. What you're doing? What your mission is? And what you're up to over there, and how you're helping people?

Bob: What we're trying to do with this site, and kind of the goal, you know, we're geared toward Christians but obviously, I think a lot of our message applies to a lot of people.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: But basically, we're a community of people who are trying to live debt-free; and kind of with a purpose with the end in mind of being able to give more and give generously. And anybody who's been in a lot of debt or is living from paycheck to paycheck, understands very well that it's really difficult to give and to be really generous, and support charities, and you know, any other organization that you want to support. And so, that's kind of like the main purpose behind what we're trying to do. We're trying to help all of our readers get out of debt, free up some cash flow so they can be generous givers like they want to be, like we're kind of hard wired to be.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: So, that's kind of the mission of what we're trying to do. So, we have different e-mail courses. We have some free e-mail courses. I think we have like 2,000 articles on the site. You know we have a couple books we've written. And so, we're just trying to hit everything from as many different angles as we can.

Aaron: Yeah. That's cool. Do you have any success stories that come to mind of people who have gone through the stuff you've been doing over the last seven years and have had successes or breakthroughs and getting to that place where they're able to now give like they want to?

Bob: I don't have any really, really great stories. But I just got an e-mail the other day. What I mean by I don't have any really great stories, is that there're so many e-mails that I get from people that are really encouraging.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: But I don't have any that really, really stands out to me.

Aaron: Yeah. Like there's not like this life-changing thing where you got this 40-page e-mail that says that they were in the dumps and now they're giving millions of dollars.

Bob: That's what's funny. I did get an e-mail like that just the other day where I seriously was reading for like 10 minutes. It was kind of like one of those, blow me away, e-mails where I almost didn't…you know, everything he was saying was just so surprising and so impressive. I guess how good a job he did kind of coming out of dire straight. But anyway, I don't remember all the details of it and that's why I can't really share all those details. But, yes, we get a lot of e-mails and I save them all in a folder in my Gmail just because it's fun, you know.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: So, yeah, we've had a lot of people with a lot of success, you know, who've really begun changing their lives and being able to give more and [inaudible] being a part of that.

Aaron: Yeah. What lights you up the most about being in that business and in doing what you're doing?

Bob: You know, in some of my prior jobs, I didn't really feel in essence that I was working for a company who morally I didn't agree with or any issue like that. But when I step back and look at the bigger picture of maybe the company I was working for, it's like, what am I doing? And how am I making the world a better place? And is this company I'm working for really making the world a better place or they're just like, you know, moving money around?

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: And so that's one of the things that I love so much about doing what I'm doing now and running the website, and talking about something that I believe in. And something I believe is really helping people and ultimately making the world a better place. Personally, I just feel a lot of fulfilment out of it than I've had in a lot of my other jobs. So, anyway, that's kind of like the best thing for me. It's just knowing that I'm contributing to something that's making the world better, you know?

Aaron: Yeah. Absolutely. I can totally relate to that. I had a similar thing with just being in real estate where I was doing good but it wasn't kind of the more of moving the money around stuff.

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: And not really feeling like it was making a big impact and noticing that big difference where you switch to doing it and making a personal contribution in helping somebody improve their life and then feeling that fulfilment. So, yeah, I can totally relate to that. So, just that fulfilment then is what drives you the most or what lights you up the most about doing it?

Bob: Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

Aaron: So, what were you working in before you started that?

Bob: The start of my career, kind of once I got out of college, I pretty much just worked at a brokerage firm in a variety of different roles. So, I was working with money still but it just wasn't, you know, what am I doing here, you know?

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: It just wasn't doing it for me.

Aaron: So, you just worked in those for a long time and then finally…what led you then to kind of changing gears and getting into doing your own thing and your own business?

Bob: Getting laid off. So, I started the website in 2007. I guess it was mid-2007. And then in 2008 our company merged with another company, or it didn't merge, got bought out by. And as a result, my entire department and a whole bunch of departments got eliminated because, you know, they weren't needed.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: So, my department got the axe. But I had a nice long heads up, like six months plus notice. And I got a nice severance package. And so we put the severance package in savings and I wasn't making very much money from this site yet. But I just kind of took that leap and about a year later, I was making more from the site than I was a real job, and the whole thing just kind of worked out. So, I wasn't really ready. I didn't feel like I was ready but it worked out.

Aaron: Yeah. It seems like we never do kind of feel like we're ready. When things happen in life it's like they tend to happen and we realize after the fact that, yeah, we weren't ready but we had to just step up, right?

Bob: Yeah, exactly.

Aaron: That's cool. So, you came from the financial industry which obviously led you into then teaching personal finance as kind of the segway there, right?

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: So, you had a lot of background in just financial and that's what you were working in before?

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: Cool. Is there any particular stories or situations in your life if you went back…you sound like you have a pretty peaceful, happy life. You're striving for goals. You've got a happy marriage. You're helping people. You've got a fulfilling job. Before this it sounds like you were kind of working through jobs that weren't super fulfilling and just kind of paying the bills. But was there any particular point in your life that led you to…like a shift in life where you're able to live in a more fulfilled way and live more of the principle of living a truly amazing life?

Bob: Well, you know, one of the things for me was, getting my finances in order was kind of the first step for me because I lived a financially chaotic life for a while. And like a lot of people…I mean I think that's like a lot of different areas but especially with money a lot of people don't know what they don't know. And I remember seeing a survey were they asked people in all walks of life, how they viewed themselves in terms of their ability to manage money. And it was like 90 percent of the people said that they were good at managing money and, you know, knew how to handle their money well and stuff like that. And, you know, if you try to reconcile that with the average American and how much debt they have and living from paycheck to paycheck, we're just not good judges.

Aaron: It was like 90 percent probably didn't know they're in massive debt and living from paycheck to paycheck.

Bob: Yeah. Exactly.

Aaron: But yet they think that they are. We think we know what we're doing.

Bob: Yeah. So, I was one of those people. And I honestly thought I was good at handling money.

Aaron: What was the chaotic like? What was it like when you say it was chaotic? Describe that.

Bob: Well, I just didn't have any order to things. And I didn't know what was happening. So, my paycheck is coming out of the bank account and I'm just spending and spending until the money runs out and then you bounce a check and you say, wow, I should stop spending. And, you know, I never had money saved up to do anything that I wanted to do. It was always just, no I can't do that. I don't have the money.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: And just living a life like that, credit cards and getting phone calls because I forgot to pay the bill. Just stuff like that. That's where I'll define chaotic for me. I'm sure some people have much more chaotic financial lives. But for me that's where I was. Anyway, so I…and I found myself, I was living down in Florida at the time, and I was living off one credit card because I'd run out of money. I had one credit card and it was nearly maxed out. So, I was at a minor league ballpark and my car broke down and I was thinking to myself, I only had, I think, like $264 left until I maxed out my credit card, and my car has just broken down.

Aaron: You can remember this vividly. You're picturing this. It's sound like a very big moment. Keep going.

Bob: Yeah. It really was. It was kind of a life-changing moment for me. So, it's a minor league ballpark and I'll give you more of the details because it's pretty funny.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: So, it was right before a minor league game so all these people are pulling up. I'm like 20 yards down from the entrance, past the entrance and all these people are lined up. There's a cop in the street directing traffic, you know, directing people into the stadium. I'm broken down there. I went and asked the cop to help me push my car off to the side of the road and he said, no. So anyway, I tried to push my car myself. And if you've ever done that…

Aaron: It's hard, yeah.

Bob: …without having somebody in the steering wheel. So, all this is going on and I didn't know anybody down there. I'd just moved down there for like a year. I was all by myself. And I'm thinking to myself, alright, my credit card is maxed out. I have $264. Is there any way I could get this car towed in six or less than that? And that was kind of my moment where it's like, something's not right. There's something I'm not doing right here. You know, and I realized that I needed a change. And I realized that I need help, you know. And I started praying about it. And I started trying to learn as much as I could about managing my money, and I'm reading books, and blogs, and magazines and everything I can get my hands on. And, you know, like anything else when you really get excited about it, and try to learn it, you start seeing progress. And that's what I did. I started seeing progress. And I got my finances in order and that was a really big breakthrough for me. I felt like a burden really was lifted. And really, just once I started getting things in order, but especially once I got all my debt paid off, and kind of had things balanced and in order, it was really, really nice.

Aaron: Yeah. So, how long ago was that, that you got to that place where you were at that state of peace with regard to your finances?

Bob: I was 21 at the time, so it was about 12 years ago.

Aaron: And so since then, what has been the kind of result in your financial life and in that area of your spiritual life, the financial area, what has it been like since then?

Bob: Kind of like the mission of the site of what we're trying to do. I have been able to give far more money than I've ever thought possible. We've been able to support our local church and all kinds of other charities and ministries, and I really enjoy that. And that's been really, really great. And so if that wasn't great enough, we're making our own personal financial progress. We're moving forward financially. Our net worth is growing rather than going backwards like it was.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: And so, you know, those two things have just been so amazing.

Aaron: Yeah. How does that feel? It's amazing. Describe more, what does that feel like? What does that do for your life and your everyday living of life to be in that state?

Bob: Well, I feel like it gives me purpose and, you know, kind of a reason to live and satisfaction with what I'm doing. And ultimately, kind of going back, I think coming full circle [inaudible], it kind of gives me a reason for doing my job every day, and getting up every day. You know, going to work rather than just sitting on the couch, you know?

Aaron: And what do you mean by that? What reason is that?

Bob: Well, just to be able to do these things. Just to be able to give like we want to give. And kind of create somewhat of a secure financial future for my family.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: You know?

Aaron: Yeah, yeah. That's really cool. I can just sense that difference in peace. And it's such a common…it's such a huge challenge. Finances and money, like you're said, that whole 90 percent thing, I think is really important. And I'm really glad we're having this conversation because we don't talk about money a lot on this particular show. We're talking about happiness and we're talking about, you know, a lot of personal development qualities but finance is a huge portion of that that can really eat away at our peace. It's a huge portion of stress for so many of us. And it can be taken care of simply through this focused attention on just getting it in order and making progress, and knowing what's going on rather than just kind of being in the dark about it. Would you say that's true?

Bob: Yeah, and something else, when I was being laid off, one of the things that I really focused on, that I think helped me a lot was…so we have that severance package and we built up as much savings as we could, but the we also paid off as much debt as we could. We minimized our expenses, you know, so we could survive on the lowest possible amount each month. Because we're basically depending on this severance package and my wife's, you know, pretty low paying job at the time.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: And, you know, had we not done that, if we hadn't paid that debt off, I don't know if the business would've worked, you know. Because we needed…in order to get this business off the ground, we needed to be able to get by with less. And if we would've had a lot of those credit card bills and student loan payments and things like that…if we hadn't paid those off in advance, I don't know that I'd ever been able to make the business work, you know what I mean?

Aaron: Because you would've had…you wouldn't have the time to focus on it. You would have had to go get a job to pay the bills.

Bob: Yeah. Exactly.

Aaron: Yeah. Yeah. And so many people are stuck in that rat wheel. They can't do the thing that they love because they're so burdened financially. We feel this need to continue to pay the bills because we got bills and we're not [inaudible]. I totally see that happening so much and so the sense of peace that you can get through managing and learning to take control of your finances can be so huge and then ripple out into every other area of your life. So, I really appreciate and love what you're doing to teach these basic principles of how to live at peace. And I love how you bring God into the picture and how you bring it into a…I mean, like when you said, when you did it, you went to God. You went to prayer and then did everything you could and kind of weren't just relying only on yourself, right?

Bob: Yeah. Yeah. And that's the thing. It's a two way street. Because I sometimes see people saying, yeah, I prayed to God and he didn't fix it. And the Bible says to co-labor with him and so there's a part that we have to do, and there's a part that he does. And in my own life, I feel like I've seen a whole lot of times where, you know, I pray and then I will step out and start taking action and then I will notice him kind of sweep in and do something.

Aaron: Yeah.

Bob: That, you know, was way beyond and bigger than what I could do. But I haven't had a whole lot of success just praying and then sitting on my butt.

Aaron: I don't think many people do because it tends to…that's kind of the opposite of the principle of faith.

Bob: Yeah.

Aaron: I mean, faith is not faith without action because it's not showing anything in my opinion and from my understanding of it. So, what you're describing, illustrating, a faithful person say, hey, I'm going to pray. I'm going to ask and then I'm going to go and do the best with what I have. And watch what can happen. That's awesome. Well, that's really cool. Thanks for sharing your story and how that changed. That really helped me connect with what you're doing and why, and kind of the purpose and passion behind it from seeing how much of a difference that it made in your life. And so, I really, really appreciate that. As we wrap up here, you mentioned some of the things that Christian Personal Finance can do but I imagine if people want to learn more and get more help in this area, they can just go to christianpf.com, right?

Bob: Yeah. And so we have right now two, about to launch a third free e-mail course. And it's like our main course. It's like a 20-day email course. It takes you through a lot of basics of getting you …helping you manage your money better and starting to get out of debt, and start saving and things like that. And those are completely free. We do a few books on Amazon. You can find them all from the website. And obviously we have a blog and newsletter and all that.

Aaron: So they can get access to those free email courses. Is that the best place for people to start if they really wanted to, you know, go learn the next steps on taking control of their personal finance?

Bob: Yeah, absolutely. Because I think they're laid out nicely and the feedback we've gotten from those courses have been phenomenal. And so, yeah, I think that's a really good place to start.

Aaron: That's awesome. So, everybody listening, if this is an issue that you're dealing with; If you want to feel like you want more control in your life over your finances, if this is an area that is kind of destroying your peace at all, giving you stress, I'd recommend going over to christianpf.com, whether you're Christian or not. It's not like you have to be Christian for these things to be working. Right Bob? These are just kind of universal financial principles you're teaching, right?

Bob: Yeah. Absolutely.

Aaron: And so, go check it out. I highly encourage people to check it out and let us know what you think. Call me on the podcast post here or shoot me an email if you have any questions, or let us know any experience. I'd love to hear if this blesses your life or gives you any peace and teaches you some things to get you on the right track, or anything like that. And thanks for putting that out there for free, Bob. That's really, really awesome. I'm excited to hear how that goes for people. Thanks again for…

Bob: Yeah, me too.

Aaron: Thanks again for being on the line and sharing your story. It's really a pleasure to have you here. And we'll let you go for now but thanks Bob, and everybody else. Have a fantastic day.

Bob: Alright. Take care then.

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They share the transformational stories and key insights that enabled them to start living a life full of passion, love, fulfilment, and joy.

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