

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:

Hi everybody and welcome to episode 253 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I'm really excited to bring you today's episode. Kadi Cole is a fantastic leader, and she's got a brand new book, and we're going to drill into the subject of the new rules for men and women in the workplace and creating a culture that leverages female leaders regardless of your theology.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So this has been an issue in the church also in business. Do women really have the same opportunities as men, et cetera, et cetera. Kadi, honestly, one of the most refreshing voices I've ever heard on this subject. You're going to love this interview. She's brilliant. She's led at very, very high levels and she is amazingly open minded. I think you're going to really enjoy today's episode. Also, want to say thank you for all of the support and all of the encouragement coming out of South by Southwest.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'll give you an update on that in a few minutes, but I got to tell you, it was an incredible experience. I can't remember a time where I got more direct messages, texts and encouragement, comments, et cetera, et cetera. As I did in my time at South by Southwest a couple of weeks ago. So I'm going to give you an update on that, but I want to talk to you about opportunities you may have missed. You ever miss an amazing opportunity. So a buddy tells you about a special he got, but it's already over. Yeah, been there. Well, there is a special today that you do not want to miss with our friends at Pro Media Fire. A lot of churches are struggling to try to make it in terms of social media, not enough budget, et cetera. Well, how about 40% off the media bundle for life. Now this special expires at the end of March, which check your watch real soon. Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The media bundle includes custom video creation and graphic design for one monthly flat rate. You get a graphic designer, animator, and video editor for less than the cost of one staff hire. They can make your sermon series, graphics, social ads, sermon bumpers, whatever media your church needs. Check out the video and design plans at Promediafire.com/carey. This is the last month for the media bundle launch special. If you're listening later, it was March, 2019 don't miss it, 40% off. It's available only to listeners of this podcast, promediafire.com/carey and get all of your media needs met.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Also, how's your time management going? You know a lot of people set new year's resolutions. I know we're four months on the other side, pretty much of New Year's resolutions, but life is busy. Your phone's buzzing all the time. You got a million things to do. Your priorities get hijacked over the course of the day. If you haven't yet checked out the High Impact Leader course, it is open now. So head on over to the High Impact Leader. It's basically how I beat burnout and how I've stayed not only not burnt out but alive and well and doing podcasts

and blogging and speaking and preaching and writing books for the last 13 years.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I share my whole system with you at thehighimpactleader.com. Check it out. It's an online course that you can do on demand, on whatever device you happen to be on anytime. I would love to welcome you into the High Impact Leader. Get your life, get your leadership back, go to thehighimpactleader.com and yeah, love to see you inside that course and get you reclaiming time and energy and get all that working in your favor. Well, once again, hey, thank you so much for South by Southwest.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It was really hard to describe how awesome that experience was. I blogged about it, we'll link to it in the show notes about seven things I learned at South by southwest. But even being with a crew that just generally doesn't go to church was so refreshing. Speaking in front of a crew that never goes to church. Really fascinating but best yet just an amazing opportunity to connect with people and like it's really cool preachers never get invited to speak at events like South by southwest. So to be there was exceptional. I hope to go back in the future, and I just wanted to say thank you so, so much. To all of you, I know some of you voted back in August. I was part of the panel picker program for South by and yeah, things went really, really well. We will link to the blog post where I talked about it so that you can check it out.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Okay. You'll find all that in the show notes and a whole lot more. But in the meantime, my conversation with a woman who I really have enjoyed getting to know over these last few months, she's got a brand new book called Developing Female Leaders. She has been an executive pastor at a very large church, served in a number of church and corporate positions, and I think is one of the freshest voices out there, perhaps the best on the New Rules for Men and Women in the Workplace. Here is my conversation with Kadi Cole. Well, Kadi, welcome to the podcast.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Thank you, Carey so much. It's really an honor to be with you and I'm excited to talk about this subject.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, it's nice to meet you. We're doing this virtually. You're in West Palm, which is always fun.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yes, and usually sunny.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Is there anything bad about West Palm Beach?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

The summer's do get really warm. I think people don't realize that we just have reversed a season, so when we have little kids, we spend our summers inside and the air condition playground at the mall, but we spend our winters outside so it's opposite.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well, I'd take that. That's pretty good.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Yeah, the winter is very nice though. That is true.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) You and I were saying, we're speaking at an event probably after this or before this airs in England. Together, we're doing a few days with some church leaders who have gathered from across the UK and part of continental Europe. So, that'll be a lot of fun.

[Kadi Cole:](#) It will be exciting. I'm excited to go over there and meet them and hang out with you. So it'll be good time.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well, Katie, almost everywhere you've gone, you've had this rocket ride into the executive level of leadership. So tell us a little bit about that.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Oh Gosh. Well, I haven't really ever thought of it that way, but I have been really privileged to have some wonderful leadership roles really from early on. I think I'm just blessed to have a unique set of gifts that people like to applaud and promote. So I bring organization to chaos. I like to teach people and I love to interact with folks and I'm also a two on the Enneagram, so that always makes me willing to help out in whatever place is needed. So leaders tend to love that about me, especially in Christian ministries. So, yeah. I was a nurse professionally. First, that was my first career and that's how I ended up in Florida from the Pacific northwest.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Worked in psychiatry and throughout different places in a hospital and then eventually moved to a Christian University here in town and became dean in student development, overseeing health and wellness and eventually residential life and programming. From there I was recruited by my church, which at the time was a couple thousand people and growing rapidly, [one site 00:07:16], we didn't know to call it one site then, but it was one site and I came on staff to help them scale the growth and just started. We were kind of just holding on for dear life because things were taking off and we weren't quite sure how to build the systems or how to structure things. So I came on and helped the executive and senior pastor work on those things.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Were you there before the transition at Christ Fellowship to Todd and Julie from coach or after?

[Kadi Cole:](#) Nope. Before, so I went on staff there around I think in the year 2000. So coach Tom was the senior pastor and founding pastor. Todd was the worship leader at the time and just transitioning into the executive pastor role. He's had every job in the church, I think. So we we're multiplying and growing and trying to add staff and structure and those of your leaders who have gone in that those early days of high growth, that's really wild but exciting time. So we were just trying to figure everything out.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

So we're going to talk about Women in Leadership. I thought you wrote an incredible book on this and I don't say that lightly. We have a lot of authors on the podcast and now seriously I told you before we started recording. It's the best book on Women in Leadership I've read, and one of the things you do really cleverly? 'Cause I thought, I wonder where theologically, you're going to land. There are a couple of times he used the word theology aside and then you even have a theological primer in your book about the different positions. So if you're listening for a business context and you're like, what are they talking about? There is in church world, shall we say, a difference of opinion about the role of women in leadership. Is that fair to say?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

That's an accurate statement. Yes.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Yes. Okay. So I know business people are like, what? But anyway, theology aside, can you really address, and that's where I want to start. Can you really address the issue of women in leadership while putting theology aside? Because we have a egalitarians, complementarians listening to this and some of them, if they got in a room, we'd really have serious disagreements. So can you just address this issue without having to take a position on it?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Well, I've had the privilege of growing up in a variety of different churches who now I realize had incredibly different views on this theological perspective. I was really blessed to be in those environments and had great opportunities to grow and great opportunities to learn. So I can honestly say I really respect and believe in churches from a variety of different perspectives on this issue. It's a great issue. The reason there's a debate about it, it's because it's not super clear and there's differences of opinions.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

But the challenge for me is, and the reason I think we can address it sort of regardless of where you stand, is that on one side, we have complementarians who tend to believe that women have certain roles that they can fulfill and certain roles they can't. In most complementarian churches, it's totally great to use women in leadership over women's ministry, over children's ministry, and there are great leaders doing great things there.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

However, in my experience, those leaders tend to be underdeveloped. They have fewer resources than the men in their church who are leading men's ministry or student ministries or the equivalent. And so there's a lot of work to do there. Now the challenge though is in egalitarian views, which is that women and men are fully equal and some egalitarian churches believe that can be at any level of leadership, including senior pastor. Those churches too are struggling to develop the women in their congregations and help them grow in leadership.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So I interviewed a couple high level leaders from egalitarian churches, both from denominations who have been ordaining women for over a hundred years, and none of them have either one of these churches have women on their

leadership teams. So they are also trying to kind of crack the nut. A big piece of this is, especially in America, but I think even now that I've gotten to know some friends in Europe about this subject, we've sort of historically had these cultural perspectives of gender roles that are keeping women from really excelling into the leadership they can contribute and many of it is inherited. And so a piece of this book for me is just trying to raise those issues, not trying to change someone's theology. If you have a conviction about something, I want to support you in that. But if you do have a conviction, let's get the most from the women that you have in your congregation and you have gifts that they can bring to really help you fulfill the mission of your church.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It was interesting to me because often books around, so-and-so in leadership where it's a people group or whatever, they tend to have a perspective and there tends to be an argument, and what you said was so interesting that you've worked in egalitarian and complementarian settings where there was a ceiling on your leadership theologically and you're okay with both.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. I think for me personally, I never felt called to be a senior pastor and I didn't necessarily, I didn't go to seminary. I don't know that I necessarily should be teaching the Bible every week. So those things that were sort of out of reach to me didn't really offend me or bother me 'cause they weren't my calling. I think it's different for women who feel called to those things and feel limited. I am a great number two person I do well in executive style roles and like I said, my makeup and my willingness to jump in there and solve problems has really allowed me to fulfill that, in a lot of different ministry environments, several different churches on full time staff. I had very unique titles and really weird what I call a girl title, but the function was very much the same.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

The title never mattered to me. It didn't matter to me to have the corner office. It didn't bother me that people thought I was the pastor's wife or that I was his assistant. Those things didn't offend me 'cause I really got to use my gifts to really make the church better. And that's all I really cared about.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I'm curious, what about the title thing? What's happens with titles? It's like we won't give you executive director of pastors, so we'll call you ex or how did that play out?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

That's kind of exactly right. I know, unless you've done it. I have a feeling there are many women leaders like laughing and rolling their eyes right now with me because it's hard to believe, but what happens? I can think of a church I worked at and I was basically taking over a role that was filled by a man before me. He was associate pastor or something and he got paid a certain amount. I came in as the "special assistant" that was my title. I had more degrees than he did. I had way more leadership skills, I had overseen bigger budgets and I probably expanded the role I think under my leadership from what he was doing. But I got paid less. I got a weird title I took over his office but no one ever came to see me there.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It just has these kind of different nuances, and I think that's one of the things I'm trying to raise in this book is that if we actually stop as leaders and take a look at these systems and titles and ways we sort of inadvertently send messaging about women leaders, we'll realize we're being, in many ways we're saying one thing and doing something else. So on one hand they were saying, Katie, we value you. We know you have a lot of gifts, you are really making a difference here. And especially in private, I was very affirmed. But in the public world or from my business card, it looked like I, answered the phone and sort of reconciled the visa statement.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So as a leader it's challenging to have influence and exercise authority that hasn't really been given to you, and yet at the same time still get the project then still deliver on goals and do it all while being, likable and sort of in connection with everyone and building peer networks, and all those challenges that we all have as leaders. There are some additional challenges for women in Church leadership like that. It's not closed doors, they're just more doors you have to open yourself and not everyone can figure that out always.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, and I think, I think because obviously you know, the books either just out or not quite out yet, and I had the opportunity to read it ahead of time, but I think what you know is so helpful to me. Number one, you as somebody who's always worked alongside women, you actually have women in your congregation. So regardless of your theological position, at least half your church often more is female. Secondly, I'm married as I was sharing with you before we started recording to a very gifted woman, who's a lawyer and a pharmacist and soon to be an author. So I'm very familiar with the skill set that God has given a incredible women and have worked alongside many, most of my team right now for this podcast, women, et cetera, et cetera. But it was convicting because I realized, I'm probably guilty of some false ceilings as well as you know, open as I try to be. But you started your puck. Is the opening line something like you have good hips for birthing, is that actually the opening line of your book? I haven't got it in front of me right now.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

That is the opening line. It's about many people opening up and keep going. So yeah, I was in my early 20s I graduated college and moved to Florida from the Seattle area. I found a great church, and I was volunteering at the singles picnic. I'd probably been there like three months. They put me in charge of the greeter table, so I was handing out name tags and welcoming everyone. And this guy, and now I'm in my mid 40s but at the time when you're 22, a mid 40s guy at the singles picnic is a little creepy anyway. He comes up and, says, "Boy you have really nice birthing hips." And I just stood there-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Probably why he was single in his mid 40s, buy anyway go ahead.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I could clearly clueless in a lot. It was one of those just awkward moments because you are quite sure what to do. I'm trying to be, you know, Christian and

welcoming, but it's very awkward and what do you say to something like that? I'd never been complimented on that before, but it was good to know. So-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

That's what you call it.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I think that was one of many awkward moments in ministry that I'm sure everyone experiences. I'm sure men have them to you, but I don't know that many men get that kind of comment.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

You run through a list of things that you have actually heard of the people you interviewed and I wonder if you could just sort of give us just a snippet of that list because I hope I haven't said, but I have definitely heard all of those things in my journey in leadership and this just orients around sort of the invisible barriers, the things we do that we may not even be aware of that are not helpful.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. Well, and I think I want to start off by saying the reason I actually wrote this book is not because I want to help women get higher in leadership or fulfill things. I care about that, but I really wrote it because of all the amazing pastors who are men who are trying to do a good job about this and are trying to lean into the conversation and are trying to make headway and care about this issue or at least care about the women on their team or their own wives and daughters. I just have met so many in the last couple of years and yet they'll tell me these things that they say to the women on their team and they really don't realize how harmful or at the very least awkward these kinds of statements or attitudes are and what they tell women that is inadvertent. So one of the most popular is, as a pastor who sees a developing woman that ... or a developing leader that is female and they want to help her take steps of leadership.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

And so they put her in the role that's open, and kind of easy. So they make her his assistant. So now she gets to come to the team meeting and she gets to sit down on decisions and she gets to know and learn what's going on. Well, unless you also do that for men on your team, that's really not a developmental role. Yes, she gets to be a part of those things. But unless every leader at your church is taking minutes and making coffee, that's really not a developmental role. It's really assisting you and it probably feels great to her, but it's not preparing her to lead her own team meeting. It's not putting her in charge of a ministry. A couple of other things is we wanted ... I heard someone say once, you know, we wanted to give this gal a promotion.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It was a great job for her, she had been married a year, we've figured she was going to get pregnant. So we didn't want to give her this job with a baby on the way or if she was trying to, we didn't want to discourage her from having a family. Although that's a really great pastoral heart that is very discriminatory and at the very least just you know, requires a conversation with her. I think that's the piece I see the most is really well meaning pastors taking on a pastoral role for the women on their team rather than a leader role and making

assumptions for them with a good heart, but they're usually at the very least the wrong assumption, but at the very most they're leaving her out of the conversation. She doesn't have an opportunity to even know she's being considered for the role, let alone being bypassed for a promotion because of something she's deciding in her family.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Before we move to the next point, there's a few more. Can you coach me on that one because that is a very real issue. My sister, and I've worked with for 10 years. She was single when she started out, I did their wedding. I also work with her husband, and she's now two children in, which is great. She's on mat leave and coming back this summer, but like how do you ... We've had those conversations in very, I hope, helpful ways. We've had that 10 year history, but that is a very real issue for women and men. So, can you have that conversation? Are you not supposed to have that conversation? How do you have that conversation? Because if someone's out of the workplace for six weeks, three months or an in my country a year like that is an issue for everybody. So how do you have that in a way that's helpful?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. I think for me, I found the most helpful is to realize you're actually having two different conversations. You're having a leadership, a supervisor, boss, employer conversation, which has some really significant HR and legal ramifications to what you say and how you say it and how you approach that, but you're also someone's pastor and so you have a heart for them and you want to guide them through these challenging early family years. It's not easy to know when you're a woman who has great leadership gifts, how to steward that well because I know some women who feel like they don't want to be home with their kids, they're career people, but most of the women I know feel torn. I want to be great at both and how do I make that decision and I actually could really use a pastor in my life in that moment to decide do I want to have more kids? Or is my potential in the kingdom through ministry greater than my potential as a mom? Is there a way to have both?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Will my church work with me on that? What should I ask my boss for? So when leaders who are pastors and bosses go into that conversation, there are two sides to it and I've just found it really helpful to name which side you're talking about. So I want to have a leadership conversation with you as your employer. Here are the things I want you to know, I see this in you. I see these things in you. We have this new job coming up. I think you would be great at it. Now I want to flip hats and I want to talk to you as your pastor and I want to say I care deeply about you as a person. I would never want you to feel pressure to take on more at this church than is healthy for you and your marriage.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I want you to be the best mom that you can be and there will always be room for you here. God isn't limited by your parenting and so your life is long. You can have everything. You may just not be able to have it all at the same time. How can we support you as your church family in finding and fulfilling your calling? In fact, all of your callings. How can I pastor you? Which is a totally separate

conversation then. Will you take the job and how long will you be gone on maternity leave? Does that make sense?

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Yeah, yeah. No, that's really helpful. And you know, that's not unlike our conversations that we've had. You want to try, you're really happy for her as a person, as a friend, as you're like, I'm cheering for you. And then you have a separate conversation about, so what does this mean for work, right? And I'm always trying to not put pressure on while at the same time as an employer, you're like, yeah, if you want to come back tomorrow, you can come back tomorrow, right? You know? So it's that's super helpful. And that's for everybody. I mean, anybody who's a boss or a supervisor in any way, goes through that. And increasingly it's for dads as well as for women, right? For mums.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Absolutely, yeah. The tide is shifting that for sure. It's a conversation everyone's trying to sort of renegotiate and find new ways. I want to encourage leaders to really be open to new ways of thinking about that and just encourage you to think about the long play when it comes to, especially young leaders who are in that, those family years, both men and women, but particularly women. Because when you champion a woman to build her career as she's parenting, there is a loyalty that comes back to that that is hard to replace or get anywhere else. And we know that. We know that if there's someone who lets us take maternity leave and our job is still there or something similar or we can flex our work time while we have small kids or work more during the school year and less during summer so we can be home a little bit more, just more available.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

That is gold to me when I'm trying to meet all the demands that are on my life and all the opportunities God has given me. I want to steward all of it. And I really believe there's a win. Like I think I can win and all of it in some way or another. So being able to really kind of play the long game with someone and know that on the other side of those early, especially the early parenting years, there is a commitment and a vitality and ability to contribute. I think that's so much greater when someone has been through that and learn to juggle all those things and their ability to minister is so different when they are on the other side of parenting. So we want those women to make it in ministry over the long haul. We don't want just everyone to work till they're ... be in ministry till they're 25 then you stay home for 20 years and then you ... I don't know what you do on the other side.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Re-enter at 45 or 50 right?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. Keeping a foot in is hugely valuable for me as a female leader, but it's hugely valuable for the church as well.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, and you know, the Gig economy and remote work and virtual offices and virtual teams just make that easier and easier every year with technology.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Absolutely. Yeah. And I think we'll be continuing to see that reinvent and be more the demand. And so I would say to business leaders, particularly, you probably are already looking at this because the marketplace is a little ahead of the church, but especially in churches, just to be open to how we think about these things differently. There's a lot of best practices out there about how to steward that well. You don't have to be worried that someone's just at home, reading magazines and doing her laundry. She's huffing it, she's making it happen. She's a hustler. She can do it.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, you can make the argument that virtual teams are actually more efficient than in person teams. But it's so funny how ... I'm just going back in my mind to when I was in law and I mean, I remember can this person worked part-time was a serious conversation and now it's a joke, because you don't, you don't have to show up chained to a desk from 8:00 to 4:00. You can work off your phone, work off your iPad, your laptop from your home from a coffee shop. You can work from 3:00 in the morning until 7:00 if you want to.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

There is so much work that can be done and we live in an age where more is than ever before. So anyway, it's interesting to Katie, I read a piece and I may have the number wrong, but it was staggeringly high, something like 70% of generation Z, which is basically college and younger want to work in the gig economy. They don't want a traditional job. It's like, I'm going to work for myself, see if he you grab my talent, which creates all kinds of possibilities for people who are parenting in at that stage.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Oh, absolutely. I see it in young adults all the time. I have a 15 year old. Even he sees it that way, that, why would you be chained down? I want to do this thing at this time, and I only want to work during these hours. And so the flexibility and the ability to perform versus clock and for hours is a huge motivator for them. I think too, when you're talking about leadership, we're really talking about the knowledge economy. It's not about clocking in transactions or services. We're talking about having people's brains working on problems and creating solutions and connecting with people and leading. That is something that kind of never shuts off for most of us. And so the ability to be at the right meeting at the right time and then have those things percolating in the background. Even while we're, you know, putting kids on the bus or whatever. Those things are kind of a 24/7 job anyway. So the ability to just steward our time better and be able to meet all of those demands at one time is really exciting to think about.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

So one of the things I thought you did really, really well, and you helped me kind of to see the invisible cultural things that probably are even more invisible to guys than they are to women. But you quote a poem by David Shoulder, is it?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yes.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Which was 100% in jest, but really revealing, listing 10 reasons men should not be pastors. And do you want to just read some of the ... I mean, people should buy your book. They really should be. But you want to just read a few of the reasons that men should not be pastors. And if you're going like, what, just just listen in 'cause this was brilliant. I'd never seen that.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It isn't just, and I'll tell you, it was actually really convicting to me because I realize how many things I had absorbed incorrectly about really what God says about women. So 10 reasons why men shouldn't be pastors. Number 10, a man's place is in the army. So the equivalent to that is, a woman's place is in the home. And so we don't really think about that for guys. One of them says their physical build indicates that they are more suited to such tasks as chopping down trees and wrestling mountain lions. It would be a natural for them to do other forms of work.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Keep going. Read a few more. That was brilliant.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

One of my favorites. Men are too emotional to be priests or pastors. Their conduct at football and basketball games demonstrates this often. Pastors need to nurture their congregations. But this is not a traditionally male role. Throughout history, women have been recognized, is not only more skilled than men at nurturing, but also more fervently attracted to it. This makes them the obvious choice for pastoral ordination. Then my personal favorite number one, men can still be involved in church activities even without being ordained. They can sweep sidewalks, repair the church roof, and perhaps even lead the singing on father's day. By confining them to such traditional male roles, they can still be a vital, important part of the life of the church.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Wow! Yeah, I read that and it just, it challenges so many assumptions in a very humorous way. I think that was my biggest takeaway from the book. You deal with so many issues and we'll go in that direction. But thank you for sharing that. That was really good. So that is David Schoeller 10 reasons men shouldn't be pastors. Fascinating.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I think one of the interesting things about gender bias is there are many things that hold women back, but there are many things that hold men back too because men carry just as many gender biases. For my friends who maybe aren't good at chopping wood and wrestling mountain lions, there is a challenge for men to feel like they aren't manly enough or they're not strong enough leaders or they don't like to speak in public and so how can they have a role in the church? I think that is just as damaging to men as some of these female gender roles are to women. So part of it is just challenging our assumptions about how we look at people and realize that the uniqueness of our giftedness, there's more variety than we realize between just male and female. There's the individuality that God gives us and having freedom to be fully who he made us to be.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Okay. You say that women experience a sticky floor. Can you explain that?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah, so this is sort of that second part too. Well, we all probably have heard about, which is the glass ceiling. In the church we call it the stained glass ceiling. Which are sort of organizational barriers or systems that keep women from advancing in leadership. The sticky floor though is something that sort of holds her back for different reasons. The sticky floor are internal things that tend to keep women from pursuing leadership or advancing in leadership and they're more what's going on in the inside of her. So a couple of examples. One, especially female leaders tend to really battle perfectionism and wanting to be great at everything, wanting to be great from the very beginning. There's when a research project that I talk about in the book where, when they gave men and women a job description, men tended to feel that they could apply for the job and probably do a really good job performing if they, were 60% confident of the tasks or skills needed on the job description.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So if they felt good about 60%, they could go for it. If a woman looked at the same job description, she had to feel confident about 100% of the things on the job description from day one, before she would even apply. She wouldn't even apply for the job to see if she would get it. And so that has huge implications if you think about it, because we might post a role for a staff position or even a volunteer coordinator of the greeters or whatever. And a woman's going to look at what you're asking for and if she doesn't have 100% of those things from day one or has never performed the job before, she feels like she's not qualified. But we know in leadership development, no one goes into their next leadership role having done it before. That's what advancement is all about.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So every new job is new. We have to help women kind of overcome that sticky floor piece that says I have to be great and perfect from the very beginning. The second side of that is, really perfectionism as a symptom of insecurity. One of the other pieces of insecurities, this idea of the imposter syndrome. Maybe you've heard of before, this idea that you kind of feel like you're a fake or you don't really belong or they're going to discover that you're not as good as they think you are. And so women battle that, usually more often than men and definitely in a church environment where they feel like leading might actually be wrong or they've experienced people telling them they shouldn't be leading or shouldn't be taking charge or their gifts are not welcome. That imposter syndromes gets really inflated for women.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

One other one that's very interesting is that women tend to wait for someone to notice their performance or their contribution. They're usually not quick to offer it. They don't tell people about things they've accomplished. They don't like to write a resume. And so when you're a church leader and you don't really know who's getting the job done and you have these, quiet leaders just sort of serving, waiting to be noticed, we're really at a disadvantage because we need to know what people are good at. We need to know what they've accomplished. That helps us know what their potential is. So women tend to hold themselves

back because they don't want to talk about themselves. They don't want to let people know they kind of take too seriously Christian humility to the point where they actually aren't even a part of the conversation. So those are some examples of sticky floor. We go into quite a few more of them in the book.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

But how do you do that without being seen as aggressive or self promoting? I mean, that's the line you're getting to, right?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah, it is a fine line. I'm sure men deal with this also. For me, I think that advice that I got from most of the people that I interviewed for the book is just the need to be honest. Paul talks about being sober about ourselves and just if someone says, "Hey, have you ever done this before?" Would you like to close in prayer. Just saying yes or yes I've done that before. I would love to do that instead of kind of going, "Oh, I don't know, I'm not sure if I'll be good enough." You know, just that kind of seeds of doubt really isn't very godly. That's different than going for something or demanding to be seen or meeting with the senior pastor and showing him your resume. That's the extreme. We don't want to be that-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

'Cause that's who we are all afraid of becoming, right?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yes, women are afraid of becoming that. We don't want to be that person. But if someone asks us or if we do have an opportunity and we have experienced with something, we should be forward in offering it and saying, "Hey, you know, I'm a CPA. I'd love to help you figure out the church finances if I can ever be of service." That's very different than demanding someone affirm you for gifting or give you a role or demanding leadership. That's not the leader we want to recruit. We want to recruit humble leaders, but we want to recruit confidence, honest leaders also.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I'm going to ask you some personal questions. How did you get noticed? You keep ending up in these executive roles. So how did you navigate that? Did you apply? Did you get invited? I'm just curious how that worked out in your life.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Most of the time I got invited. I think, I've been someone that's really tried to bloom where I'm planted. And so again, I think if you're someone who can identify problems and likes to solve them, that is pretty easy to notice in people. And also I've been very respectful. I have a lot of energy, but I have very little ambition. And so, I like to do and I like to be a part of things and I like to help things move forward. I rarely have an agenda for myself. Even like this book I've thought about writing a book. It's a fun dream to have, but I certainly didn't know how to go after it. And so, I think that's the kind of unique combination that most leaders are looking for. A reluctant leader, someone who's got great potential, great energy, has the capacity, but it's just a little reluctant to assume they should be doing these projects, but could be easily convinced.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, somebody who puts live events together a few times a year, you know it's axiomatic among event planners that the person who wants to speak at your conference probably is not the person you want to speak at your conference and the person that you have to nudge or invite or hope to get is probably the person you want which is interesting. It's just a human thing. Seth Goden says that you should pick yourself. A lot of people are out there waiting to be picked, waiting to get noticed. So you did something, I don't know how long ago, but when we were setting up the interview. I've been on your website, it's great. It's really, really well put together. You obviously picked yourself, you said, you know what, I'm going to go out on my own. I'm going to coach, speak, equip, right? How did you do that? How did you decide? 'Cause this is an issue for anybody. Like I'm doing this. And it was sort of this sideline that just got bigger and bigger and bigger until it's like a big chunk of my life right now. But how did you pick yourself?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Well, probably reluctantly to be honest. It felt like it was time to transition out of my full time ministry staff role, mostly because my personal journey, my husband's had a lot of chronic health issues and we've been raising a son together and I was leading at very high levels at a very big church that was moving fast. I could tell internally I was having a hard time recalibrating even though my husband was getting healthier and so I knew I needed to do a change and my leaders were amazing at trying to accommodate and give me options and I just couldn't, I couldn't flip the coin. So reluctantly I left my staff role and just sort of put some feelers out and was like, I'm picking myself for a sabbatical. That's the one thing I did pick is a sabbatical for myself.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Then God just sorta started opening some doors. I work a lot with leadership network in Dallas, which was really rewarding. I do love church and I do love leaders and I love strategizing and helping things be fully what they're called to be. And so, one door kind of led to another and you know, the website I have now is not the website I started out with two and a half years ago. That was more just like me and an email. I've kind of grown into it and then God just ... I get tired and so I go, will anyone hire me just to work at their place and I don't have to think about all these things. And then something like a book deal comes out of the blue or I get to be on a podcast with you and I think, "Oh, maybe there's still more in this."

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I think too, life imitates art. I think for me as a female leader, because I was very comfortable and somewhat wired for a number two role, I never had to worry that number one was in my future. I knew I would never be a senior pastor. I didn't feel called to that. I was in churches where that wasn't even on the radar. And so there was a lot of safety for me in that. I think the personal journey for me, even just as a leader and as a believer following the Lord, is exploring my actual leadership gifts. I've often tease that I'm not gifted in leadership. I don't have like a Romans 12 leadership gift. I'm a learning leader.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Everything I know about leadership, I had to learn. It wasn't intuitive for me. But now I'm like, "Huh, I might have more in there than I thought I did." And I think I'm supposed to take my leadership legs out for a run and see how fast I can go or how far I can go or what that might look like for me. And it's incredibly uncomfortable. I don't enjoy it, but I enjoy the process of living by faith at a deeper level and expanding my own abilities. And, I think confidence is probably the right word. Like my ability to conquer some things mostly at the helm of the leadership decisions.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Oh see, that's really interesting to me because I actually did read your book. I don't read every book getting ready for an interview, but this one kind of brought me in and I'm like, I need to read this book. So I did, but that didn't come through the pages of the book, which is really interesting, and it's reminding me of another interview I did with Cheryl Bachelder. I don't know whether you know of Cheryl, but she was the CEO most recently at Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen. I did an interview with her, which I think is pretty much a masterclass, like a mini MBA, but she had that kind of reluctant leadership too.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It's not like at 20. She's like, I'm going to be CEO and lead this company to 5X growth or a 100X growth or whatever it was. But there she is continually being nudged. I think she got recruited by her board. It's like, well you should just be the next CEO. And she's like, what. Is that like ... I don't know a lot of guys would linger in the sidelines for that long. Maybe I'm wrong, but can you talk about that process a bit more?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Sure. I actually think a piece of it is my age. So I'm in my mid 40s and I think I was the first generation of girls that had science programs for us. I remember winning some science fair thing in eighth grade and everyone was like that girl won the science fair, I was on the news. It was like big stuff. I was talking about coming a nuclear physicist at some point in my life. I'm not sure where that came from. I don't even know what they do, but I just ... I was kind of in that first wave of women to come out of the 70s and come of age in the 80s and early 90s where leadership was being taught and we were being given opportunities, a wave of people going to college, not having babies at 19.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Our reluctance I think is rooted in some of these cultural norms that I grew up with. You know, I was raised by a mom who couldn't get a credit card in her 40s. She had to have her husband co sign. Those are the things I grew up with and kind of the conditioning that I experienced. I mentor a lot of young women now and disciple them. I love it. But there are very few women under 25 who don't think they're going to run their own amazing non-profit in the next three years. Like they just, they know they're meant for greatness. They're starting companies, are going after stuff. They know they can have it all. They've grown up in just a completely different environment. I think part of that reluctance, especially for women is what we've experienced.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

We are kind of on the front edge. You know, I was one of the first women executive pastors in our network that we founded. And at the time, we only have like 30 of us in there. So it's not a big group, but I imagine in a decade it will be, and I actually think this book is timely for now. I don't think it's going to be relevant eight to 10 years from now. I hope, I hope that we've really made progress and we have a whole bunch of women who don't have a hard kind of speaking up or letting people know what they can do or they can imagine themselves leading big ministries or being a part of a movement of something. I think that's in our future.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

One of your pieces of advice is that, regardless of who the boss or the hire is, or the CEO is, that you only are pastor only hire great female leaders? What do you mean by that? Did I get that right?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. I think one of the things that I've seen repeatedly happen and even have experienced myself, is that when pastors decide they want to start including women, they go to the women they are closest to and trust the most. So they turn to their wife, they turn to their administrative assistant, maybe the elders wife that they've known for 20 years. Which is wonderful and these women might be great leaders, but chances are they're not. So it's unusual to have a really too high capacity, type A personalities in a marriage together. You've got, but not everyone has that.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

We made it , and we're actually fun now, but there are some fireworks.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

There's more and more of it.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Oh yeah.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It's tricky. You know, usually opposites attract, and so I think part of what's reinforced this in the church world for longer than the rest of kind of our society is that churches are started by high entrepreneurial, big L leader men. Those men tend to marry women who don't have those same giftings. And so it's a softer woman. It's someone behind the scenes with the gift of helps. These are the pastors I grew up with. Their wife is in the nursery doesn't want to be on stage. So when they teach about marriage or leadership, they talk about men and women in their mindset. They are the man and she is the woman. And they happen to reinforce these cultural gender roles.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So when they start to want to bring women up, they want to bring their wife on stage or they want to talk to their admin assistant. Those are great women and they should share their perspective. But if you're looking for leaders, your leaders are probably not hiding in the shadows and afraid to talk. Your leaders are running companies, they're lawyers, they're running the school board, they're principles, they're out doing great leadership in this, usually in the marketplace 'cause they haven't been able to in the church. Those are your female leaders. And so if you want to bring someone on staff to run all of your

small groups, please don't bring the person who's been great at organizing food for the funerals. Please go get the woman who started her own company or who is managing the mall down the street. Get that leader to come in and run small groups. That's the person who's actually gonna move that ministry forward.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Yeah. I think back over a decade now and I realized our church at the size needed an executive pastor. So the best person I could find was actually a woman in her early thirties who was working at Pepsi at the time. She was a senior leader there. I pulled her aside. I said, how would you like a massive pay cut? You know, just 'cause that's church world. I'll tell you the hardest thing for her was the culture shock was, and I tend to be pretty open I think, but just, I was telling you, we went to a big church event and all the men were doing one breakout and the women were all invited to the other and it was basically, how to do macrame and bake cookies. And she was horrified. It was like, are you kidding me? No one did this at Pepsi. It's the weirdest thing. These gender assignments that we have in the church. She didn't go to any more of those breakouts. We took her to the senior leader stuff.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It's really awkward for women because we do. It is changing. I will say this happens less frequently now and I think more people are aware of it. But you go to a conference and I'm, leading big parts of ministry or leading a new initiative to launch campuses. And my options are the men in one room, and then the women in the other. And the leaders are all in the men's room and the women are the wives who are kind of planning, shopping trips and it's discouraging. But you kind of wonder where should you go? So I just encourage women, go to the leader room, like you're there to be a leader, go to the leader room. Usually that begins to shift the conversation or bring awareness to it.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

That's good. You also have some thoughts on pay and platform time. Those are a couple things you've identified as issues and it seems silly that we're talking about equal pay for equal work but, or work of equal value. But what are your thoughts on that?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Oh yeah. This is. I think those are two areas that if you actually want to make forward progress on this topic, these are two places to really lean into because you can measure them. So, so much of these conversations are kind of ... they're abstract, they're qualitative, there's a feel to it, it's nuanced. It's kind of hard to put your finger on. It's hard for women to explain, but when it comes down to are you paying women the same thing you're paying men? That's a pretty black and white issue. Generally speaking in the church world, women make 72% of what men make for the exact same role and responsibilities. That is just, I think as believers we all know that's wrong. And so we can actually pull our HR files or have someone audit it for us and make sure we're paying people what they're worth.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Also being honest about who's doing the real work. There are a lot of amazing women leaders who are the coordinator or the ministry assistant or the admin who are running the ministry and the pastor is getting the pay and the accolades but isn't really involved in it. It's, not the same as delegation. I'm all about team building and delegation, but I'm talking about ... in fact I've had experience with a church recently that I've been working with and they recruited a campus pastor who was just blown the doors off in his youth group at his old church and they recruited him to be able to be head of campus pastor and he's struggling, but he wasn't really the guy running the youth group who they meant to hire was the person who actually was running the youth group, which wasn't him even though he looked like it.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So it's really easy with men in leadership and women kind of right hands to mistake who the real leader is in that team. And so making sure you're paying the right person for the right work. When it comes to platform, I think it's another thing I really encouraged churches to count how many times you have women on the platform. If we want women to be seen and valued, we have to have women, we have to see women being valued. Let me say it again. If we want women to be seen and valued, we have to see women being valued and the platform in the church space is where we communicate value. And so even if you're not into women preaching, which that's the theological issue. I'm not even talking about that. I mean getting up and giving the welcome, giving the announcements.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I don't know any guy who likes to give announcements, so find some women who are good communicators and let them give the announcements. In fact, assign them to do it. Get Women on your platform and help. Just it changes the dynamic and the congregation when they see a woman doing something that is important, it changes the entire conversation and it tells especially your young women that there is a place for them to contribute in ministry. Marrying the guy at youth group who feels called to be a pastor is not your way to have influence in leadership. Being someone who has skills and can do something. That is how you can have leadership and influence here.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Now, I think that's really good. I want to run something by you. It's not so much a question, it's just an observation. But you know, as someone who's spent a lot of time trying to help our board are elders set reasonable compensation levels for men and women. One of the things I've found really helpful because if you've been with someone for a while, it can get muddy. It's like, well we gave them a raise last year in the year before. So I always flip to, okay, if this person was gone today and we had to hire their replacement, male or female, what is that going to cost us? And sometimes you realize, oh my gosh, there's a \$10,000 gap. Or like I know I'm not going to get someone at this level, which tells me that person is underpaid. Would you think that would be a helpful way to value if this woman wasn't doing the job and you are going out to hire a guy to do it tomorrow, what would you pay that guy? Pay her that amount. Is that a helpful way to think about it?

[Kadi Cole:](#) I think that's a brilliant way to think about it. Absolutely. And Yeah, I think we're really talking about in the leadership space, we're talking about the value people bring more than the number of hours they work. And so-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Oh, yeah. The whole hours thing is just so, I don't know, 20th century.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Yeah. And I do think that, it's unfortunate. I work with a lot of leaders, men and women who leave their church for a better job and then get recruited back and earn huge like tons more money because they got recruited back and I just would love for people to be able to stay on their actual team and grow in their leadership significantly without having to leave in order to be fully valued. That would be a great next step.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Yeah. And I think that's a real problem. The longer someone stays because maybe they started with you when they're 20 or 25 and now they're in their thirties they've been there a decade and so you kind of edge them up a little bit beyond inflation, but you realize, no, their value to the organization is like 30% more than what you're paying them. And so they walk out the door and you know, you're, you're looking for the new person you're way behind the eight ball. So just pay them that today. Okay.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Yeah. And actually people become more valuable the longer they're with you. They know more people, they're more integrated, they understand the culture deeper. I don't want to pass it by what you just said to where, if you're looking at equal pay, you're asking yourself, what would we do for a man to come in and do this role? Because I think there is still a lot of assumptions that women don't need to earn as much money or if they're married to someone who makes a lot of money, that they're not the main breadwinner. And so those sort of things just need to not be a part of our decision making in conversation anymore. I talk about in the book, I have a really good friend who is an executive pastor and she basically gives back a bunch of her salary every year because they don't require it to live.

[Kadi Cole:](#) But she would have a totally different experience if she were just paid a secretary's salary rather than being paid what she's valued. And yet the church still benefits from it. So just making sure that we are paying people what they're worth and that we're making and testing the male female thing to make sure we don't have some unconscious biases against paying women high value jobs.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) No, I think that's so good and value to the organization, right? What you say. So if somebody has a wealthy spouse, male or female doesn't mean you shouldn't pay them a salary. It's like pay them what that job is worth and then if they want to donate it all back, let them donate it all back because at some point if they leave, you're going to have to hire that position anyway, right? Yeah. Okay, good. I thought it was really helpful for you to emphasize a safe space at work and obviously with all the stories, especially over the last few years of sexual harassment at work, but it's bigger than that. It's bigger than just inappropriate

sexual conduct or relationships. So can you talk to us about what it means to create a safe space at work and what kind of behaviors are appropriate and which are inappropriate?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I think our society has definitely lost its ability to navigate and manage relationships very well. And the sexual revolution is a part of that. I think the breakdown of the family is a part of that. So one of the things I talk about in the book is our need, especially as spiritual leaders to be re educating our leadership, our teams and our churches about how relationships can work and how God sets them up. And so I talk a bit about, Joseph Myers book, The Search to Belong where I think does a beautiful job laying out four different kinds of relationships and sort of the physical, emotional, spiritual boundaries that happened for each of those. So there's public relationships that are distant, aware of people, but distant. There's social relationships, there's personal relationships, like our friendships and immediate family. And then there's intimate relationships, which are reserved for really just husband and wives, and maybe parents with small children, it's close proximity.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

We have a tendency in church I think to over communicate the need for connection and intimacy and authenticity and community. You combine that with a culture that we've all grown up in with which isn't teaching these proper healthy boundaries and it has just really messed up our ability to have great relationships, unhealthy healthy zones and healthy spaces. And so I think that to me that's an underlying foundation to make sure people are actually coming at this from the same mentality. It's not just about not sleeping with your coworker, it's not just about not penning some girl down, or thinking some really horrible statement. It's about stewarding our relationships. And John Ortberg does a great job, talking about this idea of the sibling tests that really were a family and our relationships, especially in the church should be like brother and sister.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

We are a family as Christians and we're supposed to be brothers and sisters. And so our treatment of one another should really reflect that. My relationship with my husband is not a sibling relationship. We do things siblings should not do. And so, and that's wonderful, but making sure that when we're in church relationships, we've got these other ways of thinking about it. And I feel like the conversation about this has just not, we've not done a good job educating ourselves and re-establishing what God really formed for us. We've kind of let that go and our church circles and I think we need to reclaim that if we're really going to create safe spaces. Now on the leadership side of it, when you have these foundations of proper levels of intimacy and the ways that we look at one another, it's easier to set professional boundaries and healthy guidelines.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I think one of the things that people talk about a lot is the Billy Graham rule. And I think it's an ... I've been the beneficiary of this rule 'cause I've been in several different church environments and I am thankful and unique in that I have never really had a situation that has been horribly uncomfortable or

inappropriate. I've never had to bring charges against someone in authority over me. I've had some super awkward moments that make for hilarious stories, but I haven't actually had ... those boundaries have been wonderful for me. However, I really don't know those harsh rules go far enough for us in today's world. I grew up, in leadership in college, in Seattle. I was an RA in my dorm and one of my biggest challenges is I had a resident, I was in the all girls freshman dorm.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

You'd think this would be a safe place that a Christian campus. And one of the girls fell in love with me. She's a lesbian. She fell in love with me. She lived next door. We were in common showers, like all of these things. And so when I was 20 I'm navigating this. Well just now I feel like the church is finally going, "Hey, we need to think about our male and female bathrooms and we have families that are dealing with these issues." And so I look at the Billy Graham rule and I say, I'm so happy for you senior pastor that you feel like you can travel with that 20 year old seminary intern on your business trip. But I am telling you that is no longer above reproach. That is not the right way to think about providing safety for you, your marriage, your leadership, your church and this young man. That is not the right way to think about it. And so we need to expand that to be more reflective and more appropriate for the culture we live in.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

But you don't think it's too harsh, you actually think it's too lax or incomplete? It worked really well for 1948. Can you [inaudible 00:58:50].

[Kadi Cole:](#)

It was awesome in 1948, Yeah.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Can you talk a little bit about the Modesto Manifesto? That was new information to me and I everybody knows, well a lot of people know the Billy Graham rule as you don't travel alone with a woman, you don't meet alone with a woman you don't have ... and that was to protect their marriages because pastors were falling in the 1930s, in 1940s. They were having affairs, they were making mistakes, but there was more to it than just the sexual component.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yes. So I found that super interesting. So 1948, Billy Graham and all of his team were Modesto about to do a big evangelistic crusade. Evangelists were very popular then in the '40s. They would travel around. So he wasn't the only show in town, he's the one that we all know about now. But there were a lot of people doing this kind of ministry. They had colleagues that were being exposed in the papers, having affairs in all of these towns they were, but also they were taking advantage of different parts of their ministry and the media were following the attention of these big crowds gathering. And they started exposing these kinds of hypocrisy's that these Christian evangelists were doing. So Billy Graham took him and his team and they basically said, what can we do as a team to keep our integrity, particularly as it relates to the media, because our brothers are just being totally exposed, which they should be.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

We don't want to endorse that, but what can we do to make sure that nothing in our ministry gets misinterpreted and put in the papers that we wouldn't want

there. And so there were four areas that they felt like were the most scrutinized by the media and had the most opportunity to be, if they were to like lead it incorrectly as a ministry, the most kind of tempting areas that they wanted to make sure that they didn't fall into. So the first one was actually about money because these big crusades could be very emotionally manipulative. And so they just determined we will never do a typical love offering, which is that pass the plate at the end of the service when you feel totally spiritually moved. We'll never do that. We will always do our fundraising before we show up.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So we're never tempted to ask for money from churches or from people attending or from anyone. We want to be above reproach in many. The second was dangerous of sexual immorality. This was, they were all traveling for weeks at a time. Their wives were back home. They had very little communication. We live in a totally different world now. I travel. I talked to my family two or three times a day on FaceTime. We're very connected, but they could maybe make a phone call from the hotel office. There weren't even phones in every room, so they wanted to make sure, and up until that point I thought, it's so interesting. It wasn't a big deal to go and meet a woman for lunch who was a donor or a church person or what. That was not even a thing, but they decided to make sure no one got a picture of them at a restaurant that could show up in a newspaper if they wanted to avoid anything like that.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

The third pillar was to uphold the local church. They saw evangelist's coming in and basically rallying everybody to themselves, getting money from them, having them support their ministry. And then they'd leave town and the local churches were really destroyed in the process. And so they were like, we will always create our ministry strategies around ways to uphold the local church. I know when I was growing up in the 70s we had Billy Graham come and I remember my our youth group when and the local church was a part of it. And I experienced that. It was a beautiful thing to see all these churches come together. So that was on purpose from them. Then the last is how they handled publicity, particularly reporting their numbers. You know, there was a tendency to do what I call pastoral math, which is you round up like way up.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So you get 75 people at something and they say, there's nearly 200 people here, you know, so that was happening with these evangelists and they just did-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Pastors do not struggle with that anymore. Particularly male pastors just to set the record straight. Oh my gosh, those things are all relevant. Totally.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Oh, well yes. And so my thing was, gosh, I wish we had it. I wish we'd adopted all four of the Billy Graham Rules. How much better and more trust with you couldn't ministries be if we actually just worked on integrity, not just not meeting with women. So I think we have the wrong conversation from that.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Right. And then you're suggesting the sibling test, which is like, treat someone like an actual brother, sister and don't cross that boundary, the screen test and

the secret test. So can you go into those, 'cause I thought this is your expansive definition. It's like it has to be more. Yeah. It has to be bigger than just, I'm not going to have lunch with you. So what are the other two, the screen and the secret?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

The other two that John Ortberg lays out for us is the screen test that you can ask yourself, I'm in a conversation or I'm in this situation and if someone were to take a movie of this and play it back to my spouse or my leaders, would I be embarrassed? Would I be ashamed? Would I need to be defensive? And it's a really good test. And to be honest, it's not that out of the question that someone's got a camera on you, watching you, what you do and about the playback on Instagram or something. So that screen test, it's just a good kind of checking your gut of am I going to be embarrassed or defensive about this? And then the third one is the secret test. This has to do with inappropriate intimacy. Am I keeping secrets with this person that no one else I don't want anyone else to know about.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

And when you have intimate relationships, like we do have secrets with our spouse, but we really shouldn't have secrets from other people. And if you're married, telling this person a secret that I wouldn't tell anyone, but I actually think we have so many single brothers and sisters that the Billy Graham rule isn't even helping them. Again, I think we need to expand it, because it really has to do with if you're married or I'm not with someone who's not my spouse. It doesn't give a lot of guidelines or help for wise decision making if you're single. So the secret test is do I have secrets with someone inappropriately and until you're married, like keeping lots of secrets with someone, male or female, whatever the relationship, your boss, your own assistant, like those things always end up kind of biting you in the end because there's this level of connection and secrecy that just isn't helpful, particularly in leadership and definitely in ministry.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, and isn't that the gateway to an emotional affair?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Oh, absolutely. You are exactly right.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Like where you start confiding in somebody else, the things that really should be reserved for your spouse if you're married or your best friend. And against it's inappropriate because you're in a position of power or that kind of thing. So I'm just curious, you've upheld the Billy Graham rule. What do you think should happen? Like if you were sort of waving your magic wand, should men and women eat together? Should we not? Like if you're executive pastor and the senior pastor, what are the boundaries in terms that you would find helpful being there? Obviously the secret test, the screen test, the sibling test. So there's nothing inappropriate. But even in terms of meetings, like what is healthy, what is not? And I'll give you an example. When I've had senior female leaders on my team, they have sometimes said, cause I practice the Billy Graham rule, wow, you will go out to lunch with Frank but you won't go out to

lunch with me. It's reverse discrimination. You're trying to protect me, but I feel like I'm not able to get ahead as much. Any thoughts on that?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Absolutely. And I would say, I don't know that I necessarily uphold the whole Billy Graham rule. I love the heart behind it. But again, I think the practices are not relevant anymore. And so, I think in terms of that, when it comes to leadership development, particularly of women, the part that I like to talk about is this idea of always taking two. So in leadership we have this sort of always take someone with you rule. Like if I go out to lunch, I should take someone with me and turn it into a mentoring moment. Or if I'm going to the hospital and meeting a family there who's in crisis, I should take someone with me. So my kind of thesis is why not take two people with you? So if you're going to take one of your employees out Carey, also take another one. So even if it's another guy or if it's a guy and a girl or it's two girls, but if your rule is always to take two, then the women on your team have just as much opportunity to spend time with you as the guys.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

And that's where the, it does feel discriminatory because those casual conversations, those affinity connections, the casualness, the friendship that builds the chemistry, the understanding of your mind and your vision and where things are going, all of those really, the higher you go in leadership, the more those nuances matter. And so if women are always left out of those more casual conversations, there is a limiting factor to it I think in terms of kind of practices of meeting alone with someone of the opposite sex, I think the key word for me is just transparency. So I think some practices that many churches have, the Billy Graham rule for most churches is more than just eating alone with someone. It's also things like having windows in all of our offices. But again, that's about transparency.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I should have that if I'm meeting with a woman, I should have that if I'm meeting with a guy, I actually should have that if I have my team meeting going on and there's something we're fighting or we are having a food fight or were totally kicking back and drinking what something we shouldn't be drinking. Like there should be transparency about all of our behaviors, not just about sexual impropriety with a woman on the team. And that's where this becomes so limiting to women is that these principles of integrity get narrowed down to this one behavior and there's one potential thin rather than the issue of integrity and thin in our leadership in general. And so if we can raise that level of conversation and care about it from our broader sense, I think that will go further faster with our leadership. Another one is I think on those principles, we just need to teach about it regularly.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

We have to teach about purity. So much of this is abstract. You mentioned emotional affairs. I think we would be shocked if we could do some sort of research project and find out how many people working in churches are actually in some sort of emotional affair or tempted with it. I think that is way more prevalent now than we ever realized. I think in our digital community, we're

connecting over social media and private messages and Snapchat, which goes away in 24 hours. So then no one even knows I did it. Like we're just set up to have this kind of secret connections with people. In fact, the last two churches I've worked with that have walked through a moral failure, they never got together physically. The Billy Graham rule was absolutely moot to them.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

They never went on a date. They never took off in a car. They didn't meet for dinner. It was all done electronically through fake accounts and made up emails. And so that's what I'm saying, I don't even think it's giving us the protection we think it is. And really with all these issues, we have to get back to the heart. So making sure we're teaching on those, purity issues and holding one another accountable to it. Creating safe spaces for people to process this. I think it is loaded for young ministry leaders who if they were to actually come to their spiritual leaders and confess what they're struggling with could lose their job. So how do we create some safe spaces where we actually can encourage people to be honest and grow through their weaknesses rather than feeling like you're either unemployable or you're leaving the ministry entirely. Then I think really making sure we established some good new boundaries that kind of are more fitting to our culture.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

This could totally be a podcast episode by itself. So I acknowledge that and it has been so helpful. One of the practices I have on the no secrets rule as my wife has a password to everything I do and so does most of my team actually just because we're a virtual team. There's a few things that only my wife has passwords to you, but I live an incredibly transparent life and that's good I think like do you think that is part of the progress we need to be making on that? Any thoughts on that?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Absolutely. I think the more we can position our own lives to be transparent and open, we position ourselves to have built in accountability. I don't think it's really about one person I have coffee with once a week and tell them my darkest sin. Again, I don't think that's real accountability 'cause I can spin that however I want. It's really about these people. We do have trusted people that are in our world and are seeing the things we're doing and not only feel like they could come to us, but we're inviting them to come to us. Hey I noticed you got that email or that guy talked to you that way. Or why do you keep talking or sending messages to so and so or like sometimes I don't even know what I'm doing but sometimes I do. And the fact that other people can see it and are a part of it keeps me more accountable.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It's true. I think I do talk to women via tech sometimes or whatever, and occasionally Tony, will be like, why are you texting her? And I'm like, here, you want to have a look and I mean that like go look at the message thread and there is tremendous relief for me as a man and I think transparency in that.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah. And I think too, it does freed up like I know because I'm not on a church staff now, this was like a question for me. Like, whoa, now that I'm not forced to

live under the Billy Graham rule, will I meet a guy for coffee? I don't know what I want to do about that. Talk to my husband about it, talk to my family. Just having the transparency and accountability that people know where I am and know what I'm doing, I actually have more freedoms to connect with more people in more ways because it's all within appropriate boundaries and the right kind of transparency and accountability.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

So I always joke when I was on church staff, I can't go sit in a Starbucks with someone where there's 30 people around and everyone can hear my conversation, but I can be in an office with some guy all day that works for me. The chances of having inappropriate conversations are greater in my church office than at Starbucks. So just thinking and challenging our assumptions about what is actually functional and it's actually helping.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well it kind of goes back to the idea that no external regulation is going to solve a problem of a lack of internal discipline. In other words, your internal discipline, your internal integrity, will make you rise or fall as a leader. And external regulations are only going to make you more devious, right? At the end of the day. I get.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

That's so true day.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

This is good. Katie, I can't believe the times just flown by. Anything else you want to share? And then I'm going to ask for a few first steps 'cause people might be going, "Oh my gosh, now what? We are a disaster." So, when it comes to creating a great work environment for women or really for anyone. Any final thoughts from you?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Yeah, I just want to encourage people, I think this does feel like a minefield a lot of times and it feels loaded and emotional. And there for many women in particular, there are a lot of emotions about this and it can be easy to sorta want to pull back from it because it's intense or you don't know what you're walking into or you don't want to be, especially the bad guy in this situation. And I just want to encourage you that the guys who are making steps forward and are asking questions and really listening to what women have to say, it is really been beautiful to me to watch the healing that is taking place and the beautiful outcomes that are happening. It might be bumpy along the way, but there is really, I really just see the Lord bringing a great unity about this topic.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

I'm hoping this book has some practical steps to help you know what to do and how to do it if you're unsure. But I really am encouraged about the future. I hear our culture say all the time the future is female and I actually resisted writing a book about this 'cause I didn't want to be lumped into that. But I really do think the future is together. And so if we can overcome some of these cultural things we've inherited and really forgive one another for things that we've experienced, not directly from each other, but from what we've had in our church histories, I think we can really help the church move forward in this

topic. And most importantly, we can have more leaders working in local church, caring about people, sharing the love of Jesus, ministering to a lost community. That's what this is about to me. It's not about women. It's about having enough leaders released to fulfill the mission that God has called your church to. I think this could really be a way to unlock some potential that right now is sitting dormant.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, and I just got to say I, one of the things, one of the reasons I was so anxious to have this conversation, it's been confirmed in the interview is I just so much of the conversation around this area has an agenda. You just feel like, "Whoa, I'm stepping on a mine field." I think you diffuse the mine. And so I'm really grateful. It's a book I'm going to be sharing. It's a philosophy I'm going to be sharing. I think it's exactly the conversation we need to have in leadership as we move forward regardless of your theology. So, Kadi, any first steps for people who are like, wow, this feels like a giant mountain to climb. What's one or two things leaders can do in a very practical way that will make it better?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Well, I think one of the most important things that all leaders can do, whether you're male or female, is to talk to some women leaders in your church and just ask them about their story. You know, what is it like to be a leader here? I really want to understand. And then really taking the time to listen. I think it's easy for all of us to just jump to conclusions or kind of put our own assumptions into someone else's story. But even the act of asking and listening is incredibly healing to women who have felt overlooked or passed over or undervalued. And so even if you just had one or two conversations in the next week, it could really begin to open your eyes and it could really bring affirmation to some of the women on your team. And then I think secondly, if you want to help women know they have a place in your church, figuring out some ways to give women some visibility that fits within your structure.

[Kadi Cole:](#)

Again, even fits within your culture. These are sometimes slow moving topics, but I would encourage you just to invite someone to come and stand with you as you take the offering or have someone who's in the choir step out in front to lead the song with the backup singers. It doesn't have to be something dramatic or a big controversy, but just leaning into making women have a presence as well as any minority in your church by the way. But just making sure that, that the people in your community are represented on your platforms and in your leadership and moving towards that goal really can make a big difference in and say a huge statement to the people in your congregation.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Kadi your book's a gift. Tell us about the title of the release date and where people can find?

[Kadi Cole:](#)

The title is Developing Female Leaders and we are releasing it on March 5th, although you can put a pre-order in now if this is coming out before then.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I should know that.

[Kadi Cole:](#) You can find out more information either at the website for the book, developingfemaleleadersbook.com. There's some downloads on the theology question and some other resources that might be helpful if you really want to explore this topic more. And you can also visit my website at Kadicole.com. That's KADICOLE.COM and I would love to connect with you if you're working on this topic. I'd love to hear your story and hear what you're working on.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) I would just say I'll one final word, men, you need to read this book seriously. Probably even more so than women. Guys should read this book. It's a super, super helpful gift. Kadi, thank you so much. I'm sure this won't be the last time.

[Kadi Cole:](#) Thank you Carey so much. It's been a pleasure.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well that was refreshing wasn't it? Hey, you're going to want more so head on over to the show notes. You can find them at careynieuwhof.com/episode253. Everything will be there including transcripts. If you're a transcript person. Thank you to all of you who continue to leave ratings and reviews. They mean a lot. We are climbing up to a thousand reviews on iTunes, so thank you so much for that. And wherever you are listening to this podcast, just share it with your friends. Put it on social and we're so grateful for that.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Hey do not miss out on Pro Media Fire's special. They've got 40% off their Pro Media Fire bundle. Okay, so this is their media bundle and it's 40% off, not this month for life, for life. What will that get you? Sermon series, graphics, social ads, sermon bumpers, whatever media your church needs. So go to Promediafire.com/carey before March 31st to get 40% off. It'll be there in April, but you're going to miss the deal. So 40% off promediafire.com/carey get 40% off for life. That opportunity is going away soon.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Now this podcast is not, so we will be back with another episode actually in two days. Later this week, we are going to sit down and have a great conversation with Haydn Shaw. He is back on the podcast talking about generational differences and how to lead through generational tension at work. Here is an excerpt.

[Haydn Shaw:](#) Here's what's interesting about this horror tells us what we're scared of. Horror films as a society.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Haydn Shaw:](#) I'm still old enough to remember doing atomic bomb drills in grade school. We had Godzilla, we had Mothra. We had these big monsters that would land and scare a lot of people in Japan. And then we ended up with exerts and the birth rate was so low with exerts. There's, so much smaller of a generation and the sociological explanation for why exerts, they're smaller as their parents didn't want them. The movies were about the devil baby child. So we had a whole genre of evil baby child and going all the way to children of the corn when life

verse, we're over 3 million and children of the corn was one of the few Stephen King flops.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Huh?

[Haydn Shaw:](#)

Didn't do well because we didn't add Raising Arizona, Three Men and a Baby and Baby Boom, which were low budget breakout films, and we'd gone from children will eat your life and then children instead of consuming your life, they transform your life.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

All right, so that's coming up in a couple of days. Again, subscribers, you get that automatically to subscribe is free. Thank you so much for listening everybody. We will be back with a fresh episode on Thursday 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.