

Charlie Mechem: [00:01](#) Hello, and welcome to 15 Minutes with Charlie. I'm your host Charlie Mechem. I want to help you communicate more effectively, and I believe the use of anecdotes can get you there. Explore this with me as I share anecdotes from my book Total Anecdotal and ask guests to react in relation to their own experience and careers.

Charlie Mechem: [00:26](#) My guest today is Nancy Lopez, one of the truly great names in the history of golf. In her time, Nancy has won 48 LPGA Tour events, three of which were major championships. But Nancy is not just a Hall of Famer. Her warmth, her smile, and her determination to give back to the game are legendary. Indeed, I liken her to Arnold Palmer in what she has meant to the game of golf. Please enjoy my conversation with Nancy.

Charlie Mechem: [01:01](#) I'm going to quote a few anecdotes and then ask you for your reaction and whether they have played a relevant role in your life. The first one, I picked not only because I think it's a great story but because you and I share a wonderful experience on the Smucker Company board of directors. For our listeners, when I retired from the Smucker board, Nancy replaced me. Nothing could make me happier than that. I know she's been a great board member. But I know she also agrees what an incredible company it is. Here's the anecdote.

Charlie Mechem: [01:47](#) "I was privileged to serve more than 25 years on the board of the J. M. Smucker Company. Paul Smucker was the CEO and driving force throughout the years, an extraordinary man in many ways. One year, during a question and answer period at the annual shareholders meeting, a woman got up, noted that she and Paul had known one another since they were in grade school together and that she'd always loved the company and everything it stood for. But she said, 'There's one little thing, Paul. All of your jams and jellies are up in such large jars. We older folks, especially those of us living alone, don't need such big containers. Couldn't you put up your jams and jellies in itty-bitty jars?'

Charlie Mechem: [02:32](#) "Well, of course the audience laughed and applauded. I thought, 'Wow. How's Paul going to handle this one?' It was a good question, and it was asked by a lovely lady and an old school friend. Paul smiled and said, 'Mabel, you're right. We've known one another for many years, and I respect your judgment. It's a very good question that you've asked. Let me

try to answer it this way. We could indeed, and maybe should, put up our jams and jellies in itty-bitty jars. But, Mabel, if we did that, then we'd have to pay itty-bitty dividends.' Well, the audience roared. Mabel smiled, and the meeting went on."

Charlie Mechem: [03:10](#)

Your thoughts on that.

Nancy Lopez: [03:13](#)

Well, Charlie, first of all, to fill your shoes has been tough, I think, always, because I think the world of you, and we sure miss you on the Smucker's board.

Charlie Mechem: [03:22](#)

Thank you.

Nancy Lopez: [03:24](#)

Being on the board, what a great board, they're always so positive. They think about their customers. For me in golf, I always think about my fans, how signing an autograph means so much to them, being able to make eye contact with them, letting them know that they can walk up to me and ask me for an autograph. I've always been comfortable with that, with people and being positive. I think it's probably made me who I am, or was, on the LPGA Tour because I wanted to always give back any that I could and the best way that I could. So it was fun, like I said, being a part of the LPGA Tour and making the friendships that I did. I think with Paul Smucker, they always want to give back to their customers, and they want to do what's best for the company. And I always wanted to do what was best for the LPGA and be that person that hopefully people came out to see. If I could bring more people in the gate, that was always my goal.

Charlie Mechem: [04:32](#)

Well, you've done that over and over again.

Charlie Mechem: [04:35](#)

The second anecdote is on page 68 of the book, and it's under the category of Hard Work. It goes like this, "A man prayed and asked God to help him win the lottery. Every day he renewed his prayer and finally said, 'God, won't you please help me win the lottery.' To his absolute amazement, the skies darkened, lightening flashed, and a strong, deep voice said, 'Would you at least buy a ticket?'"

Charlie Mechem: [05:06](#)

We so often expect good things to happen without effort. They rarely do. I'd like your thoughts on that.

- Nancy Lopez: [05:13](#) Oh, definitely. Hard work was always something that my dad taught me. I would go my dad's shop. He owned an autobody repair shop in Roswell, New Mexico, and I learned a lot from him just by watching him. When he would repair somebody's car or do a new paint job, these people would come back. They loved my dad because he always did his best. I watched him do so much hard work, and I think through that, it was like osmosis. When I was on the golf course, I knew I would accomplish things if I gave it 100%. My dad did say that to me, that if you give 100%, that's all you can do. And that meant, to me, hard work, going out there, working hard, having no excuses, except that being a human being you're not always going to play perfect golf.
- Charlie Mechem: [06:03](#) That's right.
- Nancy Lopez: [06:05](#) But I enjoyed learning a lot of things from my father. He was always positive. There was a time I was playing in the U.S. Open in Philadelphia, and I had worked really hard to play well in that U.S. Open. Of course, you know, I never won the U.S. Open. I finished second four times.
- Nancy Lopez: [06:25](#) And as I walked off the green after two days of playing, Thursday and Friday, I knew I wasn't making the cut, and I walked off the green. I was teary eyed, hugged my dad. Of course, I always played for my dad, in a good way. He was not a forcible dad, and he didn't make me work hard. I wanted to do that. I wanted to play good for him, not just myself. So when I walked off the green, I hugged him, and I was probably about 12 over par and really disappointed knowing I had worked hard. When I walked up to my dad, I hugged him. And he looked at me, and he hugged me. He goes, "It's okay, honey. I didn't want to see you at 25 over par anyway." He said, "All we got to do is go work a little harder." So he always instilled that in me as I played the game of golf because I wanted to be a winner. I wanted to be a champion. I know my dad gave me all the things I needed to to become that if I gave golf hard work.
- Charlie Mechem: [07:24](#) Well, I remember him so well. We walked a lot of tournaments together watching you. I once said to him, "How many miles do you think you've walked watching Nancy play golf?" He said, "Thousands." But tell the story, Nancy, I love this story, about

when you were young, and you started crying, and what he told you about crying.

- Nancy Lopez: [07:52](#) My dad had this cute, strong Spanish accent, and he had a lot of anecdotes for things that happened to me on the golf course. But when I was playing at a young age, he was just teaching me the game, and I wanted to really play well. One day when I wasn't playing well, I started crying. He looked at me and said, "Nancy, you can't see the ball when you're crying."
- Charlie Mechem: [08:19](#) That's such a great story. He was such a great man.
- Nancy Lopez: [08:23](#) Yes, he was.
- Charlie Mechem: [08:23](#) The next anecdote I wanted to ask you about is on page 88 of the book, and it's under the category of Passion. The anecdote is a quote from the great playwright Neil Simon on the importance of always giving your very best.
- Charlie Mechem: [08:43](#) And here's what he said, "Whatever path you follow from the moment you take off those long black gowns," this was at a commencement speech, "do it as though Gershwin had written music to underscore your every move. Romantic and idealistic, yes. But I can't think of anything worthwhile in life that was achieved without a great deal of desire to achieve it. Don't listen to those who say it's not done that way. Maybe it's not, but maybe you will. Don't listen to those who say you're taking too big a chance. If he hadn't taken a big chance, Michelangelo would have painted the Sistine floor and it would certainly have been rubbed out by today."
- Charlie Mechem: [09:25](#) So how do you feel about the importance of bringing passion and determination to everything you do?
- Nancy Lopez: [09:34](#) Well, I think passion is very important. I know my dad would always look at me and he would say, "If you want to be successful, first of all, you have to love what you're doing." That's when you're going to be the most successful. But he always looked at me and said, "Be a good person. Your word is all you have. Work hard." And that, to me, meant passion. Those are things that I always felt when I was out there playing golf with my dad and working towards goals.

- Nancy Lopez: [10:06](#) He always told me to set goals high, which I think is so important as I raise three daughters who all have jobs and are working hard and hope to get promoted all the time. I always tell them work hard, and you'll keep going up the totem pole making a better living for yourself. But you have to have passion to do all that. And I feel like my dad gave me that passion to want to be the best I could be and set goals high. Because if you just set them mediocre, you just don't reach what you know you probably could reach once you do that. I learned all that from my father, and I feel like I taught that to my daughters. I'm very proud of them because they just keep moving up the ladder, and they have passion to be the best they can be. And I think that's so important to teach your kids as my dad taught me.
- Charlie Mechem: [10:55](#) Well, that's a wonderful story and a wonderful comment. Again, your dad was a special, special guy.
- Charlie Mechem: [11:03](#) The final anecdote I want to ask you about is on page 91 of the book, and it's under the category of Patience and Forbearance. It's the story of a little snail. "A man had a good friend who owned a cabin deep in the woods. Occasionally, his friend would allow him to stay in the cabin for a week or two to enjoy some rest and solitude. Late one night the man heard a noise at the door. He opened the door but saw no one until he looked down at the doormat and noticed a tiny little snail. He reached down, picked up the snail, and threw it back into the yard. Several years later, he went back to the cabin for another visit. Once again, he heard a noise at the door. He went to the door, opened it and looked down, and saw the same little snail. The snail looked up at him and said, 'What was all that about?'"
- Charlie Mechem: [11:57](#) Now, that's patience. I'd like your thoughts on patience.
- Nancy Lopez: [12:02](#) Thank God I have had patience. My dad... I always bring my dad into it because I just remember everything that he was as a person. He was always so patient with everyone. When I sat in his shop in the summertime, again, how people would come say, "You know, Sunday," his name was Sunday, Domingo in Spanish, and say, "You know, I don't quite like the way this is done." He never said, "No, you're wrong. I did it right." He'd say, "Yes, sir, I'll do it again." I saw the way that he was with patience with people, and yeah, you have to have patience.

Nancy Lopez: [12:44](#) In my life, being patient with myself first of all, trying to win golf tournaments, knowing my dad told me that I was not going to win everything that I played in that I had to get used to losing. And that wasn't a negative. It was more of just have to realize golf is golf, and you're not going to win all the time. But if you can be a good loser, that's good too. That takes patience to be able to do that. But I have, I've been blessed with patience, thank goodness.

Nancy Lopez: [13:14](#) I have a wonderful husband who hasn't always been patient, not with me, but with other people. I kind of stroked him once in a while, stroke him on the arm, and I see sometimes myself because I've become a little impatient with myself as I maybe take care of something at my house or something. I'll kind of scrape his arm and rub it and say, "All right, Nancy, it'll be okay. You have to be [inaudible 00:13:40]."

Charlie Mechem: [13:42](#) You know-

Nancy Lopez: [13:43](#) Works all the time.

Charlie Mechem: [13:44](#) It's such a hard quality to develop, but you can develop it. As I look back on my life, it's one of the two or three qualities that I think are critical to anybody's, not just success, but happiness. If you're not patient, you're going to be mad a lot. You're going to be angry a lot.

Nancy Lopez: [14:06](#) [crosstalk 00:14:06].

Charlie Mechem: [14:05](#) And if you're patient, it may try you a little bit, but in the final analysis it pays off.

Charlie Mechem: [14:15](#) By the way, how are your girls? You have how many grandkids now?

Nancy Lopez: [14:24](#) I have two grandchildren, Molly's six, Hunter's three. We've got Molly playing golf. None of the girls played golf, which I hated that. But I never wanted to force them. My dad never forced me to play the game.

Charlie Mechem: [14:33](#) Sure, sure.

Nancy Lopez: [14:34](#) But Molly is. She loves it. So I don't particularly want her to turn professional. I would just like for her to come and visit Grammy and Poopaw and us play golf sometime down the road. She's still on the driving range learning the game, and her swing has developed very well.

Charlie Mechem: [14:50](#) That's wonderful.

Nancy Lopez: [14:52](#) But she's just the cutest thing. She's got red hair, doesn't even look like she should be my daughter's.

Charlie Mechem: [14:55](#) No kidding. Oh, that's wonderful.

Nancy Lopez: [14:58](#) But she's adorable.

Charlie Mechem: [14:58](#) Well, they're great kids. Now before we close, selfishly, I have to ask you, I hope you enjoyed my book Total Anecdotal.

Nancy Lopez: [15:08](#) Charlie, I loved it. You know, because I know you, and I think you've always been a lot like me, very positive about things... Every time I got an award, I was like, "Charlie's got to introduce me. Charlie's got to introduce me," because so many people love you. That's so important that people feel like they can call you. You're approachable. And I loved reading the book.

Charlie Mechem: [15:36](#) Great.

Nancy Lopez: [15:36](#) I think that I heard a lot of you in it as I read it, of course, because you wrote it. But I said, "Oh, that's Charlie." I'd keep saying to myself, "Oh, yep, that's Charlie." It was really fun reading. I enjoyed it. I got a lot of laughs. Course when I was reading it, I was outlining and starring things that were really funny for me because I knew we were going to talk, and I wasn't sure which one's we were going to talk about. But there was so much that I really enjoyed and just appreciate being able to help you out.

Charlie Mechem: [16:03](#) Well, of all the podcasts we've done, yours is right up in the hall of fame category. And that's no surprise. So, many thanks and get well. Get rid of that sore throat.

Nancy Lopez: [16:18](#) All right, Charlie. Thanks so much.

Charlie Mechem:

[16:24](#)

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