Phil: Alright, Jenny, it's Thursday. You're looking forward to the weekend. What is Saturday going to be for you? What, what are the top three agenda items for you on Saturday?

Jenny: Ooh, Saturday is gonna be a fun day because we're gonna get 70 degrees in, you know, March. It's March Madness. So there'll definitely be basketball, definitely be time outside, hopefully on the golf course.

And I'm gonna stick with two 'cause that just sounds like a pretty awesome Saturday.

Phil: Where, where do you play golf?

Jenny: O'Bannon out in Loveland, Ohio.

Phil: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. My wife's president of the Women's Western Golf Association, and so, uh

Jenny: oh, yeah,

Phil: they run junior tournaments and, and a big women's amateur, and I don't know if it was last year.

They're doing a big tournament in Cincinnati. I, I don't remember where, but anyway, she, she loves Cincy. Several of her board members are Cincinnati folks. So kind of fun stuff. Alright, so Jenny, for those listeners that don't know Jenny Fran personally, give us a little bit of your cv, your background.

How did, how did Jenny Fran become the personal trust guru that she is today?

Jenny: You know, I think like many coming out of college, not knowing really much about the trust business or the trust world, or quite honestly even that it existed. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a management major.

I love the concept of leading people, managing what motivates people, and so I always. Had this calling to be a leader of some sort, but I also knew that in order to be a, a strong leader, you really had to build that subject matter expertise in something. I just didn't know what that something was gonna be, and I knew I wanted to come back to Cincinnati.

Family's critically important to me, and so I've got a big extended family here in Cincinnati and had an opportunity. Fifth. Third knew an individual that was actually a portfolio manager and he said, Hey, you know, I think you'd like this entry level trust specialist position. I said, sure, why not? Let's give it a try.

And I just fell in love with it immediately. I mean, I wanted to learn as much about the business as fast as I could and really just enjoyed being able to bring so many different aspects to, to the role. And so that's how I got in the business.

Phil: For many of us, that's. A very familiar story. You did not, I certainly did not.

At age seven when somebody says, you know, little Jenny, little Phil, what do you want to do when you grow up? I don't, I don't think very many of us said, you know, I think I'd like to be in the world of trust, personal trust. That, that, that sounds to, to be the perfect deal. How is this business to you in a way that that really captured your attention?

Jenny: Well, if I told you how it was explained to me, you'd be like, how did that capture your attention? The question that was asked of me was, Jenny, do you like balancing your checkbook? And I looked at the individual and I said, who doesn't like balancing their checkbook? And that's how it got explained to me.

So stewardship of financial assets was kind of what I took away from it.

Phil: It is a very good thing that my hiring manager did not use. That phrase or that example I might not have wound up in this business. Interesting.

Jenny: It, it was very far from the truth and just a small sliver, but it caught my attention.

Phil: Yeah. I, I know that it did. You know something. Interesting. And in a world where there's a lot of movement and there certainly has been a lot of movement over the last five, six years in the, in, in the, the world of trust, you've spent more than two decades with Fifth, third, you've seen a lot of industry change.

You were drawn to leadership opportunities as, as you look back on. On the last two plus decades in, in your evolving roles and, you know, now in, in a very senior leadership role, what are the things that have kind of shaped your decision making? What have been the influences that have, have led you during that period of time?

Jenny: Early on, you know, I started my parenting journey about the same time I started really getting the opportunity to be in some leadership roles. And so when my kids were very young, my husband and I kind of adopted this parenting mo motto that said, Hey, no matter how good or how bad something is at the time, don't worry about it.

Don't get too comfortable with it because it's going to change, right? Kids aren't gonna sleep through the night, don't worry about it. It's gonna change. Hey, we're really rocking the early morning routine before school. Great. Enjoy it, but don't get too comfortable. It's gonna change. And, and I really adopted that in the workplace too because the industry was, it's moving at warp speed.

We've seen more change over the last, you know, 15, 10 years than we've seen in, in the previous decades before. And I think a lot of peoples. Talk about the disruption in the industry, but we've had some really cool innovations in the business, and when you take the regulatory landscape that's evolved, our client's expectations have changed.

I mean, back in the day, you'd send a letter and have two weeks to wait for a response. Right now you've got instant communication. We're constantly trying to stay ahead of the next best thing and these unknowns and constants. Are kind of really what energize me every day. The change, the variety in our industry.

I think the trust professionals that can get comfortable with the uncomfortable and, and kind of live in that gray area are the ones that are really gonna thrive because we are constantly evolving. At the same time, oh, real quick. I think it's always fascinating when I, you know, pull up a document that was drafted in 1920, right, a hundred years ago, and I reflect on what's transpired since that grantor wrote their intentions on that piece of paper.

So many things have changed, like financial markets. We talked about communication technology, yet the core tenets of what that grantor was trying to accomplish remain the same. And we as trust professionals. In today's world, get to navigate that for them. And I just think that's just a really incredible privilege.

Phil: You know, you've got you've got so much there. You would take days, if not weeks, to unpack it all. I'm gonna, I'm gonna pick two points though. Your view on change, which is a constant versus the generational longevity of the relationships that we develop. Let's talk first on the, on, on the change piece.

I, I love. The motto that you and your husband ascribe to you, you probably ought to run relationship bootcamps in addition to wealth management bootcamps. You are so right in that change is a constant. And you know, we constantly hear, you know, things are changing so much. It, it is changing so fast and I just don't like change.

But, the human existence is. Is built on change. You know, we, we all change our lives change our, our businesses change. Is it the speed of change that is impacting people or is it just a, is something else? What's happening there? Because it, its sounds like that you're, you handling, that you're managing, that you embrace, that, you revel in it, it sounds like while others struggle with it, what's, what's happening there?

Jenny: No, I've had this conversation with a number of team members because I think that, you know, you kind of do fall into a couple of different camps. You've got those that, that revel in it and enjoy it and embrace it and run. You've got those that are like, okay, let me wait and see what happens. I, I might be on board.

And then you've got those that are just like, please don't make me do anything different today. And I think, I think the human nature is fear of the unknown. What is this gonna look like, right? If I don't do this thing. What does my day look like tomorrow and how do I make sure that I deliver? And I think at the end of the day it's, it's really all about the client and individuals making sure that they wanna be able to provide the same advice and the same service to their client that they did year over year over year.

And when things are changing around them, how do they make sure that that is consistent? So I think there's a little bit of that. And I also think that the pace is just. It's exponentially faster than it's ever been before, and I think that's just our overall world in general.

Phil: Yeah, I think you're right.

And, you know, I, perhaps it's that, that pace of change and, you know, the fact that every day is not the same anymore, makes this industry more and more professionally attractive to younger people who are looking for, again a pace of change, an ability to, come in and learn and grow and make an impact.

In your recruiting efforts, you know, what are you telling? We know what, what your hiring manager said to you? What are you telling young people about this industry today?

Jenny: Absolutely not what my hiring manager said to me at the time. That's for sure. You know, I, what I talk to folks about is, many people, unless they're in the estate planning industry, looking for a change or, or they've been in the financial services industry, again, aren't as familiar with trust, and so I really try and bring to them the fact that it is analytical.

It's problem solving and it's human psychology all wrapped into one. And so you get to use so many different parts of your brain on a regular basis. We can teach you the ins and outs of the fiduciary expertise, but if you can use your brain in a way that flexes amongst. Analytics, problem solving. And quite honestly, like human empathy, you're gonna really succeed in this industry.

Yeah. And that's what we look for. And that's hard. 'cause I mean, back to our earlier comments, I'm not sure you can teach that. I think that's more of something, you know, you got it or you don't. Or you nurture it and you grow it. So that's, that's really what I try and get from recruits. And I think those are kind of some of the things that we've seen most successful.

Phil: Yeah. On this issue of, of longevity and, and staying power, you know, you're part of an organization that, brings with it a history of, of longevity. You are part of a leadership team that's, for the most part has been together a kind of a tight group. We'll talk a little bit about that, but you talked about the, i, I guess the intellectual curiosity that comes from working on relationships that are.

Centuries old, right? A grantor created a document a hundred plus years ago, and, and today we're administering based upon intent with tremendous flexibility that we've got today. That carries a, a huge responsibility. It requires a level of excellence. How do you, how do you define excellence in the fiduciary industry today?

Jenny: One, I I think it's more important now than ever before. I think the options for clients and families and how they go about receiving fiduciary advice is, is very different than it was many decades ago. The trust world. It really is and always has been very complex. I think it is one of the most complex areas of wealth management when you think about family structures, entity structures, businesses, and assets, like they're more complex than they've ever been before.

And excellence really means understanding these complexities and working with our clients and beneficiaries. To me. In order to simplify them, like how do you take these complexities? You boil 'em down, you simplify 'em, to help the family achieve whatever that goal might be that they're looking to achieve.

And I think the hard part, and you hit on this, was the goals many times span generations and decades of family members, right? So the goals, while there's the consistent theme, they definitely evolve over time. And so excellence is really about being clear, consistent in delivering on behalf of that family and client day in and day out.

Phil: So you are part, and I made reference to this just a few minutes ago. You're part of a, an incredibly effective, efficient, and recognized female leadership team within the, the trust and wealth management group. That is it a something to be celebrated, but b at the same time it's something that, you know, within the financial services industry.

Still is looked on as, wow. That's unique. You don't see that as, as much in organizations. What is it about the culture of Fifth Third? What is it about the culture of your leadership team? You all were recognized a couple years back by American banker for, top performing, most recognized leadership group.

What makes that dynamic so special?

Jenny: That was a special group. That is a special group. And that was a really cool experience and a huge accomplishment for our leadership team to be able to represent the bank on that stage. And when I think about that team I really think that we embodied, like the collective group is way bigger than the sum of its parts.

And that's what made us successful. We didn't worry about who got credit or whose idea something was. We challenged each other, and I would say fiercely at times, but we also supported each other. And I think the thing was, most of all, whenever a business decision was made with that leadership team, we linked arms and we moved forward to execute.

Because it was our collective decision. And I think that's so important. And I think that's rare sometimes is we all brought unique backgrounds and experiences to the table. No two paths, quite honestly, or perspectives were the same, which sparked some lively debate, but it, it also allowed us to accomplish some pretty major transformation and change management initiatives.

And I think the other thing is. Our collective goal was, you know, we, we said whatever we do, we wanna improve the client and the advisor experience all while managing risk. And when we kind of had that core baseline that we were all working towards, it was fantastic. And I think it's really neat that, you know, that leadership team has, has, many of us have gone on to do different things in different roles.

And so I'm really excited about some of the ripple effects that we see as we kind of go off into some of the other areas.

Phil: Several years ago, I sat beside an individual on a, on a flight. I'm one of those, one of those people on a plane that I, I am gonna at least introduce myself to the person I'm sitting next to.

And we wound up having a, a long conversation. He had done some research on something I'd, I'd. I'd be interested in your feedback. He credited Title IX and the gender equity efforts of Title IX to engage female athletes and collegiate athletics and, organizations or, or colleges, universities have to, uh, invest in equal amount in, in lady sports to men's sports.

He credited that. In part, not, obviously not solely for the rise in the number of female executives. Not in financial services per se, but female executives across the board. And he talked about team sports and, and being part of a team and competing and, you know, that, that high drive activity, he said, that that is going to, he used the term, I, I didn't think about it until you said ripple effect.

He talked about the ripple effect and how he was projecting over the next number of years that, you know, you would see this diversity across all landscapes. And, and again, that was probably 10, 15 years ago. You're a big golfer. You like to compete. You went to Notre Dame high performing institution.

Have you always had this competitive drive? If so, how has that played out for you in your team environments, your leadership roles, et cetera?

Jenny: Yes, I've always been a wee bit competitive and, and I would say that, you know, sports for me have played a huge role in shaping who I am today. And that's one of the things that I, not to go off on a tangent on the sports world of today, but I really hope youth continue to engage in sports activities, team activities, individual activities.

'cause I think it just teaches so many life lessons. In the, the framework of a game that it's, it's critically important. And for me, yes, I've always been very competitive and I, and I think about when I first started in the industry as a, as an early trust officer, I remember looking around and thinking.

How am I ever gonna be as good as some of these peers, right? They all have 20 years on me. They've got law degrees. Gosh, they just seem to know everything. And being the competitive individual I am, that was a big motivator for me. So I knew just gaining experience wasn't gonna differentiate me. So I started to think like, what is gonna differentiate me?

And I really went back to my roots. I had, you know, wonderful parents that were great role models that lived the value of hard work. And if you do the right thing. You say you're gonna do what you do, people are gonna trust you. They're gonna know that they can count on you. You don't have to be the smartest person in the room, but if you're the most trusted person in the room, that's gonna carry you very, very far.

And I feel like that's how I differentiated myself early on. And, and quite honestly, I've, I've continued to build, and that's critically important to me as a person on that reputation of, I'm gonna do what I say I'm gonna do, and I'm gonna do it very well.

Phil: If the world could follow that last statement and just do what you say you're gonna do, when you say you're gonna do it, the world would be a much nicer place, would it not?

Jenny: It's, it serves me very well, so I, I am very happy in that regard.

Phil: I love it. I love it. It was probably, I don't know, eight, nine years ago that with my colleague Sarah Jones, we began this Women in Wealth series and, and highlighting female executives, female entrepreneurs, women who are doing interesting things in financial services.

And of course we do that every March. Got tremendous response. But I did get a couple of questions and it wasn't. Just from, from males in the financial services is, Hey, why, why are you investing this time? I mean, calling this out, I mean, the industry is so much better today for females than it was 25 years ago.

Why bring this up? And, I had a response to it, but I'm, I'm gonna, I'm, I'm gonna. Pose that question to you. Why do you think it's important that as an industry and as professionals, male and female, that we highlight women who are, are leading inside large institutions, small institutions, not just, you know, those entrepreneurial or, or high visibility roles?

Why is it important to, to highlight the successes as we sit here in 2026?

Jenny: Yeah, I, I wanna go back to, to the comment earlier in the question around like, why do, why do we need to keep doing this, right? Like, you know, we're way better than we were before. And I, I think it really goes back to our initial conversation around change and always wanting to be better.

If we get complacent today, we will only go backwards and we will only lose talent of the future. And, and I think we all know in our industry, human talent. Is the differentiator. Relationship building, making sure that we've got folks that, that have that EQ is really important and if we lose a population, a generation of that talent now that's gonna be really detrimental to our business.

And so I think, you know. Early on I got to attend a lot of different high level leadership seminars and retreats and opportunities. And I remember there were a lot of CEOs, a lot of entrepreneurs who had started businesses. And I do remember looking around the room and thinking, you know, I'm just, and I'm using air quotes, A leader in a large organization like these individuals have done amazing things.

And that imposter syndrome really. Resonated with me and impacted me for, for quite a while. And it wasn't until I started reflecting on the true impact of my leadership that I was having within, uh, an institution, that I really started to get that confidence. I mean, at, at, at any point in time, I am have the opportunity, the privilege to impact, you know, 200 plus employees.

Like knowing them by name, knowing their backgrounds, knowing what motivates them to see succeed. Kind of going back to this is what I wanted to do with my life and leadership. That's really impactful and you think about, we said the ripple effect. We think about how do we continue to expand our reach, being able to do that, you know, I'm only one person.

You're only one person. If we can impact 200 people and then they can go impact 200 people, it's a game changer. And, and I think that's why it's really important.

Phil: There's your ripple effect. I love that as we think about. Young women who don't have that view on what their career aspirations, you know, really, really could be.

So maybe she's, she's 16, 17. She's, you know, thinking about college. You know, she's thinking about what majors might be. Maybe she's in college, she's, you know, second year at the college of University, and now it's time to, to really get focused on majors and, and things like that. What would you say to those young women about our industry, about their opportunities, things that they really ought to think about that make, that has made your experience, so I'm gonna call it purpose driven.

What advice, what council would you offer those young ladies?

Jenny: You know, the first thing that I would say is kind of going back to the get comfortable with the uncomfortable, do things that push you outside your comfort zone. I remember, you know, public speaking for me, oh my gosh, I was terrified. I made myself take every public speaking presentation course I could in college.

It wasn't fun at the time, but looking back, you know, 24 years later. Best decision I ever made. So doing things like that, you know what it really interests you. You know, if, if you're passionate about something, follow it. That's really what's going to make the difference in your future success.

And, and I think we talked a little bit about the emotional intelligence, the iq, the fiduciary knowledge. If that's table stakes, those are things you can learn as long as you're someone that can learn, but really leaning into the emotional part is really important to be successful.

Phil: I, I, I, I love the emotional part because at the end of the day, and we've said this a thousand times, but you can't say it enough, we are in the people business and, and we are individuals and teams that are providing counseling advice and not just financial counseling advice, but providing counseling advice to individuals and families about some of their deepest hopes, wishes, dreams, fears, and the ability to.

To be emotionally centered, to be empathetic. That is to, to your point in an earlier conversation, a lot of that is, is hardwired. It can be nurtured, it can be developed, but it, it really does have a dramatic impact on our industry. Right. Yeah.

Jenny: I mean, we have to talk about things that clients they don't even wanna think about, much less talk about.

And to be able to do that in an empathetic, non-judgment, active listening state, that's really important.

Phil: Love it, Jenny. We always ask one final question as part of our Canon Curve series. So I will, I will pose this question to you. You know, it's coming, you've, you've heard it on other podcasts.

If you had the opportunity today with all of the experiences, all the developmental opportunities, all the clients that you've interfaced with, all of the. Decisions you got, right? All of the decisions that you look back on and say, what was I thinking? If you had the opportunity to go back and have a conversation, we'll call it a coaching conversation, a mentoring conversation with 23-year-old Jenny Fran.

Jenny: Yeah.

Phil: What advice, what counsel would you give that young lady.

Jenny: I always love when you ask this question at the end of the curve and I, I hold on to the end waiting for folks answers. 'cause I always think it's so insightful. So I hope I deliver here. But, you know, for me, as I think about it, if I were gonna have a conversation with my 23-year-old self, and I'm very fortunate that I, I get to have this conversation with my daughter on at times.

The one thing I always start with is, you got this. Keep being. Your authentic, you know what your true north is, whatever that might be. And that's very personal to you and keep going in that direction because our industry doesn't need a lot of people that think the same way and do the same thing.

We need unique perspectives and there's so much opportunity out there. The second thing I would say is. Define your own success and have the patience to attain it. I remember early on, you know, people were staying in the role, you know, three or four years and then moving on to the next role or moving on to the next organization.

And you know, there's times you kind of think like, all right, am I supposed to be doing that? And I always went back to know this is what's successful for Jenny and what do I wanna attain? And that was always important to me. So as long as I was enjoying what I was doing. I was finding value and purpose in the work.

I did not get caught up in the short term 24 years later. And so as long as you follow your values and your plan, you're gonna be successful. However, it's how you define success. So you got this, and this is whatever you define it as.

Phil: Those are words to live by. And as a dad of two daughters, I am going to absolutely, I, at this stage, I can only encourage, they're both adults, so you can't, you can't make them do anything.

Once I, I'm not sure you can ever make your children do anything as I, as I. Think back on that, that, that whole experience. But I am absolutely gonna encourage them to, uh, to lean into those last comments. That is, that is so good. Jenny Fran, senior Vice President, managing director of private bank client service and administration for fifth Third.

Thank you for being part of our Women and Wealth series.

Jenny: Phil, thank you so much for the opportunity. I really enjoyed it.

Phil: The Canon Curve is a production of Canon Financial Institute. The executive producer of the Canon Curve is Sarah Jones. Editing and mixing is done by Danny b Bruner. On behalf of Jenny Fran and the entire group here at Canon, thank you for staying ahead of the curve.