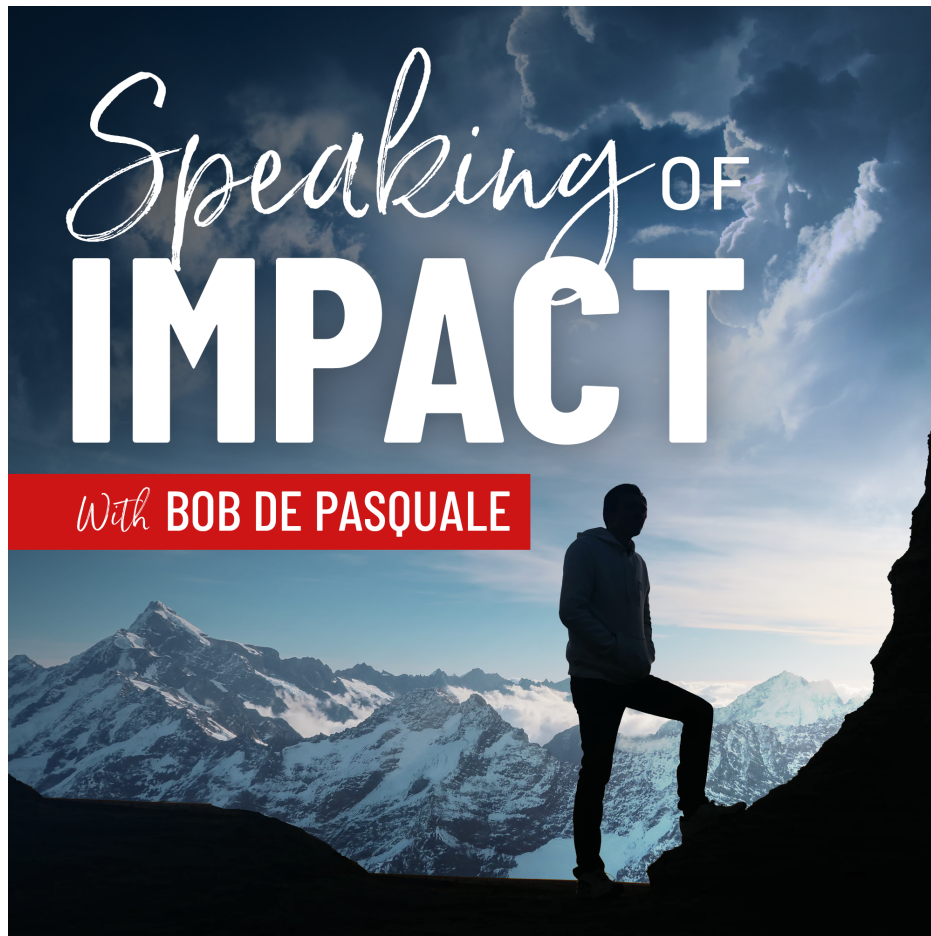


**EP #04: Are You Kidding Me? Talking Comedy with
Dede Lomenick**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Bob DePasquale

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Do you feel like there are gifts inside of you ready to burst out? Are you feeling unfulfilled and called to make a difference in a more meaningful way?

Welcome to Speaking of Impact with your host Bob DePasquale. Led by his own unique experiences and curiosity, Bob will inspire you to identify and utilize your gifts in ways that will make more of an impact on the world around you.

And now, here's Bob.

Bob DePasquale: Speaking of Impact, are you kidding me? One thing I love to do is laugh. It makes me feel better. It makes people around you feel better. It's just a great thing to do. And people who are able to make you laugh are extremely talented. I don't think I'd ever want to be a standup comedian, but getting around of laughs out of a packed room is surely a rush. I had the chance to talk to Dede Lomenick recently, and she has quite a unique life. She's the wife of a pastor who participates heavily in the ministry. She's a standup comedian, an event host and the organizer of Unleashed, a woman's conference, men invited, designed to help bring people and their ministries together for greater impact. Make sure you catch the end of our conversation because Dede also has some inspiring words as a Caucasian mom of biracial and African-American daughters. Her story is very relevant to the issues currently being highlighted in our world. Here's today's impact interview. Welcome Dede Lomenick to Speaking of Impact, how are you doing today?

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Dede Lomenick: Hey, good morning. I'm doing great. All barricaded in my home.

Bob DePasquale: Yeah. You like the rest of us, are you're staying safe?

Dede Lomenick: Oh yes sir. Yes sir. Got the masks by the front door if I ever venture out but mostly staying in.

Bob DePasquale: Yeah. Going out into the wilderness, I forgot my mask one day I think it was last week and I'm pretty sure my wife called me in a panic like, "You left without your mask." So if you know what I'm talking about, but well, I'm super excited to have you on today. You have such a unique way of living life and what you believe in and what you do and the people you come in contact with. And you're the perfect guest I would say for Speaking of Impact. So thanks for being here. And I'd love to just start off with who you are, what you do, what's the basis of your story?

Dede Lomenick: Sure. Well, I'm honored to be here. Thanks for inviting me and I am married. Actually, we just celebrated our 25th anniversary in April. And-

Bob DePasquale: Congratulations.

Dede Lomenick: Thank you. Thank you very much. And if you knew us, our anniversary date would make great sense to you because it's literally on April fool's day. So that makes a lot of sense for us as a couple. And then we also have three daughters who are 24, 19 and 18, and the 18 year old is getting ready to start her senior year in high school. I'll tell you a little bit more about the girls later, but we also, my husband is a pastor. He's the executive pastor at

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Rio Vista community church, which is right near downtown Fort Lauderdale. And we've attended there for about 17 years. And he's been on staff there for 11 years now. And so what I love about Rio as a church is just their heart for everything outside the walls of the church.

And that's been a really unique opportunity to just be part of every ... there are so many, I believe really cool things happening in South Florida. I believe God's preparing this area for a revival. That's been neat. And then the other thing I do, my side gig, I have two side gigs. One is being a standup comedian, and that has offered me a great opportunity to use humor as a way to speak truth. I saw a quote that said something to the effect of that in the absence of people, listening to pastors in our culture, comedians become that. They become that voice, which I thought was interesting because I do think there are some comedians that are like that, that have the ability to speak truth in a way that feels less threatening to people.

And I love the gift of humor. I love the idea that when you're telling a joke, you're relaxing people, you're taking down their defensiveness and when you get people laughing together, it helps us to see kind of what we have in common. And then I also, a couple of years ago started a women's movement down in South Florida called Unleashed, which I can tell you more about later as well, but that's kind of what I do. All those little things there.

Bob DePasquale: That's quite a bit of stuff you have going on. I know that being a spouse of a pastor is that's quite a busy life just to begin with.

Dede Lomenick: It's true, because they expect you to go to church every week. It's ridiculous.

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Bob DePasquale: What are the chances you're going to ... oh, man. That's crazy.

Dede Lomenick: I know. I mean, I thought, I was like Christmas and Easter baby, and they're like, "Nope, every Sunday."

Bob DePasquale: There's 50 other weeks in there.

Dede Lomenick: I know. Oh, it's very, it's overwhelming. And then you have to be nice to people. You have to care for people. It's just, it's a lot. And I don't know if you've met people, but they are the worst.

Bob DePasquale: Something tells me you're really not stepping outside of your comfort zone too much to be nice and respectful to people.

Dede Lomenick: No, no. I just try to keep it tight, keep it only to the people I like and that's about it.

Bob DePasquale: That's funny. So y'all have been in the South Florida area for quite a while then. Did you grow up somewhere else? Where were you born?

Dede Lomenick: I grew up on the West coast of Florida in Palm Harbor, which is right near Tampa, Clearwater area. And actually my mom and dad are still over there. And so I grew up over there. And then when I was single, I started volunteering in a youth ministry at a small church plant in New Port Richey, Florida, which every listener right now will say, "Oh, that's where so-and-so my relative is retired because they are all retired in New Port Richey." And so I did that for a while. And while I was volunteering at that church, that is when I met my now husband. He came over as a seminary student to work part time in that

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ministry. And I was at the time I was volunteering with high schools kids. So that's how we met was in the context of youth ministry. And we did that together for a lot of years.

Bob DePasquale: That's cool. So my wife and I, we met through a high school and college students ministry. And we've been participating in it for many years. [Www.spokefolk.org](http://www.spokefolk.org), that'll be in the show notes I'm sure. But I know how that can really bring you together, high school ministry, and also how it just keeps you super busy and modern and always new stuff going on for sure.

Dede Lomenick: Yeah. Yeah. We loved it. We really enjoyed that season of our life. I think we did that together for, I don't know, 12 or 13 years. And so it was really, we have such great memories and that's one area where Facebook has really been a gift to us because we are still in contact with the vast majority of the kids that we worked with, which was great. Like we hear about their lives and their kids and some of them, the ministries they're involved in now, and it's really cool to see what God is doing even now with that ministry.

Bob DePasquale: Yeah. That's amazing. You don't realize that sometimes how many people you actually do impact. And when you get with technology and the digital age, now you can see what you've accomplished or what God has accomplished through you dealing with those kids and helping them out and mentoring them. And now they're having kids of their own and they're growing up and they're contributing to society. It's really cool. It's really, really cool.

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Dede Lomenick: Yeah. It's a huge blessing and it's just one of those things that I think God gives us out of his great mercy is the ability to see every once in a while to see some fruit. And that's really encouraging.

Bob DePasquale: For sure. For sure. So where along the lines did you say, you know what, I'm going to be a comedian, a standup comedian. How does that come into your mind?

Dede Lomenick: You and I have shared before just a bit about kind of our shared history. I've had some physical struggles and so I actually spent a great deal of time for a long season, about nine years off and on in bed, off and on during that time with some incredible pain, some misdiagnoses and things like that. So during that season, I was really struggling because I am wrestling with God because I had felt like I had been obedient. I had dedicated my life to ministry and to following him. And in my view, I had a huge amount to offer and he put me in bed and I was kind of like, "Hey, wait a minute. I think I'm doing a pretty great job for you so what's up with this?" And so I spent a pretty long season of time wrestling with him over where I was at and what he taught me during that time was that you can minister wherever you are.

And so he taught me in that season to ... Well, when I finally relented and said, "Okay, you have to show me what else to put my mind on right now, because if I just lay here and think of myself all the time, I'm going to lose my mind." And so he in his great compassion gave me a desire to truly pray for people because I had unlimited amounts of time to do it. I had all this uninterrupted time. I didn't have anything else going on, but just trying to get through a day. So I started praying for people like I had

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never prayed before just hours and hours and hours of praying and reading God's word and reaching out to folks, really following up with them on prayer request. And I had some very dear friends that would come by every once in a while. And it was pretty fun in the sense that they would come to see me and they'd climb up into my big bed and they'd lay there with me and I'd pray for them. I'd pray for whatever was going on.

And as things improved and got better, and I started being able to get up and around, it was funny because some of my friends were like, "Can we go lay on your bed?" It was just this very special time. But also during that time, I had started reading and looking up articles and had made a little file that said secret dream. And that secret dream was to do standup comedy. I'd always wanted to try it. I thought it was a great challenge. I had over the years written lots of fun things for church events or kids' events or youth events and I'd always wanted to try it. And so I just started reading a lot about the art and the discipline of comedy writing. And every time I'd find an article, I'd put that in the file. And so I just kept adding to the file and to be honest, the only one that knew really how much I wanted to do that was the Lord.

And after I started getting better and getting back around, getting up on my feet, I had a friend contact me and she said, "Hey, I have a crazy question for you." And I said, "Yeah, what is it?" And she said, "Would you want to do an opening act for a standup comedian?" And I said, "Excuse me?" And she said, "Yeah, would you want to open? I have this girl that's kind of headlining this event at a church and would you want to open for her?" And I said,

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"Well, I would love to meet with her and find out more about it and see what's going on with that."

And so I met up with them and they offered, this is crazy. They offered me 30 minutes, a 30 minute slot, which is unheard of for something like that. So they offered me a 30 minute slot and it was probably about I think, a month or two out from the event. And so I just went to work. I went to work, studying, writing, practicing all that kind of stuff. And it was at her home church, which was local. And it was close enough to my home church that a ton of people from my church came too.

So the first time that I ever got up on a stage to do standup comedy, there were about 600 people there. And it felt like coming home. It was the most wonderful, just my heart was super full. I wasn't nervous. I was just pumped. I was so excited. It was so fun. It was so fun hearing them laugh and realizing that comedy is more than just telling jokes. It is a way to do some surgery on folks, heart almost without them knowing. I performed at a thing a couple of years ago in Colorado, and this lady, I know she was trying to be nice, but she came up to me afterwards and she said, "Man, you were so funny, I didn't feel like I was learning anything."

And I was like, "I think she's trying to be nice." That was a really cool, because that's it. That's the idea is that sometimes when you're laughing, your defenses are down and you have the ability to take in information in a different way, in a way that you might not have otherwise. So that's when I became an even bigger ... Over the months and years that I've been able to do some of that, it's been very compelling to see how that can be used as

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a tool. And when you look at literature as a whole, they basically break it down into two types of camps. There's tragedy and there's comedy, right? So tragedy always ends with a tragedy and comedy has a happy ending. And so when you zoom out a little further, you recognize that that then makes, and I read a great chapter on this awhile back, but that then makes the Bible a comedy. And not in the sense that it's a joke, but in the sense that it has the ultimate happy ending. And so that's what I strive to do is explain real comedy, what real comedy is.

Bob DePasquale: Wow. That's cool. That's really cool. I just, I look at the amount of people that you're probably impacting there too, speaking in front of large groups and being invigorated and motivated to do it's that that's probably a great, fulfilling feeling.

Dede Lomenick: Well, it's interesting because it hasn't been, it really hasn't been very often that I performed for groups that aren't labeled as Christian, but I have done it a few times. And the times that I've done it, it's been, people have talked to me afterwards and asked me some interesting questions. One of them is, why am I so clean? And along with that comment comes, you're really funny and you never cussed and you didn't do anything off color. And I think that that becomes a testimony in itself because when I'm at certain venues, I don't bill myself as a Christian comedian and I never have. And that is not because I'm ashamed of being a Christian, but what I like to say is I'm not a Christian comedian, I'm a comedian that's a Christian.

And so I think that my work and hopefully the way that I present myself speaks for itself and it provokes

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conversation with folks. And when I was at an event for a non Christian audience and finished, I had two women come up to me and ask if they could talk to me. And I was like, "Sure." And I thought it was just going to be about the show and they ended up pouring their hearts out to me. And I mean, that's not because I was funny, that's just the connection that somehow they felt. And so that's what I love about it is the opportunity to use it like a ministry.

Bob DePasquale: Yeah. That's cool. That's really cool. So what kind of, I don't know, trade secrets or what can you tell us about actually being a comedian? Just out of curiosity, like what's it like being up there, kind of having that pressure on yourself or what's the number one thing you gotta do before you start it out?

Dede Lomenick: I think it's just to have fun. When you're having fun, people around you are having fun. And so trying to just be prepared as much as you can be prepared, I think people underestimate the amount of work it takes to write well and to keep things tight and also to be flexible when things go wrong. If you have tech problems or anything like that, you have to be prepared for those type of things. But I really do think that it's just, I think comedy offers a great freedom to just have a great time and enjoy it and then use it to make points that might have been difficult to make any other way.

And so I can make points about things I've learned in a self deprecating way, but it relates to all of us. But I think that the biggest thing in preparation is the idea of really being prepared, really taking time to write, think through things. And then for me, just every day, all the time, I'm

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always writing stuff down, like just little things that happen. I write it down and keep it in a running list for working on later, working something out and seeing how fully you can develop one idea, one funny thing.

Bob DePasquale: Interesting. I consider myself a comedian, but not a prepared comedian, right? I mean, just the off the cuff willing to say what's on your mind type of person, but I can only imagine that having the expectation of being funny is it's a different sort of pressure. But it seems like to me that if you can just kind of live in that world and enjoy it and just like you said, just have fun and know that you're prepared, I would imagine it's a different feeling than someone just throwing you up on stage and saying, "Okay, make us laugh."

Dede Lomenick: Yeah. Okay. Be funny. Yeah. I was at a thing awhile back and I was there not to perform. I was there to listen to something else. And there were some people that had seen me at other events and I was walking through and they're like, "Oh, be funny." And I was like, "Okay, that's not how it works. Okay. I'm not a jukebox. I cannot just be funny on command. I have to take a minute to think about it." It is interesting because when you talk to a lot of ... when you watch comedians being interviewed, a lot of them don't really necessarily always walk around just being funny. They're funny on stage, but then they're pretty normal off stage. So it's interesting because people have this expectation that you're just a wellspring of humor all the time.

Bob DePasquale: I think based on what you just said, I think I figured out my problem. See when I'm on stage, I'm probably more normal. When I'm off stage is when I'm abnormal.

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So I have it backwards. That's exactly what it is. That's funny.

Dede Lomenick: Well, you know though what you have, if you're off the cuff like that, that's a real gift and all comedy does, all performing and standup does is it just sharpens that skill. You just get better at taking the things that you say off the cuff and more fully developing those ideas. So if you make a joke about traffic, then what you do as a comedian and as a writer is you sit there and you fully develop that idea and you take that idea, whatever it is about driving and you just expand as much as you can. And you think about all the different aspects of driving. You make that a five minute thing.

Bob DePasquale: You think of all the funny situations that come up.

Dede Lomenick: Exactly, exactly, exactly. Right. And the other thing it's done is I also try to stop and what I'm excellent at is pointing the finger at other people. It's one of my spiritual gifts. I don't like to brag, but I am good at noticing other people's faults. And so what I've had to really learn how to do as well is to when I'm pointing something out culturally, for example, there was a story that I told that happened in Publix a few years ago. And it was the craziest story. I was shopping, walking down an aisle toward the bakery, and I heard the screaming in Publix. And first of all, you never scream in Publix. Okay. Publix is where shopping as a pleasure. Okay. That is rule number one. So I'm like, "Who is screaming in my sanctuary?" So I get closer to the bakery and I see this man screaming at an elderly woman with a cane and her pregnant daughter. And he is just going off.

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He is just in rage and he's yelling and screaming and in their faces. And they're trying to like pacify him and the older lady is saying, "I'm so sorry. We were starting to order when you walked up." It did not calm him down. Then I looked over and the girl was pregnant and she was so angry, she did not know what to say. So she was standing there and of course I'm standing there because I'm the nosiest person in the world. I'm just standing by the frozen foods, watching this all unfold. And she says she's trying to think of something to say, and you can just see her neck's getting red. And she's trying to find the words. And she goes, "I'm pregnant. Screw you."

So then of course, that immediately fixed everything and the guy just immediately apologized or he got even matter and then goes marching down the main aisle of the store. So on the left hand side are all the isles where he's walking in on his right are all the cash registers. So now he's marching down that main aisle and he is cursing and flipping them off like as he's walking away and everything. And so because I am just a fountain of wisdom and kindness, I stepped out into the main aisle and I said, "There he is ladies, your Knight in shining armor unafraid to scream at elderly women and make pregnant women cry. Let's give him a round of applause, shall we?" And I kid you not, you see all these ladies heads popping out from the ends of the aisles to see what's going on and they're all watching me. And they literally all clapped because I said it so loudly.

And it was kind of like one of these moments where I was like, "Oh, this is awesome. I just totally killed him." Like just that whole thing. So then I go to get in line to pay for my stuff and I see him, he's coming at me. He's coming at

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me at 9:00 o'clock and I'm watching him. He's heading over and he gets right up next to me in my face and he said, "And you need to lose weight you're fat beep." And so for the first time in the history of the world, I look straight ahead at the customer service desk and I put my hand up again with great compassion for all.

And I said, "Manager," and the customer service manager made eye contact with me. And I said, "If this man doesn't get kicked out of this store, I'm going to call the police myself." And that happened while simultaneously the little lady and her pregnant daughter had made their way to the customer service desk. And they were like, "That's him. He's the one." So the guy gets booted. They boot them out of the store. Now people are clapping in the store. And the guy that is standing in front of me at the register getting rung up, he says, "Yeah, go to Winn-Dixie."

Bob DePasquale: That's funny.

Dede Lomenick: It's the most amazing thing I've ever seen. And so they boot him out. Everyone's clapping. That guy says, go to Winn-Dixie. I get in my car self-righteously and drive myself home. And I kind of tell my family pride fully about what I did and how I fought for justice and this whole thing. And then like when I finally was quiet for a second, the Lord said, "Why wouldn't you love that, man like you loved those ladies? Why couldn't you have had compassion on him like you had on them?" And so that changed the way I told that story when I used it in stand up, because what I did was I set it all up and I told it just like I told you, but then I talked about myself and the idea that I was so self-righteous with him, but forgot that he too

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was made in God's image, just like those women. And so I think that's where the beauty of insightful comedy comes in, you know?

Bob DePasquale: Yeah. You can certainly learn a lesson from that. Those times where emotions are running and there's conflict, once things take a step back and you really think about it, that's where great lessons are learned.

Dede Lomenick: Yup. Amen. Amen brother.

Bob DePasquale: So you do comedy acts, you have a great message to share. You're such a wonderful communicator. Where did the Unleashed conference and idea come along? I mean, there's some really powerful messages there too.

Dede Lomenick: Unleashed is an area wide movement for women and men, as there has been. It's funny, the last, the second year we did it, a lot of guys came. They're like, "Can I come?" And I'm just like, "Of course you can come. You have to wear a wig, but you can come." But it came from the idea that what I've seen as just someone in ministry over the years and talking to lots of people and counseling with lots of people as someone in ministry, you just see a lot of pain. You see a lot of hurt, a lot of confusion. And I just felt like there was this overwhelming need to see people in general, but for my purposes, women become free from a lot of what they carry with them. Just realizing that once we are in Christ, we have been set free.

So even though we can say that, how do we live that out and how does that transform our day to day lives? And so that's what I felt like I wasn't, I just saw a lot of people feeling very stuck, very trapped. And so the idea behind

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Unleash was to invite a group of women from all different backgrounds and all different churches onto a leadership team where we could reach our community and reach out beyond the walls of our churches and create a sisterhood where we loved and listened to each other and we spurred one another on in faith and good works. And we also, the idea when this was started a couple of years ago was also to get out, get beyond that cultural stuff, and really embrace, we have such a diverse area that we live in, but yet we're all in our silos.

We're all separated in ministry and I really had a desire to see that change and become a vibrant sisterhood. And South Florida is so notoriously unfriendly that one of the bigger parts of the vision is to see us become this community of women that really is, we're about reaching outside of ourselves, outside of our own circles and just loving women well. And so instead of women moving down here and feeling lost and alone, and that it's a really hard place to live, man, wouldn't it be cool to change that narrative and say, "Man, when I went down there, I found a sisterhood of women that immediately took me in." There was a great quote I read out a few months ago and it said, when you have more than you need, don't build a higher fence, build a bigger table.

And so the idea behind Unleashed is that every woman has a seat at that table and they are part of a sisterhood. So that's why we started it. And Unleashed became just like a Friday night and all day Saturday event with speakers on the main stage. And then this year we added breakout sessions and just trying to begin to get that ball rolling, where we're just getting to know one another and we're not all cliques and we're opening ourselves up for

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really what God's trying to do. And I think that what's happening now in our culture is God's really pushing that agenda and we need to get on board.

I think the church has been all of us, it's kind of one of those things that it's easy to just go, "yeah, yeah, we should be more multicultural or we should think more about these things," but there's always something that feels more pressing. And I think in light of what's happening right now around us, that now's the time. If we're going to do it, let's do it. Get on board. Let's go. And not just do it because it's everybody's watching you, but do it because it's the way the Bible and the way God created us to be in community with each other.

Bob DePasquale: Sure. And there's so much need and there are so many options and ministries out there for people to get involved in and movements. I can imagine it could potentially be overwhelming, but when you're networking and you're in community and fellowship with people, it's a little bit easier to be, I think to be directed.

Dede Lomenick: Yeah. Well, and the thing is that what we want to do with Unleashed is Unleashed seeks to be a resource. So what we want to do is discover all the best ministries and nonprofits in South Florida. And we want to highlight those and point people to them. We want to discover all the best counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists. And we want to curate that list and then have that be a launching pad for people in mental health crisis. What I've seen more and more and more are serious, severe psychological crises over the last probably four or five years are just becoming more and more prevalent. And the other thing I see is that people don't know who to call.

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It is a maze of who do I trust? Who do I call? It takes forever to get in, who is going to give wisdom and who is just going to give medicine while ... and don't hear me say that I'm against medicine.

I take an antidepressant myself, but I think that it's important for us to find the people that are Godly and they're teaching Godly wisdom when you visit them. So what we've done is we've curated this list of mental health professionals so that you can get on our website and look them up and find out what their areas of specialty are, where they're located. Hopefully that's just the beginning of what we want to do, but hopefully that helps streamline a very, very confusing and scary process for people. And then that also opens up the ability to communicate about that issue as well. And that's not the only thing Unleashed stands for, but in light of everything that's going on, I think it's an important thing. And what we've noticed is and I was talking with a couple that they're planting a church over in Lauder Hill and they deal with people that just counseling's not an option for them. They're trying to just get food on the table.

So that's kind of the second layer we want to approach with folks is creating a way that we can help get folks the mental health care that they need. It's a journey, but that's the other thing is that we just want Unleashed to be just a resource and not necessarily take the place of a local church. We want to turn these women back to their local churches and see them really engage and get involved there. But what we want Unleashed to be as just the thing where you just know we're going to point you in the right direction.

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Bob DePasquale: That's great. That's great. So where can people go to get information on Unleashed

Dede Lomenick: You can go to Unleashed 1, the number one.com

Bob DePasquale: Unleashed1.com. Okay, great. So we'll put that in the show notes so people can reference it if they're listening right now.

Dede Lomenick: And then if you want to look at like clips and comedy stuff, the comedy stuff is dedelomenick.com.

Bob DePasquale: Okay, great. Great. Thank you for sharing that. So a lot of the people that we talk to or that I've interviewed over the years and kind of dived into what it is that did they do and really motivates them, there's a large portion of them that do get motivated or inspired by large groups of people and making an impact on a broad scale from a numbers perspective. But I've also seen that some people, even the same people or others can find some great joy or find some fulfillment or find that their skills that they've been blessed with lie in really making a deeper impact maybe on a smaller amount of people or even one person. And I know we've talked a little bit in the past a little bit about your family and your daughter. So I was wondering if you could share a little bit about that family process that you all have and the impact on the lives of people who need a family that you've experienced.

Dede Lomenick: So my husband and I have three girls, like I said. Delaney is our oldest. She's 24. And I gave birth to her. She's the only child that I've pushed out of my body. And I pushed her out and she was 11 pounds. And my body said, "You're done. That is, you've had all your babies at one

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time." So after Delaney was born, a few years went by and I'm an adopted child, so I had always wanted to adopt. And at the time we were living down in Miami and I happened to get to know someone that was a foster parent, and she kind of helped me figure out the ropes and learn what to do and go to the Matt and I go to the classes and get licensed as foster parents and everything. And when we were in the middle of that process, Reyna, our second daughter was born and ended up in foster care, very long, powerful, beautiful story.

But she ended up moving in with us when she was five months old, then her adoption was finalized right after her first birthday. And then a few years went by and Rachel came to us. I had actually met her when she was six months old and had just come into foster care. She had actually been in a shelter down in Miami where they keep kids when there aren't enough foster homes, when there are not enough beds. So she laid in a bed for six months at a place called Macklemore house in Miami and then she got put in foster care. So I met her at six months right when she came into care and then it took a little over a year to get her into our home. And so she moved in at 19 months and her adoption was finalized after her second birthday. So Reyna, our middle 19 is biracial, African American and Caucasian. And Rachel is our youngest and she is African-American. So it's been an interesting time as a mom to watch everything going on around us culturally and watch what happens with an around my kids.

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Bob DePasquale: This really must be an extremely interesting time. And you have daughters that they probably, they all might see or experience things in a different way.

Dede Lomenick: Yeah, for sure. For sure. It is interesting to watch how they've experienced things. I've seen times when we're out in public, what happens because people aren't aware that I'm with them. So if I'm walking behind them and I'm looking at something else while we're in a store, because I do not look like them, people don't associate me with them. So they'll sometimes say or do things that are obviously racially motivated. And what's interesting is many times I feel like they are much more gracious with those things that happen than I am, because I'm the mother and I want to rip your face off.

Bob DePasquale: Like a good mother should.

Dede Lomenick: I mean, in Jesus' name, obviously, but yeah. They've had some really ... I feel like if I had not adopted these two precious girls, I think that I would have not completely understood nor believed what I see happening. I think I would still be in the camp that would like to say, "This isn't that bad. Come on. It's not that big a deal. You've got the wrong mindset." And for example, I'll tell you that our girls both grew up going to Bethany Christian school from the time ... Well, all three of them, but Rachel and Reyna started at Bethany when they were two. So Rachel went to Bethany. Let me just clarify, Rachel's our youngest. She went to Bethany from the time she was two all the way through eighth grade.

And when she was, I think in sixth or seventh grade, she, after school, she had said, "Hey, can I walk to a friend's house here in the neighborhood, in the Rio

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neighborhood? And I'll meet you there instead." And I was like, "That's fine. I'll get you there in a little bit. So she went and walked to her friend's house. She was in her Bethany uniform with a backpack. And her friend ended up having to go before I got there. So there's a ton of church families in that neighborhood from our church. So she walked over one street to see a couple of the church families. Their kids were playing outside and she talked to them and joked around and caught up with them a little bit. And she looked at her watch and said, "Oh, I better go back over. So my mom can get me."

So as she's walking back to the street, keep in mind, she's 12. A car, an SUV with dark windows that's black starts rolling behind her slow. So as she's walking, they're just rolling right behind her. So she gets a little nervous and she turns a corner and they turn a corner and they keep rolling right behind her. And she gets scared. She's by herself and she cannot see who's in there. And so she ran and hid behind a car. And that's when the person in the car determined that she was behaving suspiciously and they called a policeman. They called the police and they stood up out of their car and took a couple pictures of her. And they texted, I guess, someone they knew in the police department as well as a friend of theirs. Well, now the police are on their way.

So now the police are coming, I don't know any of this. I'm coming to pick her up. As I get there and pull in, I pick her, she gets in the car. I back out and I start heading down this neighborhood streets. She hasn't even said anything to me yet. And as I'm driving away, three or four police cars come flying past me and they're heading toward the street than I see one of them kind of squeal

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around and do a U-turn and pull me over. And I'm like, "What in the world?" Like I'm thinking, did I not use a turn signal? Like I can't figure it out. So I pull off and the guy gets, the police officer gets out of his car and he walks up and I look at him and it's amazingly enough, it is the security officer that worked at that time worked weekends at our church. So I know him and love him. And he sees me and he looks in any sees Rachel next to me and he goes, "Oh my gosh," like he realizes what's just happened.

And what shook me about that whole thing was that if I hadn't gotten there when I did, and my kid had panicked and got scared or wouldn't stand up because she was terrified. Now there's three or four cops, they're screaming at her to stand up, that scares me. And that's the reality. That is how quickly things escalate. Now yes, I know that there are other circumstances with many other people that get in those situations, they've broken a law of some kind, but you can just see how fast that can go badly because if I had not shown up, and this is my 12 year old daughter in her uniform for a private Christian school in the neighborhood that she's known and walked around since she was two and that happened.

And so I think that, and that is just a sample of things that have occurred. And so I think that we have to understand that these aren't just these one off incidents, and it's not just the bad people that are getting stopped and the bad people that are disobeying. It's constant scrutiny. And so there's something that we need to dig out by the root and deal with once. And for all, especially as believers. Especially as believers, I think we need to really think about that.

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Bob DePasquale: Well, I can really appreciate that analogy you just mentioned about digging out the root. There's something unseen, unexperienced by many people that we just take for granted that's there. We don't even realize what's going on. And your perspective, obviously being a mother is extremely unique. And I've had the opportunity to have some really great conversations with some friends of mine who some are African American, some are Hispanic, some are Caucasians over the past two or three weeks. What we've all, I think what we've all determined is A that there is that root there that you just mentioned. We may not have used that language, but there is that root there and the only way that it's going to be uncovered is if we have conversations, we talk about it, and we actually tell stories. As a standup comedian, you know that stories can be one of the best ways to get information out there.

Dede Lomenick: Absolutely, absolutely. For sure. And the other part of it is when I talked to my dear friend who's one of the most gifted speakers I've ever listened to, Vanessa Pettifer. She's part of the speaking team of Unleashed. And she and her husband, Isaac have planted a church down here called The Font. She's just an amazing girl. And when she and I met a few weeks ago, she's Haitian, she and I just talked and prayed together and cried together. But she said, "This is a gospel problem." And I thought, wow, that is a great summary because she wasn't angry or bitter, or she was just like, "Until the gospel transforms us completely, we will always want to point fingers. We will always want to say." We always want to deflect the reality of things by saying things like, "Well, they ..." like I've heard this one a lot.

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Well then tell the black people to stop killing other black people. It's like, okay, that is an issue. I agree. That's not what we're talking about right now. Let's stay on this issue. So I think it's a challenge. I definitely think it's a challenging time. I think it's a very tender time. So it's also been interesting because people have seemed interested this unique perspective, but I've also recognized kind of the grave responsibility of trying to be wise with how I interact socially, like on social media and things like that, because that self righteousness rears its head and comes out in condemnation of everyone and everything. And so I've got to temper all of that through the word of the Lord, which is the truth. And it says the word of God is sharper than any double edged sword. And it's like, I need to let God's word speak for itself because it has plenty, plenty to say on this topic.

Bob DePasquale: Absolutely, absolutely. Well Dede, I really appreciate you coming on and Speaking of Impact. You have so many good stories and different perspectives and really quite an eclectic skillset and-

Dede Lomenick: And a juggle.

Bob DePasquale: Yeah, absolutely. There's so many things going on. Could you tell us, I mean, how can people get ahold of you or kind of follow along what's going on in some of your projects?

Dede Lomenick: You can email me is probably the best way. So it's just Dede, which is D-E-D-E.Lomenick, L-O-M-E-N-I-C-K@gmail.com. You can reach out to me that way. And also I still try to be very prayerful every day. And so even if folks just want to reach out with prayer requests, please know that I'd be honored to pray with and for you. And I

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just, I'm hoping that people will know Jesus better because of the time they spend with me.

Bob DePasquale: That's great. That's great. Well, thank you so much Dede Lomenick for joining Speaking of Impact.

Dede Lomenick: Oh, my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Bob DePasquale: All right. Be safe out there.

Dede Lomenick: Thanks. You too.

Bob DePasquale: There's nothing like a good story to make a point. Dede really does drive it home. I love how she uses self-deprecation to build her credibility. I feel like I'd have a lot of material if I learned how to do that. Someone like Dede reminds me that although we may have lots of trials and tribulations, there's always good reason. And our timing as good as we may think it is, is not the best. Patience is a great virtue. Do you have any stories of things that may have seemed terrible at the time, but ended up teaching you a great lesson? Let me know. Direct messenger on Instagram @bdpa. Check out Bobdepasquale.com for your free initiatives for impact. I'm sure Dede would appreciate you having great reminders posted to keep you motivated. I hope people are being smart and staying safe. Until next time, see you.

Thanks for listening today. If you'd like to connect with Bob, visit bobdepasquale.com. Tune in next time for more inspiring stories and remember to like and subscribe so you don't miss an episode.