

Outstanding Leader: Doug Mazza

Doug Mazza's distinguished career began in the automotive industry. Involved in leadership in Mitsubishi, Suzuki, and eventually Hyundai. Then, as a dedicated volunteer with a variety of non-profit organizations that meet human needs, Doug and his wife Lorraine made a life changing decision when he accepted the position of Executive Vice President of the International Christian Ministry Joni and Friends. This organization was founded by visionary, author, artist and quadriplegic, Joni Eareckson Tada.

1. How do you feel called to your position?

Having created what I thought was *the* plan for my life in corporate management it eventually became dramatically clear that God had a different idea. Following the birth of a severely disabled son whose deformities and sufferings for years threatened the very viability of his life, I eventually cried out to a God whom I had marginalized, "God I can't do this. Please, if there is a purpose to all of this show it to me!" That led to submitting to a personal relationship with Christ and God is faithful. His Bible teachings revealed the value of the disabled, the very people Christ loved to hang out with and for

whom he had so much compassion. Today I am the President of the Joni and Friends International Disability Center, founded by author, speaker, radio host, artist and disability advocate Joni Eareckson Tada, herself quadriplegic. Joni and I both know that without my son Ryan, there would have been no pathway for me to be here, serving in the most rewarding work of my life. God has answered my plea to "show me a purpose for all



this!" He has taken brokenness and despair and molded it into both joy and contentment. Do I feel called to this? *Oh yeah!*

2. What lessons have God taught you through your leadership position?

In the corporate world, it was all about vertical management: climbing to the next rung on the ladder; gaining more power and being in charge. God provided a breakthrough for me when I realized that God's chart was horizontal. Being President is a task found on God's horizontal list

of appointments to be made. At Joni and Friends, like any ministry or secular corporation for that matter, God appoints a President, a Receptionist, a Director of Programming, a mailroom worker and lots of others to serve in many capacities. To God, one position is not more important than another. (He's even been known to appoint a carpenter King!) That's not to say God does not appoint some with more authority. It's just that God sees those to whom He has given the mantle of authority at any level as fulfilling the **task** to which they have been appointed. God remains the sole living being in charge. So there is a difference between authority and being in charge. When we gain power by surrendering control to Him we can each seek to become the chief servant. Therefore, the authority God has given me as President comes with the responsibility to strive to be the Chief Servant Officer. When all employees are seeking to be chief servants to a higher calling, amazing things can be accomplished! It all begins though by leading from a point of servant hood. We call it "leading like Jesus".

3. How does your faith shape your leadership?

Without a faith that is true and transparent, I have no qualification

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that would allow me to serve here. My faith informs my role as a servant leader in a variety of ways to include risk taking, delegating and creating an environment that stresses compassion over competition. At Joni and Friends our collective faith informs our actions as we seek to focus narrowly on the task God has set before us, "to communicate the Gospel and equip Christ honoring churches worldwide to evangelize and disciple people affected by disabilities." Amazingly God has provided my ability to serve Him through a small disabled boy who at one time I thought had no purpose. Only a very big loving God could do that!