

[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. Now your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well, hey everybody, and welcome to Episode 256 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I've been looking forward to today for a long time and today I get to sit down with Carly Fiorina and she ... I'm sure many of you have heard of her a few years ago, she ran for President of the United States. The first woman to ever seek the Republican to nomination and whatever your political stripe I promise you there is a lot in today's episode.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) She is also the former CEO of Hewlett Packard, HP. She was the first female CEO of a Fortune 20 company and literally ... I've read about her all of my adult life. It was a thrill to be able to sit down with her. She has so many principles, and we go all the way back to when she was a secretary in a nine member real estate firm, and what she learned there on the job, so if you're a young leader, I think you're really going to love this. Then obviously, we talk about all the complexities of leading HP and running for president, it's a fascinating conversation.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Today she's got a brand new book out on leadership called Find Your Way. You can find that anywhere that books are sold. Thrilled to have Carly on today. Hey, whatever you're doing, thank you so much for joining us. If you haven't subscribed yet, I would love for you to do that, because that way you get all this kind of goodness in your inbox. These days, we're doing about six episodes a month, so couple of weeks, you get a bonus episode every month, and I'm just loving it.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) It's a great time. Thank you for your feedback. Thank you for all the conversations and the encouragement, and thank you for sharing this, and for all of you. We're almost at a thousand ratings and reviews on iTunes. For all of you who do that, just want to say thank you, you're making a real difference.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Hey, here's a question that a lot of church leaders are asking. I sat down with Troy Pollock, who is one of the Vice Presidents at Pushpay. I asked him this question. I said, "Hey, why do so many people not give to churches?" Listen to what he had to say.

[Troy Pollock:](#) Okay, that's a great question and something that we get asked quite often, and I believe it's three primary things. Number one, theology. Number two, transparency, and number three, accessibility. Let's go to theology. I'll that you all take care of that. Your audience is church leaders and ... look, as Pushpay, we don't try to get in that lane. That's not who we are. We're a technology company.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Fair enough.

[Troy Pollock](#): We'll leave the theology to all of you pastors. Secondly, transparency. Where is the money going? Carey, nonprofits are exceptional about surfacing this information and showing you where those donations are going. They're great at storytelling. They show you Susie, who didn't have water in Africa and now she has water, and that draws you in. They show you Susie and, and Sammy and life change and where your hard earned dollars that were donated to that nonprofit organization were given that transparency.

[Troy Pollock](#): I think us as the church we can get a lot better in our storytelling and transparency, but then thirdly, accessibility, and that is where Pushpay comes in. That's where we want to help because we want to give you church leaders the tools to help you do your job better, and Carey interesting data point. Do you know how many people ... the average number of apps on a person's smartphone? Any guesses?

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): No idea. Way too many for me.

[Troy Pollock](#): It's between 80 and 90 apps.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Wow.

[Troy Pollock](#): On a person's smartphone. Do you know how many they engage with on a daily basis?

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Eight.

[Troy Pollock](#): Three.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Three? Seriously.

[Troy Pollock](#): Three. How do we make one of the church apps or a giving solution, one of the three apps that they're engaging with on a daily basis? That just all comes to accessibility. Is it easy to navigate? Are you giving them personalized content? Are you stimulating them? Is it applicable? Is it right there front and center, or is it going to get buried on the last page of their home screen?

[Troy Pollock](#): For us, those are the three things that we see of why people are not giving two churches. Number one, theology, number two, transparency and number three, accessibility.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Fascinating. Well, one thing I want to tell you about is Troy and I are both going to be at the Pushpay summit May 22nd May 23rd in Dallas. I'm giving the keynote along with Patrick Lencioni, Cheryl Bachelder, Nona Jones, Bobby Gruenewald from YouVersion and Life.Church, Clay Scroggins from North Point

and it is a hyper-practical conference. There are dozens of breakouts, you should bring your whole team. We've got an amazing discount for you because you listen to this podcast.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): What you can do to get the best pricing is head on over to pushpay.com/summit to learn more and to register. When you register, use the coupon code CAREYN C-A-R-E-Y-N and that will bring the registration cost down from \$159 which is early bird down to \$89, because you listen to this podcast, just \$89 per person. I'd love to meet you in person. We're going to have a great couple of days May 22nd, 23rd in Dallas, Texas.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Go to pushpay.com/summit and use the coupon code CAREYN and yes, that'll get you in. At a really good rate. Hope to see you there. It's going to be fantastic. Hey, are you struggling to like keep up with the overwhelm that seems to be so much of life today? I would love for you to head on over to thehighimpactleader.com I'm in the middle of doing some extended writing right now on basically exactly what I teach in thehighimpactleader.com, and it's just making me reflect on how different my life is than it was, say 15 years ago. When our church was a third of the size that it is when I wasn't publishing books, speaking all over the world. I felt completely overwhelmed.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): I went through a period of burnout came out on the other side, I felt not only so much better, but I had to learn a new system a new way to live because the old way that I was living in leading led me to burn out. In the process discovered 10X productivity. A few years ago, the number one question I was getting was, how do you get it all done? I realize you know what, there's a couple of things I've learned and I share them with you. I teach you how to apply it to your life in The High Impact Leader course.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): It's all about getting time, energy and priorities working in your favor, so you're not overwhelmed all the time. I've discovered using this approach in my own life. I actually have hobbies now I've lost weight. Yesterday I went on a 40 kilometer bike ride. That's like 7000 miles, now it's about what? 24 miles. Plus I'm doing the podcast and writing books and preaching and all that stuff. Speaking, fly to England in a couple of days, and can you get it all done?

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Actually, as Greg McKeown says, you can do anything. You just can't do everything. I show you exactly how to get your life in order and how to get time, energy and priorities working in your favor in The High Impact Leader course. Head on over to The High Impact Leader today. I'd love to be able to give you a hand in that. Well, in the meantime, it's a book launch day for Carly Fiorina. It is a thrill to have her on the podcast and without further ado, here is my interview with Carly Fiorina.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Carly, welcome to the podcast. It's great to have you.

[Carly Fiorina](#): It's great to be with you. Thank you for having me.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Yes. Congratulations on your new book. Find Your Way, excited for that, it releases today actually.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Yes, I'm very excited for it. Thank you so much for having me, and congratulations on your new book as well.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Well, thank you. I want to go back to the beginning, because you had a fascinating life, a fascinating career, a path that in many ways pioneered a lot of things, but you started your career as a secretary in a real estate office, and then became the first woman CEO of a Fortune 50 company, and then most recently made a bid for President of the United States, which not a very typical career path. When did you first sense that you might have a leadership gift?

[Carly Fiorina](#): Well, you know it's an interesting question, because I actually have come to believe that everyone has the capacity for leadership, but many people choose not to ever explore that capacity. Frankly, I never had a plan to become a CEO. I spent a lot of time worrying that I was going to get fired, or I was going to fail, or not looking up to the next rung, but actually expending all of my energy to do the very best I could wherever I was, including as a secretary.

[Carly Fiorina](#): When I started as a secretary, I had just dropped out of law school. I was a medieval history and philosophy major, which means my resume wasn't very stellar. Honestly, it wasn't like I was sitting there thinking I need to move ahead. I was sitting typing, thinking, "I need to keep this job because I have to pay rent." What I think I discovered along the way, is that there are problems everywhere, and frequently, what separates managers from leaders, or leaders from followers, is it leaders focus on actually solving problems.

[Carly Fiorina](#): I would gather people around me who knew something about the problem because they were impacted by it, and they were close to it. Together, we would collaborate and we would solve a problem. Over time, the more problems I solved, the more those results were paid attention to. More and more opportunity was put into my path. I wasn't afraid to say yes to those opportunities, but if you ask me, when did I think I was going to become a CEO? The honest answer is I thought that the day I became a CEO.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Yes. Let's wind that back a little bit, because there's a lot of young leaders listening to this podcast and they're probably at the Assistant Secretary, low guy on the totem pole place and I want you to go back to how long were you in that sort of entry-level position at a real estate firm. Was that months, years?

[Carly Fiorina](#): It was a year, and then I ran away to Italy to teach English and then I finally got an MBA and landed at the bottom of the totem pole again in a huge company called AT&T.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Let's go back to the legal secretary days ... sorry, it's law school in the picture too, but the real estate secretary days and bottom of the ladder AT&T. How did

you build influence? You said you solved problems. You gathered people around you to do that. Can you walk us through some of those early chops and leadership? Because that's where the majority of people who are listening to this find themselves.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Yes. Well, let me say first, that the beginning, particularly at AT&T, was not encouraging. I say that to encourage people who maybe you're having a tough time. My first client meeting was held in a strip club. It was a very difficult set of circumstances. I was thrown into the deep end of the pool with a bunch of people who didn't want me to succeed, honestly. Despite that very hard beginning, there were a couple of things that I did.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

The first ... and I say this in my book, Find Your Way. You know when you're taught as a young child to cross the street, and you're told, stop, look and listen. I went into that job, and every job I've ever had since then. I stopped, and I looked around, and I figured out what was going on, and I listened to the people around me. I didn't try and make a big splash right away. It wasn't that I was just trying to fit in I was trying to understand.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

When I felt that I understood what was going on having stopped and looked and listened. Then I forged relationships with people who complained a lot about festering problems. It's interesting when you go into any setting, everyone knows what the problems are. They all know what your problems are.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It's true.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Frankly, most people talk about what the problems are. They complain about what the problems are, but they're not that many people who say, "Actually, we're going to make the problems better." That's what I spent my time on. People appreciated that, and so I forged relationships. The other thing that I would say is because ... I didn't get discouraged, and I didn't throw my weight around until I understood what was going on. I focused on adding value and solving problems.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

The final thing that I would say is, and I do all these things to this day, is I asked loads of questions. I see people go into situations and try and tell people what they know, prove how smart they are, or tell other people what to do. I did just the opposite, because I knew I didn't know very much. I asked a lot of questions. It turns out that people like to be asked. And it also turns out, you learn a lot when you ask good questions.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, I would imagine that if you were entry level position, some people would say, "Well, what you're describing exceeded your authority at the time." You're supposed to move paper from pile A pile B, or meet clients and do your job and go home when it was over, but it sounds like that wasn't really your approach. Tell us like, did you not exceed your authority, but were you going beyond what

was technically in your job description, even from the earliest days to try to make it better?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, absolutely. I think it's a little bit ... your question is very insightful, because that actually, I think, is the difference between people who lead and people who don't. It's frankly, the difference between managers and leaders. It's not that managers are bad people. They're not at all bad people, but managers do the best they can within the constraints and the limitations that they find.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) A lot of times in an organization, you're told to be a manager, don't color outside the lines, stick to the process, do your job. Don't worry about all this other stuff going on. That's management, and there's nothing wrong with it, but it's not leadership. So yes, I did things that I can remember one of my very first successes with a client. They had a problem, and our company didn't have a product to solve the problem. I decided I was going to solve their problem. Everyone kept saying, "No, don't worry about their problem sell what we have." I said, "No, but they have this problem, and if we can figure out how to solve that we're going to sell a lot of what we have."

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Interestingly, I also met my husband in the course of solving that problem.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) That's a good deal.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, exactly. My point is, yes, if you're going to actually solve a problem, if you're going to lead, you're going to have to change the order of things for the better, which means you're going to have to challenge the status quo, which means you will have to color outside the lines and take some risks. Decide that managing within the constraints and conditions that you find around you isn't enough.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) What was their problem, and how did you solve it?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, they had ... it's interesting. This sounds so basic now, but this was a long time ago when technology ... we couldn't have Skype conversations, for example. This was an organization that wanted to have the ability to conference 25 offices at once.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Yes, and this is back in 19 ... whatever.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) It's in the 80s.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) In the 80s. Yes, that was a big challenge.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) That technology didn't exist. It just didn't exist. It turned out that the more I explored what was going on in the company, my goodness, we had Bell Labs, we had all this incredible innovation. I thought someone surely is working on this,

and it turned out, yes, somebody was working on this. The guy I ended up marrying, was working on that.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) There you go.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Which was an added benefit that I didn't expect, but that was their problem. They wanted to conference a lot of people and so we ended up having a solution that was ready to be trialed. They turned out to be the trial customer.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Did you get criticism for that? For stepping out of your -

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Oh sure.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Yes. Tell me about that.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, when I teach leadership for problem solving capacity to organizations that in my book, Find Your Way, the first and most important quality of a leader is courage. The reason I always start with courage is because the price of leadership is always criticism. The reason the price is criticism is because the status quo was powerful. Always, even when the status quo is lousy. It's powerful. Because there are people who are invested in it, and they're people who say, "Well, okay, we have a problem, but really, they're all these reasons why nothing should change."

[Carly Fiorina:](#) When you try and challenge the way things are, which is the only way you can actually change things for the better, you're going to get criticism, and so what anyone who's focused on problem solving and collaborating with others. What everyone who is in other words focused on trying to lead has to understand is the price is criticism. Get ready for it and get used to it, and don't let it impact your ability to use all of your talents, and gifts.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I would quickly say Carey, that there's a big difference between criticism and feedback. Feedback's really important. Criticism comes from people who just want to stop you or tear you down. Feedback comes from people who think you need to know something or learn something or be coached to do something differently. Feedback comes from people who want to help you and lift you up.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) That's a helpful distinction. It was interesting. You said when you were introducing where you started at AT&T, you said there were people there who didn't want me to succeed. You pick that up early. Can you replay that like that? No, that's really interesting, because I think most of us who have been in whatever leadership position, senior, middle, Junior would say, "Yes, there are people inside and on the outside who actually don't want us to be successful." What was that about, and how did you handle it as a young leader?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, in my experience there two kinds of people who don't want you to succeed, there are people that really you're not going to be able to convert.

They truly are going to tear you down. Those kind of people you just need to steer clear of. It is however, not most people. In my experience, most people might be afraid of you, intimidated by you, resentful of you. Maybe they just misunderstand you. You have to be able to work through that.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I'll tell you a story. What I mean, I mentioned my first client meeting was in a strip club. My colleague, who insisted that the meeting be there was a gentleman he was a couple decades older than I was. He didn't want me to succeed, and so he said, I'm going to scare her. I'm going to scare her. Literally.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Really?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, a strip clubs pretty scary [crosstalk 00:21:07].

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Yes.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) He thought that would be an intimidating and threatening environment, and he was right. In fact, when he first told me the meeting will be held at the strip club, it was ironically called the board room. He said, "You can go, but sorry, this is where the client wants to go."

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Wow.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I thought a lot about that, I tell this story in my book, I thought a lot about that. I said, finally, I'm going to go, not because I wasn't intimidated. I was, but because I knew that if he scared me out of doing my job, the very first try, then I was never going to be able to succeed, so I went. Long story short. When all that was over, I was ticked at this guy. He had done something mean to me, but I was humble enough to understand I need this man. Because he actually does know the clients, and he does know the company. I don't know either one of those things.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I was empathetic enough to figure out that by talking to other people around him, he was afraid of me. What he thought was that I was the new model with the MBA, and that he was going to get shoved aside. Because he felt threatened, because he was frightened that he was being disrespected over the long term. He wanted to put me in my place. We work that through, and we became very good colleagues. We did a lot of business together.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) There are people who don't want you to succeed, and when you figure out who those people are, you need to steer clear of them, but a lot of people you just need to take the time to understand. Maybe emphasize with what they're going through, and maybe be humble enough to ask some questions. I've had a lot of men along the way who say, "I've never worked for a woman, I don't know how to work for a woman. I don't know how I feel about working for a woman," in virtually every case, we worked our way through that.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Because if you're going to succeed and lead, you got to deal with a lot of different kinds of people.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) What prepared you for ... because it sounds like that's an exceptional amount of insight, and even emotional intelligence for a young leader in their 20s, male or female. What do you think prepared you to see that at an early age? That's an exceptional level of insight. I'm sure some of that is hindsight now looking back on it, but yes, to realize that you didn't have to turn this guy into an enemy or quit or walk away or shrivel and just sit at your desk and do your job. That required something.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) I'm just curious as to how you got that level of insight.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, you're nice to say. I think two things, honestly. The first is that when I was growing up, we moved around a lot. I lived in all kinds of places, I was always the new kid, and so I learned that the fastest way to establish a relationship, or a new friendship was to ask questions of people. To engage them to find out what are they like, what are they interested in? Where can I find common ground? That habit that I developed by necessity, honestly, early on, of asking question, of seeking to understand so that I could connect and engage turned out to be a skill that is enormously valuable.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I continue to use it to this day. That's why I said at the outset, I tell people, young people who go into a new situation and want to take the world by storm, I said don't take the world by storm yet. Ask questions and look around you and listen to people around you. But the second thing I would say honestly is necessity. Look, my resume was medieval history and philosophy, law school dropout and newly minted MBA, I couldn't afford to say, I mean, the times are different now. But I couldn't afford to say, "You know what, I'm just not working with this guy." Because there were a lot of guys like him. I was the odd man out. I didn't fit in. I had to figure out how to make this work.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I believe to this day, that it is always better to seek to understand first before you condemn and write someone off. I think we do way too much condemnation and writing people off before we understand them, and that doesn't work very well. If you're trying to lead others, change the order of things for the better and solve problems.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well, I'm going to skip ahead a lot in this next question, but it's not all of a sudden, but a few years later, and not that many years later, you find yourself as the first woman CEO of a Fortune 50 company, and some ... Was it fortune 20? It was one of the biggest companies in the world. It was huge.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, was actually Fortune 100 believe it or not, but the reason people use different numbers is because we were in the fortune 20 and 27, actually, and we became the 11th largest company.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) It made headlines when you were appointed as the CEO of Hewlett Packard, their first outside hire ever, and you-

[Carly Fiorina:](#) First non-engineer ever, first woman, a lot of first.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) A lot of firsts. What were your greatest fears when you became the CEO? Because it drew international attention.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) You know what's so interesting about that question, Carey, and it sounds so dumb in retrospect, but what I was not prepared for at all, was that it would be such big news. People have asked me, what was it like to be the first woman CEO? What was it like to be a woman on that debate stage with all those men? My sincere answer is I don't know. I've never been a man. I've only been a woman. I had been a woman in business for so long. I had been dealing with mostly men for so long, that honestly it never occurred to me that what people were going to focus on was the fact that I was a woman.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) What I thought they-

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Quite interesting.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) It is interesting. It sounds so foolish now, but I had ... I just hadn't thought about it in those terms. I didn't think about it in the terms of oh my gosh, I'm the first outsider. I'm not from the computer industry. I'm not an engineer. I'm in medieval history and philosophy major. Therefore what I was focused on particularly in that first day was, I wanted to be very prepared. I had done a lot of homework.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) What did I think were our most important technology challenges? What did I think about our requirement to accelerate our innovation? What did I think about all these weighty business topics that mattered distinctly to Hewlett Packard and were among the many reasons I was asked to transform a company that was in deep trouble?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) What I didn't even think about, and frankly, what I wasn't prepared for was, "Oh my gosh, you're a woman. How does that feel."

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) It's like, we're going to start there.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, fear is the wrong word but what I was focused on was, what are the things that need to get done so that we can succeed. What I was very deliberate about was when I came to HP, I came in all by myself, I didn't bring anyone from the outside with me. Because the first signal that I wanted to send to the organization was we have everything we need to do what needs to be done, I may be a catalyst. But the people in this organization understand the problems and together we're going to figure out the solutions because I've learned over

and over again, people closest to the problem, know best how to solve it if they're given the opportunity and the resources and the catalyst of leadership.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): One of the ... I imagine intimidating parts because I also have a degree in history, not medieval, but 19th century tremendously useful document for no body.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Yes, it useful for perspective and it's very useful but not on the resume.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Yes, exactly Carly.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): You know you got it. Walking in, you're surrounded by engineers, you're in Silicon Valley. It's not in your background and yes, you'd worked at AT&T and I think Lucent Technologies and other places like that so you were around technical people, but all of a sudden, you're their leader and you're going to be in meetings where you're getting briefed on things that maybe they're doing calculus that you never fully prepared for. How did you lead in that environment, when you didn't have that background and had to make decisions about things that maybe you couldn't comprehend at the same level as though you were an engineer?

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): The reason I ask that, that's not a slam, it's just like every leader at a senior. I'm not an accountant but you got to make million dollar decisions, right? I'm not an artist, but I've got to decide whether this is a better look or that is a better look or at least have input into it. How do you do that when you're leading outside of your personal area of expertise? What was your approach?

[Carly Fiorina](#): I think, first, you will be surprised to hear me say, you ask a lot of questions. You ask a lot of questions. Of course, the more senior people become, the more they feel this pressure to give answers instead of asking questions. Resist to that pressure. There are times when you will have to make the decision and provide the answer but there is loads of time to ask the questions necessary for you and everyone else to understand what's really at stake.

[Carly Fiorina](#): The second thing I've learned, and I've learned it over and over and over again, is someone's an engineer they are a rocket scientist, literally, let's say and I'm surely not, although I spent a lot of time around technical people. It doesn't matter. If someone can't explain something to me or to anyone else. After five tries in a language that most people can understand, then they actually don't understand it.

[Carly Fiorina](#): I didn't say one time, I didn't say two times. I said five times. If someone can't explain something after five times, if they can't explain why it's important, what it does, why a customer will benefit from it, what it costs. If they can't explain that after five times, they don't understand it. The reason I say that is it's so important is you see companies and boards and senior people make terrible decisions, because they don't understand something, but they are too

intimidated to ask the questions that will reveal that actually, nobody understands it.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Remember the Wall Street crisis? Remember the Wall Street crisis, that crisis occurred, because they were a bunch of algorithms, technology driven algorithms that were dictating investments and nobody really understood how they worked. Nobody understood it. But people got themselves into this situation when they said, "Well, it's technology, it's all going to be okay." I mean, I don't really understand it, but it's going to be okay. Well, guess what? It wasn't okay.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It wasn't okay, yes.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

I can't design the product, but if I can understand ... if anyone can understand the benefits of a product, costs of a product, the use of a product just as one example, then whoever's trying to explain it doesn't understand it either and it's time to send them back to the drawing board. My point being, never underestimate the power of a question and don't dismiss your own ability to understand the essence of what's important if you're in a decision making mode. Get to that essence. If someone can't tell you what the essence of the decision is, then it's time to go back to the drawing board.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

What were some of the challenges you faced in that first year at HP? Because it was a turning point for the company as well. A lot of people said it need to be shaken up. What were some of those initial decisions you had to make and how did you know what to do in those first few years? Because you engineered some massive change in your tenure at HP?

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Yes. I would say the first thing that became very clear, is this was a company that had been founded on a very clear set of values by the founders. Those values included innovation, teamwork, integrity service to customers. The things that all of us would embrace but those very important values which had been a compass for the organization for a very long time, had come to be ... There was a shorthand expression for them called the HP way.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

What had happened over time, and this frequently happens in organizations that are successful and have really strong cultures is, over time, the real values that made up HP way got lost and the phrase became important in and of itself, and the phrase became what you said, when someone was trying to change something. "We don't do it that way. That's not the HP way."

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

In other words, the culture had petrified, ossified so that it was all about keeping things just the way they were, even though one of our core values was innovation, which is about shaking things up. The first challenge was to go back to what is the HP way really? What do we really mean when we say that? We spent a lot of time early on in my tenure, and through the entire six plus years that I was there, unpacking the HP way so that we reminded ourselves. Actually,

if innovation is a core value, it means we have to take risks. If we're going to take risks, it means we're going to make some mistakes. What does that mean in terms of our culture, as but one example? That was a really important thing that needed to be done and the journey that we stayed on for a very long time.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) What were some of the best decisions, Carey that you think you made in your tenure as C.E.O?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I think ... It's interesting. Though I use a tool, I talk about a tool in my book, Find Your Way that I actually developed while I was at HP because it's a tool called the leadership framework, but I developed it because we had ... HP was a very complex company facing very complex challenges. It needed to be transformed. We were falling behind in every way, in innovation, in patent production and profitability and market share, we had lost our way. Our culture had gotten stultified as I mentioned, and on top of all that the .com boom rapidly gave way to the .com bust.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Yes, you led through the middle of that, right?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) You started just before it all collapsed.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, the worst recession in 25 years in technology. You add all that together. That's a big complicated set of problems. I developed this leadership framework so that we wouldn't lose our way through that complexity. Because of the power of that framework which I've used on everything from helping my nephew figure out his life to HP, it allowed us to tackle an enormous amount of work in a relatively short period of time. To answer your question directly ... one of the best things I did was to devise that framework because it kept me and the organization grounded.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Another one of the very best decisions that we made and it's always we, a CEO doesn't act alone although they are the decision maker in some important things was to acquire Compaq. It was a very difficult acquisition, the largest of its kind, but it was absolutely the right thing to do. I would say some of my best decisions as well as some of my worst decisions. Were around people. What person you put in which job are some of the most difficult and most important decisions that a leader makes. I did some of those well, and I did some of those not so well.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) That was ... My next question is, are there any decisions and there always are that you wish you could get back, that you had a do over on?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Yes, I guess there are two that I would say. One is that I put some of the wrong people in the wrong places. What I've learned is that when you have an issue like that, it's always better to deal with it faster. Our instinct is to take our time

to deal with those things, well there's disruption and we're taking risks. In my experience, the faster you can recognize a personnel problem and deal with it, the better off you are, although that's very hard. Not only did I put some of the wrong people in wrong positions, but I waited too long in some cases.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): That is the universal advice. I've never heard anybody say the opposite and yet I think anybody who's had to make a personnel change which is all of us would say they feel exactly that tension that you felt. Well, maybe we can work this out or maybe it's going to be better. Do you know why you hesitated so long or why we tend to hesitate so long? What we're ... Because that is ... and listen, if that's a problem in corporate and a problem in politics, I promise you it's 10 times the problem in church world.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Of course. Well, I think there are a couple instincts. First, I think people's instincts, perhaps, especially in the church world, and I've done work with church organizations and leaders, and I've seen this is you want to give the person the benefit of the doubt. You want to give the individual the opportunity to grow, you want to make sure that they are not devastated by the process of saying, this isn't going to work. I think people tend to extend the time hoping that someone will develop and grow or that we can avoid having a hard conversation.

[Carly Fiorina](#): I think the second instinct that all of us have to struggle with is somehow our intuition is usually that leaving things the way they are is the least risky path. In truth, leaving things the way they are is sometimes the most risky path but it doesn't feel that way sometimes. It's like, no if I just leave it alone, that's less risk. Usually not.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Well that's worth the price of admission. I'll tell you that. You're absolutely right.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Yes, and so I think one of the things that I would say is, I said never underestimate the power of a question. The other thing I would say is, never underestimate the power of an honest conversation. The most important thing in developing someone or in dealing with someone's inability to perform in a particular role, the most important thing, the most respectful thing, the kindest thing is to have an honest conversation.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): You said there was one more thing that you wish you could do over and then I want to flip to politics and few other questions.

[Carly Fiorina](#): The one more thing I wish I could do over is I would have changed the board out a lot sooner because the board ended up being a real mess. It's frankly the reason that I left. I felt as though I had been brought in by this board and then we added to the board through a very complicated acquisition. I felt as though I was not in a position to be moving board members out but that was a mistake. I should have. It would have been better for me, but more importantly, it would have been better for the organization.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Right. Well, it's not every day you get to talk to someone who has run for president and put in their bid and you were candidate for the Republican ticket last time around. Tell us a little bit about that. Why did you decide to throw your hat in the ring? You've announced, am I correct, that you're not running in the next round? Tell us more about that?

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, I'm not running in the next round. I don't think I ... I've learned never say never but I just ... That's not what I'm focused on right now for sure. I got engaged in politics, because I think we need more citizen government. I think professional politicians, while there's some good people, I think the system of politics, as George Washington warned us about in 1789, the system of politics is all about winning. I think that isn't what citizens expect from public servants. I thought we needed more citizens, less professional politicians, more problem solvers, who understood practically what solving a problem takes and more leaders.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I got engaged in politics. What I've learned is that politics, unfortunately, and political parties of both kinds are really focused on winning and I say that because the focus on winning means, unfortunately, that problems frequently don't get solved. Because festering problems get people out to vote. It's such a sad thing to say but if you think about the political arguments we're having today and the issues were arguing about, pick one. Healthcare, immigration, debts and deficits, care for our veterans, pick one.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) We've been arguing about those for 30 years. I think the system that we have, does not lend itself easily to problem solving, which is why all my energy right now is on lifting up leaders wherever they are, so that they understand how to change the order of things for the better and solve the problems that are right in front of them because I think we got to stop waiting for others to do it for us.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) What surprised you about the presidential bid? What things, when you got into it you're like, "Oh, I didn't know how this was going to be. I didn't know it was going to be like this."

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Well, I'll tell you the thing that was most both surprising and remains alarming to me. I knew when I got into the presidential race that it was a very long shot. I knew the odds were high. I don't mind a challenge but I knew that because no one knew who I was. I had less than 3% name ID and I was running against people who had enormous name ID. I knew that the debates were going to be critically important. It was an opportunity for people to get to know me.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) What I didn't know until I was into it was that on both the democrat side and the Republican side, both parties had worked with the media to determine the rules of those debates. The rules were that everything was determined by your polling position. When I say everything, I mean, did you get on the stage, where you stood-

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): You got in the afternoon debate right? Not the evening debate.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Yes, but then, where you stood on the stage, how much time you got to speak on the stage. All that was determined by the National Parties at the outset of the debate process in conjunction with the media. The purpose of that decision, from their point of view, was to eliminate people.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Wow.

[Carly Fiorina](#): The only trouble is that that's the only time citizens get to see all of the candidates. It's why Bernie Sanders didn't get any media attention for a really long time, even though he was pulling 25,000 people at a rally because he didn't meet those criteria. It's why you see the Democratic Party agonizing over their criteria this time when they have 20 candidates. I didn't know that. But a national poll, what a poll measures, particularly at the beginning of a debate, the beginning of a process, is name ID, it's fame. It's who's been in politics the longest, it's celebrity-hood.

[Carly Fiorina](#): Well, that doesn't necessarily give citizens a look at all the folks who actually maybe could do the job.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): We've been circling around this a little bit over the course of the interview but one of the things that surprised you when you became CEO of HP, is all the focus on the fact that you're a woman and that was a lot of the attention as well for the Republican nomination, and even briefly, your time as the vice presidential pick of Ted Cruz, et cetera, it was the first time a woman in that context, I believe, had been selected to be a vice presidential candidate running mate.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Talk to us about that. How much has changed in the last 30 years? Is it still the same issue it was in 1999 when you became CEO or have things changed and how have you learned to respond to all that?

[Carly Fiorina](#): Well that's a big topic.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): It's a big question now, if we had all day.

[Carly Fiorina](#): I think honestly the answer to your question, has it changed, is that the same? Is yes and yes. Yes, it's changed and yes it's still the same. I say that because obviously a lot has changed. For example, there are now on the democrat side, I think six women running for president right now. That's a big change. There are clearly more women in senior positions in government, in business.

[Carly Fiorina](#): On the other hand, if you look at the data, what you would find is the number of CEOs hasn't changed much in terms of percentages. If you looked at the number of women or people of color who serve on boards, it's less than 20%. That's the same number as it was 25 years ago. If you look at Congress is still 20%. If you

think about the fact that women are ... It's not that women are better than men, it is that women are half the human potential in the world.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

When half the human potential in the world is not being fully tapped, and it's clearly not being fully tapped, then we're all losing out. I would also say yes, things have changed. There's a sensitivity, a recognition that certain kinds of behavior and certain disrespectful behaviors or comments are not acceptable and yet, my goodness, how many famous people have taken a fall in the last 18 months? Because it turns out, they were doing all of those terrible, disrespectful, abusive in some cases, criminal things to women.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Yes, things have changed and yes, things are still the same. What I would say to every young woman is, don't get a chip on your shoulder for every bad story. I could tell you 10 good stories about men. Don't hide your light under a bushel. Be as smart as you are, be as good as you are. Don't let other people typecast you or categorize you. But on the other hand, at a certain point, we need to get past what people look like, their appearance and their circumstance. We need to be able to see and hear who they actually are and the value they really bring. That in the end is what empathy is really about.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

I can look past your appearance, I can look past your circumstances, I can look past the labels that people put on you and I can see you for who you are, and accept the value that you will bring to a situation. Leaders look different. But leadership is always the same no matter what the package is.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It's really well said. One of the things, Carly, that you've had to endure from the very beginning, whether was that guy taking you to the strip club to try to break you and knock you out of leadership to we've ... many of us have read all the stories and books and in the press about your tenure at HP and then even you throw yourself into the political ring in California and then again, nationally in the presidential bid.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

The one thing that holds that all in common is you get criticized a lot and every leader does and yet you seem to be really resilient. How do you navigate that? How do you handle the critics? What do you allow to stick and how do you get some of it just to bounce off you or does it bounce off you? What is what is that like for you?

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Well, I do think that part of resiliency and having criticism bounce off you is to recognize that it's omnipresent. It is the price of leadership. I think people take it really hard when they feel like, Oh, I didn't. This isn't ... This doesn't come with the territory. It always comes with the territory. By the way, if you're first or you're different, or you do things differently, or you look different, the criticisms always worse, that is life unfortunately.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

It is also true so criticism is the prize. It's also true that the critics are always louder than the fans. Always. Look at social media. Yes, everyone's struggling for

likes and how many likes and all this but basically, the critics are always louder than the fans. It's also true in this day and age, the criticism is oh my gosh, it's so harsh. It's so mean. It's so

[Carly Fiorina:](#) everywhere all the time. You really do have to steel yourself and remember, it's the price and to remember as well the distinction between feedback and criticism.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) I will tell you a little secret. Oprah Winfrey taught me this many years ago. I don't read press about myself. I don't watch what people say about me on social media. If it's feedback, I need to hear okay. But if people are just out there, taking potshots, I pay it no attention because guess what? Someone else's criticism can only define you if you let it. Each of us can choose to define ourselves to determine our own path or not.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) One of the things that I worry about is so many young people now seem to spend so much time worrying about what everyone else says about them. In the end, you determine who you are, the path you chart, the difference you make. In the end, you're not going to be remembered for who criticized you. You will be remembered for your character and your integrity and the impact you made and the courage you showed and whether you're consistent and whether you change the order of things for the better.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) How do you not ... Early on, how did that not just defeat you? How did you not let ... That's a good learned position but how did you not let that take you out of the game? Well, there were times when I felt it was going to. The strip club story. Honestly, I had to sit in the ladies room for hours to think that through. I can remember being at dinners ... This is a terrible story but I can remember being at a dinner, I was the only woman at the dinner. I had a very important client, a very big piece of business. I was the person who understood the situation and the complexities of the issues best. We had brought in a whole set of new resources, which meant new executives.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Anyway, I'm at this dinner and with all these men, and me, I was not only the junior person at the table, big important dinner, lots of executives, I was also the only woman at the table. At a certain point, in that conversation, a man, an executive looked at me and said, "Well, I hope that when we have this important presentation to the customer, that it's not that time of month for you."

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Whoa.

[Carly Fiorina:](#) Now, I was stunned. I was so taken aback by that comment that I ... So disrespectful, so demeaning, so dismissive. Everyone else just went on. Nobody else said anything. No one said that's inappropriate. By the way, that's something men could learn that we need everyone to speak up, not just women. I excused myself and I went into the parking lot. I remember walking

around the parking lot crying. I was so frustrated and angry and I didn't know what to do. I walked around in circles crying long enough and I came back to the table and I finished up dinner but I never really recovered from that.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

I went home and I talked to a good friend, a woman, a mentor, and she made me laugh about it and then I got mad. The next morning, I woke up and I thought no one is ever going to make me feel that way again. He was the fool. That executive was the fool, not me. Sometimes you just have to take the time to work through it. What you can't do, at a moment when you feel defeated, and I did, what you can do at that moment is something that you can't take back. You can't push your chair up from the table, throw your napkin on the table and say I quit because you can't take that back. You can't let people see how devastated you are.

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Give yourself the time and the space to work it out. Hold yourself together, keep yourself under control. Don't emote. Don't say the first thing that comes to mind. Keep it together. Get yourself to a space where you can work your way through it, and then choose your next step.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, I so appreciate you sharing that and I'm so glad you had the presence of mind to do that and that ...

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

I didn't look very present wandering around the parking lot crying.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

But we all have moments like that in different ways. Carly, this has been a joy to have you on the podcast. Today your brand new book Find Your Way releases. Tell us where they can find obviously everywhere books are sold, but there must be a website and people are going to want to connect with you online as well. Can you tell us where they can do that?

[Carly Fiorina:](#)

Yes, please come to carlyfiorina.com you can order the book there and you'll also find out a lot about all the work that we're doing to lift leaders and problem solvers up in organizations of all sizes and communities all across America, carlyfiorina.com and Carey, this has been a really fun conversation thank you so much for having me.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

It's 100% mutual. Thank you so much. Well that was fascinating, I don't know that that interview may have set the all-time record for pearls of wisdom dropped per minute. There were just so many principles there. You may want to check some of them out. You can do that in the show notes. Head on over to careynieuwhof.com/episode256. You can find everything there including the transcripts for this episode.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

In the meantime, if you haven't yet registered for the Pushpay summit, head on over to pushpay.com/summit and use the coupon code CAREYN on checkout C-A-R-E-Y-N on checkout and you will get almost half off even the early bird registration. I would love to see you there along with Patrick Lencioni and Cheryl

Bachelor and a number of others who are speaking at the Pushpay summit. If you haven't checked out the high impact leader course, well, you can continue and overwhelm or head on over there to the highimpactleader.com.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Next week we're back with a fresh episode and I have got ... Who have I got next week, Tyler Reagan. He is the president of Catalyst, a lot of you know him from that. Tyler and I have a really transparent conversation on leading a large organization when you're not a detail person, can you relate? Some of you are like, yep. We're also going to talk about self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-confidence in leadership. Here's an excerpt.

[Tyler Reagan](#): If we're not careful, we'll quickly remove the DNA of pastor and plug in the DNA of expert. I remember when Julie Arnold hired me, I told her I said, Julie and Julie was one of the six people that started North Point, she was in charge. She created service programming for all of us and I remember telling her. I was like, "Julie, I'd love to do that job, but I just need to clarify something. I'm a pastor first, and then I'll be a service program director. Are you okay with that?" She was like, "Of course, I'm okay with that." The truth is, Carey there's a lot of churches that might not be because they're going no, but your job is to produce the events.

[Tyler Reagan](#): Okay, but I want to do it from an understanding, that I'm equally responsible to love on this congregation, that I'm equally responsible to care for them. That I'm equally responsible to pasture the seven people God entrusted to me on a team. Now granted I am ... I have a pastoral call in my life, I felt that my whole life and in college, I felt very clear and I went to seminary for those kind of things.

[Tyler Reagan](#): That's not the case all across the board, I get that. I just don't want to lose from the church what it is the church is called to do because we're so excellent at our programs. You can be so excellent. You've heard me talk about this and I learned it in our world years ago, but a good product with a bad process is a counterfeit win.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): That's next week, guys. Hey, thank you so much for listening and I really look forward to hanging out again next week. If you subscribe, you get it all for free and thank you so much for listening. 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.