



GET FREE FROM PERFORMANCE ADDICTION

READ TIME: 8 minutes

By: City Gospel Movements



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Most recently she is the Chair of [Omahaleaders.com](#) and the City Strategist for the Global Leadership Summit for Lifegate Church. She’s a champion for marketplace leaders at Lifegate Church and across Omaha.

We squeezed in a few minutes with Amie because she’s an incredibly busy person but her story is so significant and one we believe will inspire and free you to lead. Listen now or read the show notes below!

TELL US ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF YOUR CAREER JOURNEY. WHERE DID THIS WHOLE THING BEGIN?

My career began once I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I was offered a position with the University of Nebraska Foundation to be the first Stewardship Coordinator which was a wonderful opportunity. I was so privileged to receive that role right out of college.

I had the opportunity to build relationships with the top donors of the university in the midst of a campaign called “Campaign Nebraska.” This campaign was designed to impact all four branches of the university. I really enjoyed the core of the work there but found a lot of the red tape and bureaucracy existing in the organization made it really difficult for me to navigate on a day-to-day basis.

I wanted to leave the work I was doing because I found it really difficult to move anything forward, to create any significant movement. I began thinking about what I else I might do. As a fourth generation entrepreneur, it was no surprise that I began looking at what I could do to build my own business. At 23 years old, I started my own business while still working at the university. I was really attracted to that because I was excited about creating something new and building something from the ground up.

YOU BEGIN AS AN ENTREPRENEUR AND THINGS START TO TAKE OFF. WALK US THROUGH THAT PERIOD OF TIME FROM JUST BEGINNING TO REALIZING: "HOLY COW, THIS IS TAKING OFF!"

Yeah, that did happen really quickly. Six months after I started my side business, I was leaving my position at the University of Nebraska Foundation and moving full-time into building this new business and supporting myself solely on that income. Within that time-frame, it went from just me to building a large team and stepping into a leadership role with that company.

What I did not realize at that point in my life was the entire experience was an extended part of a performance addiction which I had battled since I was a child. Every part of this new experience that I had stepped into tapped into that performance addiction and had me fully entrenched.

SO WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE? THAT'S PROBABLY NOT UNCOMMON IN CORPORATE AMERICA. WHAT WERE THE SIGNS?

It was an interesting role to be in because I served the corporation, but I was an independent business owner. It actually meant to some degree I had even fewer boundaries. The environment heavily promoted fame, fortune, lifestyles of the rich and famous, unlimited earning, unlimited recognition, stage time in front of thousands of people, prizes, awards, recognition, and all those kinds of things. My performance addiction that I was battling attached right onto those things and I found the addiction began to spin so very quickly.

I found out quickly how to use my God-given skills and talents to create a lot of success in that environment. I became a world-ranked representative. **I earned all the international trips and big perks, but really what it looked like was a mindset of obsession and tremendous anxiety.** With every goal that I reached, that simply meant that there was another one waiting for me.

There was never a moment to really celebrate because it was a scoreboard-based business and the scoreboard monitored my performance minute by minute, hour by hour, week by week, month by month, year by year. Truly from a realistic standpoint for the outside looking in, I perhaps look like a hamster on a wheel who is continuously running never able to figure out how to get off.

It looked like obsession and anxiety; it looked like a mindset of success at any price. It looked like a life being lived in-harmoniously; it was exhausting; it was challenging. Yet, those fleeting moments of success would very deceptively present themselves at the most opportune times.

For me battling the performance addiction was just like taking a hit. So consequently any success was filled with grief. I couldn't have verbalized that at the time, but now I can. It only served to continue the addiction but never provided any true sense of fulfillment, peace, or joy.

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN PEOPLE MAY HAVE SAID, "AMIE HAS IT ALL TOGETHER," BUT WHAT STARTED TO UNRAVEL FOR YOU THAT LED TO GETTING OUT OF THAT WORLD?

There was a tremendous pressure around creating an image of perfection. I had no points of vulnerability. I existed as a perfect image of leadership and person-hood, and that was also the expectation for my family. My husband and our two daughters were in the midst of that and our home and lifestyle was very much held to that unreachable standard.

When we all hear things like this we think: “How could we think that? I am smarter than this. How did I not know this was happening?” But I clearly know what was happening—I was searching for significance, unconditional love, and I was attempting to be in control of every facet of my life, all at the same time!

I was growing my faith, had strong spiritual disciplines in place, was leading people to Christ, was regularly holding prayer calls for people to participate in, hosting weekend retreats that included worship services. You name it, I was checking that box too. However, what that brings into question is: “Are we constantly trying to run a race doing things for God or are we living and leading from God and how He’s blessed us?”

I needed to focus on being in His presence and being the person He’s called and equipped me to be. Then the *doing* simply comes as a byproduct out of our *being*. I had the two things backward. Essentially it was like I was living two lives and I began to feel the internal conflict of being completely misaligned for my God-given calling and purposes.

WHAT MOMENT CAUSED YOU TO GO A DIFFERENT DIRECTION AND GET OFF THE HAMSTER WHEEL OF PERFORMANCE ADDICTION?

There was actually a distinct moment and that was backed by a series of additional moments that the Lord allowed me to step into. The distinct moment that I experienced was very public. I was standing on a stage in front of 10,000 people where I was being recognized for being #2 in a division out of 4 million people. Worldwide that would have placed me top 4 at that time.

Of course, any number of those individuals would have easily traded places with me, everybody except for the person who was #1. It wasn’t good enough for me. **#2 wasn’t good enough. Because for years and years I had been going after being #1. What for?** It wouldn’t have lasted more than one minute because as soon as the deadline hit, it starts all over again and the scoreboard clears back to zero. At that moment in front of 10,000 people, God just revealed His beautiful grace and love and His truth and I heard Him whisper to me as tears were falling down my face on stage. He said, “This race is over. I have so much more for you.”

I shifted my focus at that time and I began a new ascent within the same career, but with a slightly different focus. I continued in the same old patterns, pouring my all into this new focus.

That was a step into the pinnacle position of the company and I stepped into a position at age 37 falsely believing this minor shift in direction would change the scoreboard focus. In this new role, I would instead be able to have a different key focus than just how the scoreboard was ticking. In reality, it didn’t change at all, it just became a bigger scoreboard.

DID YOU FEEL THIS WAS A GENTLE SHIFT BECAUSE FULLY LEAVING WOULD BE TOO HARD?

That was exactly what I was thinking. I falsely believed that because that’s how the pinnacle position was always promoted throughout the company. So when I reached that position and found that the same race was being run and that there was very little that I changed, and instead there was even more significant pressure for perfection, I began to crumble internally.

The Lord began to reveal to me through a series of scales (or glitter) falling from my eyes. I began to see an environment for what it truly was and began to recognize my own performance addiction that at that time totally owned my life for three decades.

SO HOW DO YOU GET OUT? IT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIFYING.

It was extremely terrifying at first—which I believe is normal. Change is difficult and challenging and I had fooled my family and they were also fully caught up in everything thinking my lifestyle was a forever decision. 95% of my career had been invested into all this. So to look at a new picture was really difficult.

What compounded that situation was that I was the first person ever in the history of the company in the position to exit by choice. The greatest part of the difficulty was I began to accept that God might be leading me in a new direction. I wish I could say that I surrendered immediately and that I was completely obedient. But I would be lying. That crucible moment was a total wrestling match with the Lord because I was attempting to negotiate with Him believing that perhaps He positioned me in that role in that time period to create change within the organization.

Throughout that wrestling match which lasted for months and years, I began to stand for the truth that He was revealing to me at every opportunity that I could get. Any opportunity I had to be a public voice or national training, I began to speak a different message that God had given me that I believed was assigned to me at that time. Great disappointment settled in the further along I went and I realized that I was not to be here for the long haul.

SO YOU FINALLY MAKE THE DECISION TO LEAVE. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THAT WAS LIKE?

In the process of coming to that decision, I had to realize what leaving meant. Leaving meant I am walking away from a retirement plan, all the perks, the privileges, the totally secure six-figure income, a platform of influence that I built for nearly 20 years, and comfort. All those things were the things that were so hard to walk away from initially.

The harder part was walking away from the relationships. I began to realize that when you're in a culture that really struggles to do exits well (because no one leaves, you're either in or you're out), there was a likelihood that I would lose relationships that I've invested in for a very significant amount of time and very deeply. That was the hardest part, knowing that would most likely become a reality.

However, I also knew that freedom awaited me because my surrender and willingness to be totally obedient meant that in taking this step, I could leave behind my addiction once and for all and step into the arms of Jesus and live in an entirely different way.

I'M AMAZED AT THE COURAGE THAT TOOK. TOO OFTEN THE PERKS ARE TOO GREAT BECAUSE THAT'S UNTHINKABLE TO WALK AWAY FROM SOMETHING LIKE THAT. WHEN YOU LEAVE AND STEP INTO SOMETHING NEW, WHAT THINGS GOT YOU FIRED UP ABOUT WHERE GOD WAS TAKING YOU IN THE NEXT JOURNEY OF LIFE?

What most fired me up was being able to step into a whole new chapter completely free. I felt like I was a bird in a cage and that my identity was owned. That had been communicated to me and there's nothing like knowing the feeling of being trapped, or feeling like your wings are being held down and then moving into a space where I could be fully who God was calling me to be. Where I was loving Him and knowing Him and prayerfully allowing Him to use me and even the smallest ways to create Kingdom impact. It was so liberating.

YOU WANTED TO CREATE KINGDOM IMPACT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION AND IT WASN'T POSSIBLE. NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN FREED, LET'S TALK ABOUT SOME OF THOSE PLACES THAT YOU'VE BEEN USING YOUR EFFORTS AND ENERGIES FOR THE KINGDOM. WHAT HAS BEEN THRILLING ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING NOW?

When I think about career, I love being able to come alongside people as their leadership coach. I help them navigate through tough spaces and re-root themselves in their true identity because I believe it is out of who we are that we influence and ultimately are able to achieve. To be able to come alongside leaders and champion their God-given potential has been incredible. I tell them they can choose if they want to have scoreboard, and help them envision what it looks like in their life to not have one.

Within these new narratives, this leads me to ask them:

- How will you then influence?
- What do you ultimately want to achieve?
- What does finishing well look like in your life?

I sit in an open posture just allowing God to guide, direct, facilitate the direction He would have me go in, and the assignments He would give me.

Through this transition, He has freed me up and disentangled me from a place of entrenchment. In the process, all these beautiful service opportunities have presented themselves to me. Where once I would have separated or differentiated between what I'm doing as my work and what I'm doing as my service, I am now allowing those two things to beautifully, harmoniously, as God would have it, co-exist in my life. I no longer look at it as this is what I'm doing for work and this is what I'm doing in the community.

In all of these beautiful service opportunities that have been presented, **there's an incredible movement in Omaha, Nebraska that is God-breathed and God-infused. I see myself as one of many who are called into a space to co-create a movement with Him that is beautiful.** It's a movement centered around unity and championing leadership-excellence. It's a movement on how we are impacting and growing His Kingdom and the Church in our city.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CANNOT BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN YOUR CITY?

One of the most exciting things that God has created in our community is a collaboration called [Within Reach](#). Within Reach represents anywhere from 35 to 45 churches right now, all unified and committed to the capital "C" Church.

There are four primary focuses within this organization:

1. Growth within the church (by conversions, not just transferring within churches)
2. Planting new churches
3. Serving compassionately
4. Leadership development

This incredible organization is led by ministry leaders in the city. Inside of that, there is a partner/sister organization that represents the marketplace: [Omahaleaders.com](#). This is made up of both marketplace and ministry leaders who are committed to growing, serving, and championing leaders. Our community is very invested in what they're doing and specifically providing any support that we can help to provide leadership development.

The other component that plays a huge role in how this organization was created is the Global Leadership Summit (GLS). In fact, Omaha Leaders was birthed straight out of the engagement of marketplace leaders in our local GLS. We've seen incredible growth in a movement surrounding the Global Leadership Summit in Omaha over the past couple of years. In the last year, we were recognized as the #2 city movement around everything that is happening through the Summit in our community.

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE LEADERS IN OMAHA ADDRESSED THE QUESTION: "WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO OUTSIDE OF THIS SINGLE EVENT?"

The Global Leadership Summit is an incredible launching pad. That launching pad is posturing us where we can excitedly, enthusiastically, and passionately create dialogues within our communities throughout the year that involve marketplace leaders, ministry leaders, believers, and unbelievers. They all come together around one table with conversation around the question: **"What would God dream for our city?"**

We are in the very beginning stages of what this looks like, but at this point, we are listening for what He would tell us and how He would guide us. We also listen to what the people of Omaha tell us about their needs and how we can do a better job of meeting those needs. Essentially we're creating spaces and places that are safe to have healthy dialogues about leadership and growth.

Of course, we all know that when leadership gets better, everybody wins, so after the Summit, we're creating monthly leadership luncheons that have a wide open door for people to come and engage in a healthy space where we have important dialogues. This is where we can lead with Christ-centered leadership principles to impact God's Kingdom in our city.

We have Mastermind Groups as well for those who want to take a deeper dive through content created by the [Global Leadership Network](#). Through organic networking that's happening within the community, I believe incredible things are possible.

In fact, part of our growth as a city movement is related to the Summit—the Archdiocese of Omaha became one of the first Catholic churches in the nation to come on board with the GLS. Not only does that mean that the Archdiocese is hosting the GLS for the first time ever in Omaha, but it means their group of leaders is engaged in the conversations that we’re having at the leadership luncheons. This network of people coming together could really only happen through God and what He has planned for our city.

WHAT DO YOU DREAM ABOUT NOW AMIE? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE GOD DO?

It’s a great question and an exciting place to be in when we are asking the question: “What is God dreaming about for us?”

Stephanie, if you had asked me this question before I would have given you an answer that would have related to an achievement or accomplishment. I maybe would have backed that with numbers or something measurable.

Now my answer is God has me no longer striving to the next thing. Instead I’m striding forward with long, intentional steps in the same direction at His pace—which is the pace of grace—toward what He has called me to.

I am most passionate about loving and knowing Him and that every part of my life and leadership would speak to His love, grace, mercy, and the perfect beauty of His Kingdom. How He will use me in that space, I don’t know. **I just know each day I show up for the assignment He has given me to invest 150%, not in ranking or a goal, but the people that He places in front of me.**

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE WHO COULD RELATE TO YOUR PERFORMANCE ADDICTION?

I get it. I know what that pain feels like, living in an addiction that is accepted, promoted and encouraged in this world. Recognize when God speaks to you and appeals to you that you are living more in a place of doing rather than being. The freedom on the other side of that is indescribable. No income, fame, recognition, or perks can hold a candle to the peace that you have on a daily basis when you are walking in freedom with Jesus.



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