

Announcer: Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, a podcast all about leadership, change and personal growth. The goal, to help you lead like never before. In your church or in your business. And now your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well hey everybody and welcome to episode 233 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well I know a lot of you guys, as we interact when I'm on the road and as I read your ratings and reviews. And we chat on social. I know you are addicted to productivity. So am I. I mean, how else are you going to get better at what you do, right? At the end of the day, you just got to figure out, how can I do the best I can, with the time I have? Totally get that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well that's why I'm so excited about today's guest. His name is Daniel Pink. He is a multiple New York Times bestselling author. Much sought after speaker in the business world. I got to tell you, he helps top performers become even more top performers. I love his books. And I was particularly fascinated by this latest book, which is called When. You know what I love about it is, I've got The High Impact Leader course, which by the way is coming back in January with some fresh new material, which I'm very excited about. Stay tuned for that.

Carey Nieuwhof: But the main idea behind The High Impact Leader course I do is that, when you do things, matters. Naturally, I was very interested when this book came out. Daniel and I nerd out, on the science of timing and why when you do something in the course of a day and how you do it, why all of that seems to really make a difference. We go all over the place with this. If you're a morning person, a night owl, everyone else. This is how you can maximize your productivity and effectiveness. It's the science behind perfect timing, with New York Times bestselling author Daniel Pink. I think you're going to love this episode.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys a couple of things I want to tell you about that I am very excited about. First of all, next year, what is your mobile engagement strategy? It's just, it's a serious question. Sunday is part of the deal but it's not the whole deal. We have an unprecedented opportunity to connect with people during the week. That's why I love what Pushpay is doing. I think they're the leaders at keeping our industry at the cutting edge of technology. They got a huge heart for the church. Last year, they helped more than 7,000 customers process billions of dollars in generosity. They're more than just a giving app. They are a gateway into a mobile strategy for your church.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right now, you can head on over to [Pushpay.com/Carey](https://pushpay.com/Carey). That's C-A-R-E-Y. Talk to a representative, just sign up for that. And he will have a special offer for listeners of this podcast. No obligation, just a chance to talk about whether this is right for you. Make sure you check them out, [Pushpay.com/Carey](https://pushpay.com/Carey).

Carey Nieuwhof: Speaking of 2019, you know as a pastor, you think about people in worship. You got a budget. You've got a lot on your plate but you also want to get people plugged into small groups and you want to help them grow in their faith. How

does that happen? Oh yeah, by the way, plus you got volunteers. Well the Red Letter Challenge is a new tool that churches are starting to use. It's a 40 day turn-key church campaign, that centers around making more effective disciples of Jesus.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've sat down with the author, Pastor Zach Zehnder. And we had breakfast one day, talked to him all about it. Really impressed with this and have looked through the program myself. I think it's fascinating. He basically studied everything Jesus commanded his disciples to do, really the red letters in the bible. Found five main principles, that came directly from Jesus. The challenge for your church is centered around these five targets. It results in, with so far, a massive growth in engagement, in the actions behind the things that Jesus taught about, which is kind of your goal, right? You hope for that. 100% of the pastors, get this, that have implemented the Red Letter Challenge, recommend it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, these are some of the things they're seeing, when they do this Red Letter Challenge, they see an average of 40% growth in small groups. Even in very large churches, which as you know is difficult. One church in Nebraska, a small church, went from zero to 60 people in groups, in the first week. Another in Indiana saw 500% growth in their small groups. One pastor said about the Red Letter Challenge, "This is more than just a 40 day challenge, it's a simple discipleship tool that will help you encourage your people to not only hear what God is saying but to apply his words where they live work and play."

Carey Nieuwhof: And those are just some of the results. It's not just about small groups, it's about getting your people closer to Jesus. It's resulted in greater worship attendance, giving and one church is seeing a 300% increase in social media reach and engagement, when they did the Red Letter Challenge.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right now, you can go to RedLetterChallenge.com again, forward slash, Carey, C-A-R-E-Y. To see the church packages that are right for you, small or large, save 10 to 40%. The packages can start with as little as 10 copies perfect for like a single small group. Up to 1,000 or more, if you have a large church. If you need any other quantities or more information, go to that link RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey. They'd be thrilled to help you. Well guys, without further ado, let's dive into my conversation with Daniel Pink.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well Dan, I've been looking forward to this for a long time, welcome to the podcast.

Daniel Pink: Thanks so much for having me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, so we found you in, is it true, northern New Mexico outside, is that it?

Daniel Pink: Yes indeed. I mean, when you say you found me, it sounds like I was alluding the authorities.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's right.

Daniel Pink: Which I haven't gotten to yet but no, I am here.

Carey Nieuwhof: He's been located in northern New Mexico.

Daniel Pink: Yes. I am, I'm actually on vacation with my family, we're in northern New Mexico where cellphone coverage is dodgy and even wifi is surprisingly bad. I'm outside of a Starbucks in the DeVargas shopping center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As you can see, we're on video now, our listeners can't see that. But there's a giant delivery truck that's just gone behind me. You get a little atmospheric here, along with the content.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well I'm glad we can hang out and have this conversation. And thanks for making some time. I mean, you've written a number of really significant, important books, that have made a big difference to a lot of leaders. But I really want to spend some time drilling down and maybe even nerding out, on your most recent book When.

Daniel Pink: Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which, I found fascinating. A little bit of background, for some of my listeners as you may or may not know, I released this course in 2016 called, The High Impact Leader. It was really the other side of my burnout, I burned out 12 years ago. I got way more productive, not on purpose but by accident. One of the biggest shifts I made in my own leadership was to do what I simply teach is doing what you're best at, when you're at your best. Rather than squandering my mornings with breakfast meetings and exercise. I found I was at my sharpest and you know, I create content for a living. When I shifted my writing and my content creation to the morning hours, my productivity soared.

Carey Nieuwhof: And this was totally anecdotal, like it wasn't well researched, it was just a lot of experimentation. I've taught this for a while and then your book came out. What was it, earlier this year 2018? Called When.

Daniel Pink: Yep.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've done all kinds of incredible research into this. Some of which corroborates but I also think a lot further finesses some of the ideas that a number of us have been experimenting for a while. I'm really grateful. As we begin our nerd out, can you give us just a brief overview of what you researched for the book When and a little bit about your key findings?

Daniel Pink: Sure. The book is about the science of timing and a key point is that, it's just that. That we think that timing is an art. We make a lot of our decisions about when to do things. In a sloppy anecdotal, non-evidence based way. That's what I've been doing for years. I thought there was a better way to do it, so I started

looking at the research. See if there was any research on this and it turned out there was a huge amount of research on this question.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: It was spread across many, many disciplines. From the social sciences like anthropology and social psychology and economics. To the biological sciences, like molecular biology, there's a whole field called chronobiology. And all these researchers were asking very, very similar questions but they weren't talking to each other. I thought if I went wide enough and deep enough into this body of work, this really sprawling body of work, I could begin to piece together the evidence based ways to make better, smarter decisions. The sort of decisions Carey that you made on your own, by observing your own behavior. I do want to get back to that because observing our own behavior is really central to a lot of this.

Daniel Pink: But the sorts of observations that you made, observing your own behavior, turn out to be, some of them turn out to be true across populations. Some of them not, turn out not to be true across populations.

Carey Nieuwhof: Sure.

Daniel Pink: But what this allows us to do is, understand the effect of timing in our lives. The unit of a day, it turns out that when we do stuff in a particular day, it matters enormously more than I ever would've imagined. There's a whole research on breaks, why we need breaks. Why breaks are effective, why breaks enhance performance. Then when you get out it and you widen the lens a little bit, we can talk about how beginnings affect us, how midpoints affect us. How endings affect us, how groups synchronize the time. How the very way we talk about time and think about time, it affects our behavior.

Daniel Pink: There are a lot of, there are a huge number of findings that these researchers have made. But the key idea here is that, we should be making our timing decisions based on science, not based on intuition.

Carey Nieuwhof: Let me ask you this then, when you look back at Dan Pink, prior to researching and starting in the body of work that became When. And Dan Pink today, how are you different?

Daniel Pink: Well I mean, that's an interesting metaphysical question. I'm not sure that I'm different but what I do is different, significantly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah.

Daniel Pink: So for instance, well let me take a step back and talk about what we know about science, over the course of a day.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Because this is how to, this book more than any of the others that I've written, Carey I've had the biggest effect on basically the ground truth, the lived experience, the day-to-day operation of my life, more than the other books that I've written.

Daniel Pink: It's a very, at the very least, or at the core I guess, I have become much more intentional about when I do things. We can start at the unit of a day. What we know about the day is that all of us move through the day in three broad stages. Peak, trough, or recovery. Peak, a trough, or recovery. During our peak, that's when we're most vigilant. Vigilance allows us to bat away distractions, which makes peak period the best time for work that requires focus. Heads down, focus. Creating content, writing, I think would be a great example of that.

Daniel Pink: Trough, usually for most of us, almost all of us, the early to mid afternoon.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Terrible time of day in general, all kinds of bad stuff happens during that day. During that time, that's why we're better off doing our analytic, our administrative work during that time. All the sort of dribs and drabs of answering routine email and filling out reports and all that.

Daniel Pink: Later, later in the day, that's for most of us, later in the day, our mood is increased. Our mood is high but our vigilance is not so high. That makes it a good time for this period called the recovery. It makes it a good time for certain kinds of work that requires mental looseness. Brainstorming and things like that.

Daniel Pink: Basically what we should be doing and forgive the long-winded answer to this question is, we should be doing our analytic work during the peak. Our administrative work during the trough. And our insight, creative, iterative work in the recovery. Most of us move through the day in that order. Peak early in the day, trough middle of the day, recovery later in the day.

Daniel Pink: And then 20% of us who are night owls, evening chronotypes, they're much more complicated. They tend to have their peak much, much, much, much later in the day. Anyway, all of which is to say Carey, for me that, I am somebody who is more of a lark than an owl. For me, you know it's key that the morning is the time when I am more vigilant. That's when I should be doing my writing. I didn't always do that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Once I looked at this research, I became very, very intentional. That's one of the key words here, being very intentional about what I did. Now, on writing days, I will go to my office, which is the garage behind my house in Washington DC. I'll

get to my office not super early, you know like 8:30 or so. If it's a writing day, I will not bring my phone with me into the office. I will turn off my email. I'll give myself a certain quota of words. And I won't do anything until I hit that quota. If I do 800 words on Monday and 800 words on Tuesday, and 800 words on a Wednesday, and 800 words on a Thursday, et cetera, et cetera. That the pages actually pile up.

Daniel Pink: For me, I become much more intentional about doing my analytic work in the morning. I try to put my administrative work, routine emails and all that kind of garbage, in the early to mid-afternoon. Then later in the day, I often, will do my interviews, certain, when I'm on your side of the microphone.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Daniel Pink: And so I become much more intentional about, so that's one way this has effected me. I've become much more intentional about how I organize my day. What's more, I also well let me stop there. And then because there's so many more ways.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's really good.

Daniel Pink: Okay, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, no, no, we are getting really detailed and granular with this. That's interesting, what was the pre-research Dan, like? What was it, was the day, way more haphazard? You know, prior to doing the research?

Daniel Pink: It was haphazard. It wasn't, it was, I mean that's a great word. Haphazard is a really good word because to me haphazard is in some ways, the antonym of intentional, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, right.

Daniel Pink: I wasn't intentional about it. So that's perfect, haphazard is what it was. There would be days when I would go to my office in the morning and write but I would have my phone with me. I'd check Twitter, I would respond to email.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: I would start the day by clearing my email. What I was doing in that is that, during this peak period, this period when I was highest in vigilance, I was squandering that time. I wasn't conscious that I was squandering that time. Now I am conscious of squandering that time, of that time. So I don't bring my phone in with me, I don't spend half an hour looking at sports highlights on ESPN.com. I'm much more intentional. I block that off.

Daniel Pink: And that has made a world of difference for me. No joke, like once I started doing this research, I changed my work schedule and to write this very book. This is, this sounds like a joke, it's totally not. This is the first book I've delivered on time. Every other book I delivered late.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It made that and I mean, writing a book is formidable. I don't know, I read it on my iPad. How many words is When?

Daniel Pink: When is about 60, 65,000.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, my book is 57. That's a big body of work.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean and yours is dense, actual research.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't know, dozens, hundreds of studies.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, hundreds probably.

Carey Nieuwhof: Lots of colation, yeah.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is hard work, I can see that went into it and you delivered it on time. A lot of leaders would be nervous about that and say, "Well Dan, thank you, that's a really nice theory, it works for you."

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You must have a simple life.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: What if my team needs to reach me at 10:00 a.m. and I'm in the writing den? Like what, like there's a lot of FOMO, a lot of fear of missing out, that I think happens.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because we're so accessible all the time, any thoughts on that?

Daniel Pink: Sure, no, I think it's a real issue but.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Like so many things in life, it's a trade off. I mean, what we know is this, we you know from this research, we know that our cognitive abilities don't stay the same throughout the day. They change throughout the day, they can change in material ways. So the difference between the daily high point and the daily low point can be really significant.

Daniel Pink: Then you know the best time to do something, depends on what it is you're doing. It's a trade off, so do you, you know? Do you, if you want to make yourself accessible during your peak, overwhelming during that peak period, there are going to be costs to that. I just want people to recon with the costs. If being accessible to your team is more important than doing your heads-down work, then be accessible to your team. But remember, that period of peak vigilance is fleeting.

Daniel Pink: In many cases and I don't you know, in many, many cases and I've seen this a gazillion times, in organizations. On most things, most people can wait a couple hours.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: That what seems urgent, at the moment that it enters their brain, is less urgent than it really is. It just goes back to the question of intentionality. I think the bigger issue on for leaders, the kinds of people who you work with, the kinds of people who you're writing for, who you're designing courses for is actually the other direction. How do leaders deal with their teams? Let's say that I have a team of people who do their best analytic heads-down work in the mornings. I shouldn't be interrupting them.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: I shouldn't be sending them to a 10:00 a.m. meeting, about the travel voucher policy.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: Right, that's a waste of their time. And I see this all the time, again this is just anecdotal. You know I was in Philadelphia, what was it like, three weeks ago. And this dude, this guy came up to me. "Hey, I'm a copywriter and I totally understand, I'm a lark more than an owl, I do my best writing in the morning but I can't do it because my boss always has me going to a 9 o'clock meeting, a 10 o'clock meeting and an 11 o'clock meeting."

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: And it's like, okay. You got to show your boss this, you got to like, you got to try to educate your boss. I mean it's, that has a very easy solution. It's the same solution from that old joke, where a guy goes into a doctor's office and he says, "It hurts when I do this." And the doctor says, "Don't do that." You know?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Like that you know, it's like so some of these, so. But again, I mean not to sound like a broken record, it's all about intentionality.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: It's all about intentionality and being intentional about how we make decisions. This point, let me just rant for 30 more seconds here. But because this issue is so, so important. When you think about things like meetings, right? The leaders you're dealing with, they spend so much time in meetings, right? Huge portions of their day are devoted to meetings. But when they schedule meetings, they use only one criteria in scheduling meetings and that criteria is availability. That's it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Daniel Pink: We don't, they don't say, "Hey, who's going to be at this meeting?" Are there going to be people who are more vigilant in the morning? Are there going to be people who are more vigilant later in the day? What kind of meeting is this? Do we want people to be locked down and focused and intense and analytical? Is this purely an administrative meeting? Do we want people to be looser and more iterative and able to brainstorm? We don't even ask those questions we just say, "Hey, is Juan available, is Jose available, is Janine available and is conference room 3C open?"

Daniel Pink: And so that's again, to your point, I'm going to say this word, that is not being intentional, that is being haphazard. And haphazard, we're talking antonyms and synonyms. You know a synonym for haphazard is non-strategic.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. This is so helpful and you are preaching to the choir on this end of the microphone. I can tell you. I was so excited to delve into this research because I think it just, it validates and supports so much of what, I think a lot of us have always suspected. But you kind of think, "Oh that's idiosyncratic, that must just be me." What surprised me is, I taught this to thousands of leaders, they're like, "Nope, me too, me too." And now there's actual like comprehensive research to go with it.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: One of the questions that does come up and I really want to dig, do a deep dive into the research. But since you raised it, I want to ask it now. Not everybody's a

boss, not everybody's like you and me. I pretty much get to call the shots on my calendar.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You probably have a fair degree of autonomy with your calendar. But we hear from people almost every week, who are in the middle of organizations, who are second in charge. Who are bottom of the totem pole, who say, "Yeah, I don't, like great, good for you, you know, decide you're going to write till 10:00 a.m. and not get distracted, that is not my life."

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you're not in a place of control or influence, do you have any tips for leaders, as to how they can create a more conducive environment?

Daniel Pink: To the leaders, not to the individuals?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, to the ... Okay, to the person. Sorry, I should say, to the people who are not in that decision making seat.

Daniel Pink: Got it, okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: Who have to go to the 10 o'clock meeting, rather than call the 10 o'clock meeting.

Daniel Pink: Got it, got it, got it. Okay, yeah, yeah, okay, okay. Yeah, no. It's tough.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: And the reason I asked that followup question to you is that, to me it should be the leader's problem. But we'll get to that, we'll talk about what the individuals can do. Because many people are not, as you say, absolutely right Carey, they're not in a position where they can. They have full discretion over what they do and how they do it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: I think that in that case, it's important to work the margins. It's important to work the margins. So, what does that mean? That means that, okay. You got to suck it up and maybe go to that 10 o'clock meeting, all right? Let's say that you're a person who does their analytic work better in the morning, okay. I want to get to people who don't follow that because 20% of the population has a very different pattern and I don't want to neglect those people because they're neglected so much already.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: But let's focus on 80% of us who basically move through the day, peak early in the day, trough middle of the day, recovery later in the day. Like people like you, people like me. Let's say that I'm on it, I'm a copywriter. Okay here we go, I'm a copywriter. And like that guy who I talked to and my boss always makes me go to a 10 o'clock meeting. Right, that's a big pain, it's a waste.

Daniel Pink: The first thing that I should do is that, if I'm free from 9:00 to 10:00, don't check your email. Don't do your routine, don't do that routine administrative work. Don't do the sorts of things that many writers like to do, oh I need to clear the decks first, right? Take that, take what you have. You might not have three hours of heads-down vigilant time, you might have only two hours. Maybe you have only one hour. Don't squander that, it's even more precious.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: That's just sort of, a heightened, it's a heightened degree of intentionality. That's one thing that you can do. Two, you should talk to your boss.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Right and one of the things about talking to bosses that I always advise people, that I've used in my own life is this, when you talk to a boss and you want to make a change, always put it in terms of the boss's self interest. Not your self interest, all right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Daniel Pink: Oh, I would feel a lot better, I'm much more comfortable. Hey boss, I'm really a lark and I don't, you know.

Carey Nieuwhof: Eh.

Daniel Pink: Go in there and say like, if I'm the copywriter with a 10 o'clock meeting I say listen, Maria, boss, here's the thing, right, I have skirted the deadline big time, on some of these last writing projects, all right. The reason I'm skirting it is because it's pretty clear to me that, I do my best work during this 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, period. This 10 o'clock meeting, I understand why we're having it but is there any way that I could skip it once a week? Is there any way that I could miss it twice a week because what I don't want to do is, I don't want to deliver copy late to you, all right?

Daniel Pink: That's how I would do it, so put it in the terms of the boss's self interest.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm.

Daniel Pink: Now, where this becomes a huge issue and I want to get these folks in here. Where this becomes a huge issue, is with people who are in the 20%, who have what are called, have evening chronotypes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: People who are owls.

Carey Nieuwhof: Night owls.

Daniel Pink: They don't follow, exactly. They don't follow this pattern, right? They have, what we know about owls are very complicated but it's one-fifth of the population, it's one-fifth of the workforce. Owls do their best heads-down vigilant work much, much later in the day. Much later in the day, then you and I are talking. 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM, 7:00 PM, 9:00 PM. And the typical world of work is so antithetical to how they work.

Daniel Pink: But let's say they can't avoid it and let's say that I'm an owl. Who has to go, to say, let's dial it back to a 9:00 a.m. meeting.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Okay, if you talk to owls that's, they're miserable at nine o'clock in the morning. They're barely awake. Okay, let's say you can't avoid it. This is another example of how you can work the margin. Let's say I'm an owl, I got to go to this nine o'clock in the morning meeting. It's my suboptimal time, I'm absolutely at my worst.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: But I can't avoid it, what do I do? Here's what, here are some suggestions for the owls out there because I'm assuming one-fifth of your audience is owls.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm.

Daniel Pink: Right, so here I am. Now I'm an owl. I got to go to this stupid 9:00 a.m. meeting that Maria makes me go to all the time. The night before, let's say this meeting is on Thursday. Wednesday night, right I'm at my peak, six o'clock, eight o'clock, right at my peak. I'm going to take 15 minutes and I'm going to think about this horrible nine o'clock meeting. I'm going to think about, what do I need to accomplish at this meeting? What information do I need to gather, what questions do I need to ask. What commitments do I need to secure?

Daniel Pink: I want to think very hard and strategically, what do I need to get done at this meeting, at nine o'clock in the morning? Then what I'm going to do is, I'm going to make myself a checklist, right? I'm going to make myself a checklist. Literally you can put it on a card, you can put it on your Notes program in your phone.

What are the three questions that I need to ask, the three things I need to do at this meeting. That way, when I'm at this meeting in my suboptimal time, I can look at my checklist and make sure I have it. I'm not forcing my groggy brain to retrieve that information during my suboptimal time. I'm thinking strategically during my optimal time. And I'm importing that to this time.

Daniel Pink: The other thing I would do, if I'm an owl and I'm at my suboptimal time and I should do this myself is, before that nine o'clock meeting, don't go you know, say you're driving to work. Don't like drive into work, race into the garage. You know, just press the elevator, go straight into the meeting. What I would do is, I would try to take a five minute walk outside before that meeting. Right, we know about that, there's a lot of research on the replenishing effects of breaks. I would take a five minute walk outside, before that meeting. Some kind of break beforehand to restore a little bit of our mental acuity, restore a little bit of my mental energy.

Daniel Pink: Except that what I want and I think the goal of the book is to have, is for people inside of workplaces to have conversations like this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: And to be as strategic about when we do stuff, as we are about what we do, how we do it, who we do it with.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is so good. So for people who are in the senior seat listening, you've got to dial in on this stuff. Because you're not getting the best out of your people.

Daniel Pink: Absolutely right.

Carey Nieuwhof: For everybody, everybody listening, we've got to figure ourselves out. I did it the hard way, reconstructing over a few years after burnout, to discover that if I pay attention to exactly what you are talking about and what you've researched. I can, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say, I've 10-Xed my productivity and effectiveness as a leader. Certainly doubled, tripled, that's easy, that's a no brainer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just by shifting when I do things, paying attention to when I'm sharp or not. But Dan, what I'd love to do right now is, situate everyone because we've been talking about larks and owls and then there's a middle category as well. Can you just help, yeah, just help everybody find themselves in the story. So quick diagnosis for like, oh yeah I'm a lark, oh yeah I'm an owl, oh I'm in the middle.

Daniel Pink: There are a couple of assessments out there, they are scientifically validated assessments, that people can take to determine. Well this again, it's called your chronotype. You have to think about it as a scale. And one side's super morning people, on the other side, super evening people. What we know about the distribution along that spectrum is, about 15% of us are very strong larks,

morning people. About 20% of us are very strong owls, evening people. And as you say, about two-thirds of us are in between, what I call third birds.

Daniel Pink: You can look online for the Munich ChronoType Questionnaire, the MCTQ. There's also something called the MEQ, the Morning-Eveningness Questionnaire. These are the typical kinds of psychological, biological assessments, where you answer a battery of 20 questions or something like that and it gives you your place on the spectrum.

Daniel Pink: There's also a very easy, there's an easier back of the envelope way, to figure this out. And it has to do with the thought, I'll give you an example from my own experience here. For the people who are listening to this, we can work on it right now. Think about, I want you to think about what's called a free day, a free day. A free day is a day when you don't have to wake up to an alarm clock. You can go to sleep and wake up any time you want. It's sort of like the week I'm on. I'm away with my family this week, I have a free day. I don't, I didn't set an alarm clock. I don't have to be in bed at a certain time. I don't have to get up to go to a meeting or take a trip or anything like that.

Daniel Pink: On a free day, when would you typically go to sleep? When would you typically go to sleep? For me on a free day, I would typically go to sleep about midnight, all right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm.

Daniel Pink: All right, then you say, well on a free day, when would you typically wake up? Again, you don't have an alarm clock or anything like that. When would you typically wake up? I would typically wake up say, at 8:00 in the morning, 8:00 a.m.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: Then you look at you're and so, what you're trying to figure out here is on a free day, what is your point of sleep? What is your midpoint of sleep? This is the key. If I go to sleep at midnight and wake up at 8, my midpoint of sleep is 4, 4:00 a.m., yeah, 4:00 a.m.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: All right. And then so, here's what we know. If your midpoint of sleep is 3:30 or earlier, you're a lark. If your midpoint, probably a lark. If your midpoint of sleep is 5:30 or later, you're an owl. If your midpoint of sleep is in between, you're a third bird. At 4:00 a.m., I'm basically a third bird, I'm larky. I'm sort of on the lark side of lark side of the spectrum. But I'm larky, I'm not a full fledged lark.

Daniel Pink: What I know there is that, okay here's the deal. I'm going to move through the day peak, trough, recover. Peak early, trough in the middle, recovery later in the

day. I'm not one of these super hard core larks, who you know is just kind of naturally, get to the office at 6:15 a.m. and start working. I'm asleep at 6:15. But I'm at the end of my sleep. For me, it's like not anything crazy. It's like, you know for me, if I get to the office at say 8:30 and my commute is modest, it's 22 steps. If I get to the office at 8:30 and I can do heads-down work from 8:30 to noon, three and a half hours, I can get a heck of a lot done during three and a half hours of uninterrupted heads-down work.

Daniel Pink: So that's it and then I'll try to move my administrative stuff to the trough period, in the middle of the day. Then I'll do sort of the more iterative, creative stuff later in the day.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's super helpful for people. Again, you've got that in your book. I did my chronotype and I'm an early lark. I'm on the front end of the lark thing.

Daniel Pink: Really? Really, what's?

Carey Nieuwhof: I'll wake up on a free day, yeah I'm trying to remember now. It's on the same device I've got these questions on because it is I bought the e-book for easy reading on flights. But long story short, I think my midpoint was 2:30 or 3:00 a.m. Like normally I'm up at 5:00, 5:30, even on a day off.

Daniel Pink: Okay, yeah. Wow, wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which puts me at the early stage of the lark.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So what time would you typically get into your office? 7:00, 7:30?

Carey Nieuwhof: I work from home, so yeah.

Daniel Pink: Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm usually working by 6:00 a.m.

Daniel Pink: Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: I have a quiet hour, just a real quiet hour. I'm working by 6:00 a.m. but by you know, by three o'clock, I've done all my productive work that's really in me for the day.

Daniel Pink: Wow, yeah but that's so good.

Carey Nieuwhof: I might phone in for a meeting. Yeah.

Daniel Pink: That's nine hours of work.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, it's too much work, sometimes.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah. Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, but I get a lot done and you know, for me it works out fairly well. I'll take breaks in there and we're going to get to naps.

Daniel Pink: Of course, it's good, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean your stuff on naps is some of the best stuff I've ever read. I want to get there but let's talk about the trough because everybody experiences it. Most of us, third birds and larks will experience that, you're arguing somewhere in the early to mid-afternoon, where it's you know speakers call it the post-carb lunch slump. Where you don't want that afternoon slot in a conference because the audience is going to be half asleep, struggling to stay awake.

Daniel Pink: Right, right.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's when you're pinching yourself in a meeting, trying to keep yourself awake.

Daniel Pink: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Trying to stay focused on a phone call.

Daniel Pink: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: But you have some staggering statistics, actual research about that, it's not only suboptimal that, that, the trough is dangerous.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like medically dangerous, road safety dangerous.

Daniel Pink: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you walk us through some of that research, so people understand how human performance varies?

Daniel Pink: The research is overwhelming. I mean I'll just give you a taste of it. What we know is that, basically every domain. So you mentioned healthcare, so what we know is that for instance, anesthesia errors are four times more likely at 3:00 p.m., then at 9:00 a.m. Look at something like a hand washing in hospitals, massive deterioration of hand washing in hospitals in afternoons.

Daniel Pink: Look at colonoscopies, doctors find half as many polyps in afternoon exams, as they do in morning exams. Go to education, what we know about you know

basically younger, especially younger students is a massive drop in standardized test score, when students take the test in the afternoon. There's a really important piece of research with the LA Unified School District, showing that students who take, the elementary school students who take math in the morning, learn more, have higher grades, higher test scores, then students who take math in the afternoon.

Daniel Pink: There's some very, there's other metrics that have corporate performance that show a big decrement in the afternoon. You mentioned auto accidents, really important here. Really important, it's somewhat complicated because with auto accidents, the more cars there are on the road, the more auto accidents there are going to be.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: Okay, so you have to control for cars on the road. Once you control the cars on the road, the most dangerous time to be on the road is 4:00 a.m., to 6:00 a.m.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hmm.

Daniel Pink: Second most dangerous time to be on the road is 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. So what we know is that, there is this period of the day, when for most of us it's really you know, as you were saying, as you called it, it's really, really, really suboptimal. What we should be doing is, we should try to be doing the least important work during that period. And we should be taking more breaks.

Daniel Pink: Now it's, as it's not always possible to court in all of our least important work in that period. So when we put it in there, we have to recognize, oh wait a sec. You know it's like, listen, it's like driving in bad weather. You drive in bad weather the same way you drive on a sunny day, no. You say, "Oh my gosh, there's bad weather out here, I have to drive a little differently." That's the way to think about this period in the early to mid-afternoon for most of us. It's like, being in the rain, slow down. Recognize that you're more likely to have a problem during this period. And just be intentional about it and also take more breaks.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Is what's fascinating to me, I mean a lot of us who would listen to this podcast, we do the kind of stuff you and I do, not too many people die from reading a bad book. You might put it down after, you know if you miswrite. It's like, it's not the end of the word.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But I mean, if you're in medicine, like you make the case that, no people actually die because they're operated on during the trough or they got an infection because nurses and doctors become less vigilant about washing their hands in the afternoon, then they were at 8:00 a.m. in the morning.

Daniel Pink: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: That, those studies are all adjusted for all the variables too. It's not like the smart kids tested in the morning and the dumb kids tested in the afternoon. It's just.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's staggering. For a lot of us in the office, you start to make some prescriptions about what to do in the trough. Because we all know that, you know you're struggling to stay awake.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You fell asleep at your desk.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You can't study, you can't think.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you adjust for that, so that you know because you got, you can't just go home and have a siesta, although you almost make that case.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: What do you do?

Daniel Pink: Well, I mean again, part of it is, where you have the discretion of putting your least important work in there. You don't have to like, you don't have to be super sharp to answer many kinds of routine emails.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: I'll give you an example from my own life today, where I made this mistake. This is a weird week for me because I'm actually not working. But so, I did something today during my peak period, at like 10 o'clock in the morning, that I would, that I should never have done. It was basically, some conference that I'm going to. Fill out a form that has like your contact information and your bio and all that kind of stuff. Purely administrative. And I took you know, 15 minutes at 10 o'clock to do that. That's a stupid thing to do, right? I can, I should've done that during that trough period. Anything that's administrative, that doesn't require massive brain power, do that during that trough period.

Daniel Pink: The other thing that you should do, once you do is breaks. And what we know about breaks is pretty remarkable. There's a whole, in this book I actually

initially had planned to write about breaks as a component of the chapter on the hidden pattern of the day. When I got into the research I said, "Holy smokes, this research on breaks is really vast and really important." And it actually grew to have its own chapter because I thought it was, the research was so compelling and it had so many ramifications for our day-to-day life.

Daniel Pink: So what we know about breaks is that, we should be taking more of them. And we should be taking certain kinds of breaks. This is, I think the really interesting part. We know certain kinds of breaks are more restorative. One thing we know is, something is better than nothing. Even a literally, a one or two minute break is better than not having any break at all.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm.

Daniel Pink: Which is pretty much how I had operated in the past, going back to one of your earlier questions. I was someone who never took breaks. Something is better than nothing. We know that moving is better than stationary. This consent to which you can move around, you can walk or something like that, during your break. Outside is better than inside. Social is better than solo. Breaks with other people are more restorative than breaks on our own, even for introverts.

Daniel Pink: We also know that you need to be fully detached. At an office, take a break, you have to take an afternoon break with somebody, don't talk about work, talk about something else. And definitely, definitely, definitely do not bring your phone with you. You need to fully detach. And what we know from the research is that, if we take these you know, literally a 10 or 15 minute break, once or twice in the afternoon. And can figure it in the way that I just described, outside, moving, with somebody else. That's a good way to mitigate some of the dangers of that trough.

Daniel Pink: You see this research in medicine where there are, where doctors are taking, surgical teams are taking certain kinds of breaks to make sure that they have everything set. You see this in the research, some of the research on education. Where one way to get those declining afternoon test scores back up, is to give kids a 20 to 30 minute break before they take the test. That generally raises the test scores.

Daniel Pink: What we have to do is, we have to get past this idea that I had for many, many years. That breaks are concession, a sign of weakness, an indicator of a lack of seriousness, a sign of wimpiness. Instead, say hey, breaks are part of work. Breaks are part of performance. And as always, per my broken record thing, we have to be intentional about them. The way to do that, I found, was to schedule your breaks. What I do on days when I'm in my office is I will schedule in the afternoon, say 1:30, take a walk around my neighborhood. Or four o'clock, my wife also works at home, maybe four o'clock we'll go out for a walk at four o'clock, 15 minutes. It makes a huge difference.

Daniel Pink: The evidence is pretty overwhelming about breaks. I really think that breaks are, that once the science takes hold, we're going to think, oh my god remember those old days where we never took breaks because we thought it was, it'd hurt our performance, what were we thinking? In the same way it's like, remember that time 15 years ago, when we thought people who pulled all-nighters were heroes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ah huh.

Daniel Pink: And now we know they're fools. It's the same kind of thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Just so people are crystal clear, give us a picture of what your mental energy or just even your physical energy. You're in a trough, you're exhausted, you're tired.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're fighting fatigue and focus and all those things. How restorative is, let's just pick a 15 minute walk around the block without your phone.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you get 60% of your energy back, 30%? What is it like for the average person?

Daniel Pink: I actually don't know the answer to that. I don't think we know at that level of specificity what it does. What we know in general is that on many measures, it can improve performance.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: We know in hospital settings that it can reduce errors. So for instance, I'll give you, let's go back to that hand washing study. There's a brilliant piece of research done by Katy Milkman at Penn and Brad Staats at UNC. What they saw was that, hand washing declined significantly in the afternoon. But when nurses had, when they gave nurses social breaks, that is breaks with other people, it climbed back up. I can't remember exactly. But it did climb back up to like-

Carey Nieuwhof: Without telling them kind of, to wash their hands. It just sort of automatically did.

Daniel Pink: No, exactly because exactly. And they weren't breaks to wash their hands, they were breaks to go out for a walk. But that restored their energy. You see it in the research on one of the big important pieces of research on testing showed that, as I said, giving these kids a 20 to 30 minute break, actually had a pretty profound effect. It raised their scores even a little bit higher than the norm. I don't think there's a universal number out there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: But we know it's going to be positive, that you're going to perform better if you take that 15 minute break. It is a kind of math that's sometimes hard for us to understand. It's like basically taking 15 minutes off is going to allow you to get more done. Even though, it seems counterintuitive. We say oh well, you know if I take a break, that means I'm going to get less done. But actually in most cases, taking that short break means you're going to get more done ultimately.

Carey Nieuwhof: You actually argue in the book that schools that are cutting recess and shortening lunch breaks, should reverse that.

Daniel Pink: Ah huh.

Carey Nieuwhof: And say more about that because that was my favorite part of school, like I'm sure a lot of listeners.

Daniel Pink: Here's the thing okay, so let's go. Let's talk about this in purely scientific terms.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: All right. Surely, here's what we know from the science of breaks. I gave you the what we know about breaks, what are the best kinds of breaks. What do we yeah, something is better than nothing. Social is better than solo. Outside is better than inside. Moving is better than stationary. Fully detached is better than semi-detached.

Daniel Pink: I basically have described recess, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: It's outside, it's moving, it's social, it's fully detached, okay. What we know from some, what we have to get past here is this idea that, breaks are a deviation from performance. That breaks are a concession. They are not and the way to look to this is through, I think through athletes. You have athletes who train, it's not like they don't take breaks. Of course, they take breaks.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: They would think it's insane not to take breaks. It's the same you know, you look of the work of Anders Ericsson, the guy who came up with the idea of deliberate practice. He has this really important piece of research, fairly well known about elite performers in music. And elite performers, elite violinists take more breaks, than the ones who are less elite performers. We just have to get past this notion that breaks are a deviation, that breaks are a concession. That breaks are soft, they're not. They're part of our performance.

Daniel Pink: There's some really, really intriguing research in some lower income school districts in Texas showing that, they're actually raising test scores by adding recess.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Daniel Pink: You know because here's the thing, human beings are not, I mean it's, in some level it's actually not that complicated. A lot of your listeners right now, could be recharging their mobile phones. Right, we always recharge our mobile phone. But we don't, we think that oh, we don't need to recharge ourselves. Of course, we do.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yep.

Daniel Pink: Of course, we do. It's this foolish notion about human capacity. We're just not built to be all on, all the time. Truly, I actually think you would see, here's the thing. If there are only two takeaways from this book, out there in corporate America. One, if we start scheduling meetings strategically, rather than in this haphazard way that we've been doing. Start scheduling meetings thinking, who's going to be there. What kind of chronotype. What kind of work are we doing. Having intentionality about meetings.

Daniel Pink: And if everybody, every workplace in America has, says hey everybody here's what we're going to do at our workplace. Every afternoon, during that trough, I want everyone to go take a 10 or 15 minute walk outside with someone they like, talking about something other than work.

Daniel Pink: We do those two things, I think we add .5%, we had half a percentage point on GDP.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Yeah, that's and another-

Daniel Pink: That's some fuzzy math there, I'm just sort of goofing around.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah, yeah but.

Daniel Pink: But there's no question that it would actually improve performance.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I love this. You're really speaking to my heart and also to my mind. Another conversion experience you had doing the research, writing the book is, you used to hate naps. Not so much anymore. You invented this term, I don't think I wrote it down, I might not get it right. Is it the Nap-spresso or?

Daniel Pink: No, close, it's close. It's actually not my term, it's been out there for a while, it's called a Nappuccino.

Carey Nieuwhof: Nappuccino, that's even better.

Daniel Pink: It's basically a way to, it's basically the ideal nap. Here's what we know about naps. First of all, naps are pretty good for us. They restore vigil energy, they restore, not only mental acuity. But the ideal nap is surprisingly short. Shorter than I would've ever imagined, between 10 and 20 minutes long. You go beyond 20 minutes, you begin developing what's called sleep inertia, which is that groggy, boggy feeling you get when you wake up from a nap.

Daniel Pink: A nap from 10 to 20 minutes is really ideal. It gives you that restored mental acuity, without any cost of grogginess. But there's a way to turbo charge that, as you say Carey, which is and I've done it, I don't do this every day at all but I do, do this. What I will do is, I will set my alarm for 25 minutes. Count down time on my phone, count down time on my phone for 25 minutes. Then I will sit in the chair in my office. I'll put on my noise canceling headphones. The very headphones I'm wearing right now. Put on my noise canceling headphones, set my alarm for 25 minutes. But right before that I will, sort of at that moment, right before I set the timer, I will just gulp a big cup of coffee. I'll just make myself a cup of coffee and I'll plunk some ice cubes in it. Just, I'm not doing it for enjoyment, it's purely medicinal. Gulp, I'll gulp that cup of coffee. Right, it seems kind of weird.

Daniel Pink: Then I will close my eyes. At this point, I can usually fall asleep in 10 minutes. I sleep, so I've taken 10 minutes to fall asleep. Alarm goes off in 25 minutes, so that's 15 minutes of napping. Right in that sweet spot. I've got the ideal length nap but I've turbo charged it because it takes about 25 minutes for caffeine to enter our bloodstream. Remember I had that nap, that coffee right at the beginning. So when I'm waking up, I get the boost of the ideally, the timed nap, plus the added benefit of a caffeine boost. A Nappuccino.

Daniel Pink: There's actually a lot of good research on this, showing it. There's one paper that does describe it as the ideal nap. What's interesting to me anecdotally about all of this is that, when I wrote out this, I've gotten so much email from two groups of people. Graduate students or former graduate students and people serving in the military or people who had served in the military. Talking about how they had used that technique. They thought it was really weird, they thought they were the only one who did it. But the coffee, then nap.

Daniel Pink: I've had so many people say, "That's how I got through graduate school." That's how I was able to survive a certain stretch of really demanding work in the military.

Carey Nieuwhof: The Nappuccino. Best phrase ever. I have done that anecdotally. And actually before this interview, about a half hour before this interview I took a 15 minute nap.

Daniel Pink: Oh really, okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yep. I've been doing that for years.

Daniel Pink: Because you're in the afternoon? Yeah, you're in the afternoon, I'm in the morning.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I'm in the afternoon, you guys are still morning where you are.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But that, I find you know and I use the analogy of plugging your phone back in. If I take a 10 to 20 minute nap, it can be as short as five, depending on the time I have available.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is like my phone goes from 40%, not to 100.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But maybe to 80 or 90 and I'll take 80 or 90 at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Daniel Pink: 2X man, I'll totally take that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah. You're a boss now and we got a lot of leaders listening who do have control. What advice would you have for a boss. You've already said give your employees a 15 minute break, give them reschedule time. What does this, like what are some little hacks that employers can adopt right away, that will boost productivity and ROI for them?

Daniel Pink: Well, I mean in the course, you know in a given day is basically, figure out people's chronotype. Let people figure out their chronotype and let them do the right work, at the right time of day. That's the most important thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Two would be, schedule meetings strategically, rather than in this haphazard way that we typically schedule them. Three would be, think of breaks as part of performance, not a deviation for performance. I think those three things right there, over the course of a day are, can have, I mean I'm not exaggerating, really dramatic effects on employee wellbeing and on employee performance.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can we, let's go back to the three chronotypes again?

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: The third birds, the owls and then the larks, those of us who like to get up early. Can you walk us through because your book subtitle is Perfect Timing. What does an ideal day look like for each type, in a nutshell? We've hinted at it, we've skirted around it. But I just, I want to drill down.

Daniel Pink: Well no, it's pretty simple, I mean it's pretty simple. Let's say that you're, so if you're a lark or a third bird. You should be doing your analytic work in the morning. Analytic work is work that requires focus. Work that demands vigilance. You know again, if we think about writing and the people who are writing out there. The greatest enemy of writing is distraction. When you're writing, the whole world is conspiring to distract you. You want to be at your, you want to do that kind of work at your point of max, at their lowest point of distractibility. Which is when we're highest in vigilance, which for most of us is the morning.

Daniel Pink: The larks and the larks like you, you're going to want to start your analytic work early, pretty early. For third birds like me, somewhat early, all right. Then again during, so in the morning. Again, people have to, going back to I think what you said originally Carey, is that we have to be observant about our own behavior. I can't go over there and say, everybody should start working, doing their heads-down vigilant work at 7:35 a.m. No.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: There's going to be variant, at that level, there's going to be a lot of variance. People have to experiment. Am I better off doing that analytic work at 8:00? Am I better off starting at 9:00, am I better off starting at 6:00 a.m., like you. Again, analytic work requiring vigilance, early.

Daniel Pink: Almost all of us have that trough in the middle of the afternoon, in the early to mid-afternoon. There's a period between again, it's going to vary from person to person. But this period roughly, somewhat, some section of say 12:30 to 3:00, all right. Some section of that, you're going to see big drops in mood, big drops in performance. You have to say, okay if I can, if I can do less important work during that period, that's what you do. If I still have to do important work during that period, I have to be intentional about taking breaks. I have to be aware of what's going on and take some steps to make sure that, the down draft is less than it ought to be.

Daniel Pink: Later in the day, again, for larks and for third birds. Is the recovery period, where your mood is back up, your vigilance is lower. And that's when you should be doing more iterative kind of work. You're solving problems that don't have obvious solutions. You're brainstorming, you're coming up with new ideas. Things that benefit from some amount of mental looseness.

Daniel Pink: Again, analytic work in the morning. Administrative work in the early to mid-afternoon. Recovery period, late in the afternoon, early in the evening, more kind of freedom work. Now, I want to just shout out to our owls out there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Because it's very different, right? There isn't a single pattern here. For owls, right, owls are very complicated. If you look at even the behavioral characteristics of owls, owls have, they're more prone to mental illness, addiction, other kinds of personality disorders. They also test higher in creativity. They test higher on intelligence. This is one-fifth of the population, so we can't just ignore that.

Daniel Pink: For owls, the most important thing for owls is this. Your period of peak vigilance is later in the day, okay. 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 9:00 p.m. Right and so, if you're an owl out there, you want to make sure that you can do your heads-down vigilant work, in the late after, in the early evening, into the evening.

Daniel Pink: This is one reason why a lot of owls opt-out of certain kinds of professions and even certain kinds of work structures. Because they want that kind of customization, to their own work. If you're an owl, you got to, I think for owls it's really important that you look for a workplace that will accommodate you. That doesn't say, hey wait a second, you're not going to, you don't want to be at your desk at 8:30 in the morning, what kind of slacker are you?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: Right and it's not enough to say, oh well I'm an owl, I'm not a slacker. I don't think that's a winning argument. You have to look for workplaces that accommodate that. Now smart workplaces, you see this especially in tech are like, you know what, you want to work at eight o'clock at night, that's cool, go for it. For the leaders out there, you have this population of owls, that isn't treated very well by many workplaces. This is a great, great source of talent, if you're willing to give them some discretion over when they can do their work.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's a really good word because I, you know as you were describing owls, both in the book and in this conversation. I'm thinking, I'm not an owl, I'm the opposite. But if I was, I'm like great, I can't have a meaningful job.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I don't come alive until everybody goes home.

Daniel Pink: Right, you can have a meaningful job at a place, the minority of places that allow that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: Or as I was saying before, you go and you become, you go and you become self employed. But again, so I actually think that we can look at this as, for leaders especially, we can look at this as an opportunity, rather than a problem. What we have here is we have this one-fifth of the workplace, one-fifth of the talent pool is not being treated well by traditional work arrangements. Hey, if my

organization is going to change their work arrangements to accommodate these folks, then I'm going to have an edge attracting the best talent.

Carey Nieuwhof: One of the things I think that we've all watched happen before our eyes, is there's a work revolution happening. I mean for many years during the industrial revolution, you know means of production were tied to a factory, a building.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: You had to be there at 7:00 a.m., whenever your shift started, you were basically chained to a machine until whenever you were done.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: We kind of adopted that in the office, in the 20th century, right? Work starts at 8:00.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: We're done at 4:30, you get a 15 minute break and just sit there.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, right.

Carey Nieuwhof: And again, computers were stationary. Right?

Daniel Pink: Yeah, right, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like you kind of, you didn't have a computer in your pocket.

Daniel Pink: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: You couldn't afford one at the house.

Daniel Pink: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was the commercial equivalent of an industrial thing. But that's all changed, everybody has their own devices now. You can work anywhere, anytime. You can do a podcast at a Starbucks in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean you can.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, you know our, I guess what I'm trying to say is, I think this research is becoming even more important because so many of us have so much more freedom than we would've even a decade or two ago. Any thoughts on that and how the workplace's take is adopting and changing and what smart employers are doing now, to equip and mobilize their workforce for the future?

Daniel Pink: Yeah, I mean I think you have it exact, I think you have it exactly right. In that, many elements at work have become customizable. The when of work is just another, is another part of that. I think that the danger for organizations is that, if they don't allow the when of work, to become customizable, they're going to be losing out on large swaths of talent.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: And the key here is really, is you say it is to shake off this mentality that work can only get done between 8:30 and 4:30. Now, there's a lot of inequity, in how people are treated at work. We have to and there's certain kinds of jobs that don't necessarily accommodate themselves to, like let's say you know, you're in retail.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: And the stores open at nine o'clock. You got to have bodies in there at nine o'clock. But even then, what you should be doing if you're a smart employer is you should be putting your larks on that early morning shift. You should be putting your owls on the later shift, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Smart.

Daniel Pink: And both sides are going to accommodate that. Right now, what you have is a boss unilaterally saying, "Hey you work here and you work here." If the boss actually takes into account those kinds of chronotypes, even in scheduling retail, you're going to have less attrition.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ah that's a good point. If you're managing a coffee shop.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Doing retail or anything, you know and you've got shifts. Even in manufacturing.

Daniel Pink: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wouldn't it make sense to have your morning people on the morning shift. And your evening people you know, have your owls doing that. Or you're going to have less injuries, less workplace issues.

Daniel Pink: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's super smart.

Daniel Pink: Right, right.

Carey Nieuwhof: You cover some other issues in the book, I want to touch on them briefly before we wrap up.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You talk about team dynamics. In the science of When, a lot of people get off to a good start. Then there's sort of, a midpoint panic that happens.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's like, oh my goodness, we're half way to the deadline.

Daniel Pink: Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: The people kind of spurt through.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't know that you had the chance to read it or not but Adam Grant in his book Originals, makes a similar argument about the most productive, the top performers. He says you know, the stereotype is everybody gets their work done early.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You know, I've done the report a month in advance.

Daniel Pink: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Or my book is turned in three months before the publisher's deadline.

Daniel Pink: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: He says in reality what happens is, a lot of top performers start early and then they procrastinate. Then they use the last part of the deadline to push them toward heights and creativity and still get it done on time. What are you finding in that, in terms of group dynamics and procrastination?

Daniel Pink: Yeah, I mean there's some interesting research from Connie Gersick, who was at UCLA, showing pretty much that. That if you look at the pattern of how teams do their work, it is nonlinear.

Daniel Pink: At the beginning, people have enthusiasm but at the beginning of a team project, people are enthusiastic. Then you know, people plan and they seek status and do all that. But they actually don't accomplish a huge amount of actual work. And the work really starts in this sudden burst of activity, that seems to occur eerily at the midpoint.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: If you give a team 21 days, they could start it in earnest on day 11. And there's often, when you look at the actual specifics of how the team works. If there's someone raising their hand or offering up a time signal saying, "Oh my god we squandered half of our time, we got to get going."

Daniel Pink: What we have to do with midpoints is and midpoints are complicated is that you know, sometimes midpoints can drag us down, other times they can fire us up. But the key is to recognize midpoints, so if anything has a beginning and an end, by its nature has a midpoint. Midpoints are going to have an invisible effect on our behavior. Again, sometimes they bring us down, sometimes they fire us up. Fire us up but if you're a leader, you should make the midpoint salient, you should announce the midpoint because that can be galvanizing for people. One of the things we know from a raft of research in sports and other things is that, if people feel like at the midpoint they're slightly behind, then they really bring it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hmm, what about endings, Dan?

Daniel Pink: Now endings again, endings have a huge effect on our behavior. Really, I think really are really fascinating with our behavior. Endings can help us energize in the same way. When we get to the end of something, when the end of something becomes salient, sometimes we'll kick a little bit harder. This is one reason why people disproportionately run first marathons at age 29, age 39, age 49 and age 59. Because they're getting to the end of a decade, so they feel like they have to do something. It's galvanizing, that's one reason why interim deadlines can be effective.

Daniel Pink: Endings have a disproportionate effect on how we remember entire experiences. And you know, in general endings matter a lot, endings matter significantly actually, on how people remember entire experiences. In general, we prefer endings that have a rising sequence, rather than a declining sequence. Again, it comes back to and for the leaders out there, to be intentional about endings. How does a project end? How does someone's tenure at your organization end? Because endings have a disproportionate weight than other elements of the episode.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you say more about a rising sequence, toward an ending, rather than a declining sequence toward an ending?

Daniel Pink: One of the best examples of rising sequences and declining sequences is some of the research on giving people, delivering news.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: When we think about news, we sometimes say, "I've got good news and bad news." The question becomes, what do you deliver first, the good news or the bad news? I was always someone who gave the good news first.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Daniel Pink: As a way to, kind of soften the blow a little bit. That's completely wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hmm.

Daniel Pink: What we know from the research is that, vast majority of people prefer to the bad news first and then the good news. This is part of a larger preferences for rising sequences, rather than declining sequences. We want, so and that means, I don't want to say happy endings, in the sort of Hollywood dignified sense.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm.

Daniel Pink: But basically, sequences that go up, rather than sequences that go down. If you're giving good news and bad news, give the good news first. Give the bad news first and then the good news. Bad, then good. This is also true in certain kinds of other sequential things that we do, when you lay out a set of options. Sometimes, the last option can be more appealing if it has a rising sequence of it. But again, as I said you know 37 times because this is really the key, it's like, it's a matter of being intentional about it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Daniel Pink: We're less, we're not very intentional about how we end projects, how we end tenures at companies. How we end conversations. How we end encounters. If we're intentional about that ending, we can get more done.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, one of the things I really appreciated about your book Dan is, how practical, how well researched it is. I guess that's two things I appreciate about it. I really also appreciate your time.

Daniel Pink: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've been extremely generous with us. People are going to want to find out more about you. Obviously you can get *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*, anywhere you can buy books. But what's an easy place for them to connect with you online?

Daniel Pink: Just check out my website, which is DanPink.com, D-A-N P-I-N-K.com. All kinds of free resources, email newsletter, other groovy stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've been so helpful today Dan, thank you so much.

Daniel Pink: Thank you for having me, it's been a pleasure.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well I love this interview, honestly. I love nerding out on stuff like that. Dan was great, in being willing to chat and get into the nuances of the secret and the science behind perfect timing. His book is called When, you can buy it anywhere books are sold. Links to everything we talked about are in the show notes. Including guys, transcripts. You asked for them, you got them. Every episode for the last few months has got transcripts. If you're a reader, you want to share it with your team, they are downloadable, all right. Just head on over to CareyNieuwhof.com/episode233. You'll find everything there. Or just search Daniel's name and my name and it'll pop up from the Googles.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, next week we're back with a fresh episode, tell you about that in just a second because I'm very excited about it. In the mean time, if you are looking for better strategy for 2019, please make sure you check out what our partners are offering.

Carey Nieuwhof: Red Letter Challenge is helping small and large churches dive into the teachings of Jesus. And also, really see a huge growth, a spike in small group, worship attendance, online strategy. Go to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey for more.

Carey Nieuwhof: And Pushpay, guys seriously, what's your mobile strategy? You need one and digital giving, about 80% of our giving right now at Connexus is digital. It makes a huge difference. Head on over to Pushpay.com/Carey. And sign up today or at least have a conversation with the guys, okay? This could be a breakthrough year for you and that's what I'm cheering for.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which leads us, to the next couple of episodes. We are in the church space, in the business space on this podcast. But I'm going to do a deep dive into the church space. You know what, I've heard a growing number of business leaders say, yeah I know church leaders always say, "We have a lot to learn from business." But business leaders are increasingly saying, "We have a lot to learn from the church, I mean let's be honest." Businesses pay their employees, church leaders don't. You got to motivate people like it's a crazy, complex leadership task.

Carey Nieuwhof: The next couple of episodes on this podcast are pretty exciting because I talked to Donnie Griggs. And Donnie is all about how to make a big difference in a small town. We have a fascinating conversation. What works, what doesn't in small communities. Because honestly, the churches are going dark, they're dying in small communities. How to find great leaders there and even multi-site, like rural multi-site is becoming a thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then we have another episode coming up with John Van Pay. He in 2017, was or is still, the lead Pastor of the fastest growing church in America. He's going to talk about how to be home five nights a week. How to find margin amidst growth. And how to say no, to stay focused. Fascinating, you can do all those things and grow a church.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then coming up, I talked to Jonathan Pokluda. It was a fascinating conversation because we're going to talk about the fastest growing and largest young adult's ministry in America. Literally tens of thousands of people engaged in The Porch. We'll talk about the key to the millennial and Gen Z mind. I've also got Lysa TerKeurst, David Kinnaman, John Gordon, Gary Chapman, Frank Bealer, Jud Wilhite. So much more coming up for 2019. Oh did I mention John Ortberg as well, Ed Stetzer, Tyler Reagin. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you guys haven't subscribed yet, do so. It'll automatically appear on your devices, on release day. I appreciate you guys so much.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just a quick little reminder before we go because you listen to the end. It is a free giveaway week, seven million downloads and counting. Crazy, so we're giving away free Starbucks every single day this week. You can simply follow me on the socials, all the socials, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. Carey Nieuwhof on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook it's just C. Nieuwhof. And we're giving away, well about 100 bucks to Starbucks every day. If you're in line and the notification comes up that we just loaded a card, you can buy your nice little holiday cheer for yourself. That's good anywhere North America, so really excited for that guys.

Carey Nieuwhof: And thank you again. Thanks for being so awesome. And of course, we're going to see you next week but all this week we're celebrating. Follow on the socials, if you want to play along and get some free holiday cheer. Thanks so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

Announcer: You've been listening to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change and personal growth, to help you lead like never before.