

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

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, hi everybody, and welcome to episode 279 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I want to say a quick welcome to everybody who may be new to the podcast, listening for the first time, welcome man. Here is what we do. We are a community of leaders leading in a variety of areas, some in church leadership, a lot in the marketplace. You know what leadership is like, you just run into all kinds of issues. And that's this podcast tries to address, just this eclectic mix of team leadership, momentum, growth, challenges, how to relate to other people who are different than you. And just well, anything from the enneagram, which we did last week to some incredible stories as well.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Bottom line, it's designed to help you lead like never before. And it really is close to my heart to help you thrive in life and leadership. I hope that is the goal. And you can subscribe for free anywhere you get this podcast, and for all of you who continue to share and leave ratings and reviews, I just want to say thank you. Today I'm going to share with a conversation I had with Brad Formsma. Brad's got a really unique story. He's an entrepreneur running a landscape design business for years, and then felt a call to help other people become more generous, and founded an organization called, I Like Giving.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Brad is one of the most connected people I know. With high net worth individuals, literally people worth tens, hundreds of millions, billions of dollars. And this has been his life for the last number of years. We talk about, how do you get past the intimidation a lot of leaders feel in dealing with wealthy people? That's true for those you who may be in the startup trying to find investors. How about those of us who are in ministry who are trying to deal with top donors? How does that work? When you flip it, what does it feel like as a high net worth individual when you are talking to other people?

**Carey Nieuwhof:** We are also talking about how to live a more generous life, et cetera. It's going to be a fascinating conversation. That's kind of what we do here. We want to thank our partners as well. I know a lot of you are diving into the media options that are offered by Pro Media Fire. And I say, good for you. Who is Pro Media Fire? Really it is a fleet, it is an organization full of people who are great at media, whether that's social, design, video. Like Amber, Amber is a Liberty University graduate with a degree in video production, and a passion for media.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** She can work anywhere, but she wanted to join up with the Pro Media Fire team to help churches reach more people. Pro Media Fire, Amber is part of the video team creating sermon bumpers, social media hotspots from pastors' messages, event commercials, and even storytelling videos. Amber celebrates with the team for the part they play when people come to Christ at a partner church. Now, Amber and the members of the Pro Media Fire team are

Christians, and they have a passion to reach more people for Christ with their gifts. They are creatives on a mission.

Carey Nieuwhof: Pro Media Fire, here is the bottom line, you get an entire creative team for a fraction of the cost of one staff hire. They know ministry and they know media. And if you need help with custom graphic design and video, check out Pro Media Fire. Listeners of this podcast get 10% off plans for life by going to [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey). That's [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey). I got to tell you, you'll hear Brad talk about the power of video. I mean, he's had over 100,000,000 views, probably way more since we did this interview on some of the videos that he and his team have created. That is the power of video.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want to introduce you to a new partner too. These are some friends that I have known for many many years. They partnered together to bring you Ministry Boost. If engagement drives attendance then part of your engagement strategy should be to onboard more people on the volunteer teams. Many people serving is directly connected to healthy engagement, but that can be difficult. Maybe you've seen 10 people raise their hands are like, "Hi, I'm going to join your team." But only three or four end up making on to the team. These guys have a lot of experience, why? Because they are involved in next-gen ministry.

Carey Nieuwhof: Nobody manages more volunteers than people who handle the next generation, student, kids ministry, preschool ministry, Nick Blevins, Kenny Conley, and Kevin Monahan are behind it and collectively they have decades of experience. I have so much respect for people who know how to do that, because let's face it, even as a lead pastor, you are kind of responsible for the whole thing, but you are only managing a handful of volunteers. If you really want to know who does it well, talk to my friends at Ministry Boost. They provide training for church leaders. They have a course that specifically deals with how to onboard volunteers.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's called the Volunteer Pipeline. It'll help you get more people in your onboarding process, and actually plug in a much higher percentage of your volunteer prospects. Wouldn't that be great if you went from 10 hands up and nine people engaged. As opposed to, "Well, we got two." The volunteer pipeline is a \$49 course, but right now you can get it for free if you go to this site [ministryboost.org/carey](http://ministryboost.org/carey). Build a volunteer pipeline for teams that your church has confidence that your new system will drive engagement for your ministry, just go to [ministryboost.org/carey](http://ministryboost.org/carey) to learn more.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, without much further ado, I am so thrilled to bring you my conversation with Brad Formsma.

Carey Nieuwhof: Brad it's so good to have you on the podcast. Welcome.

Brad Formsma: It's so good to be with you Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: We are in Atlanta for the Orange Conference and Rethink Leadership.

Brad Formsma: Good to be here. Thanks for bringing me in.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Well, I got to ask you, what exactly do you do? Because I know we've met on a couple of different occasions, and I mean to say, "Well, I work in the field of generosity, and I help people become more generous." What does it say on your business card, and how do you spend most of your days?

Brad Formsma: Well, look, I got to tell you, it's an honor to be with you. I know some of your past guests, so I feel like I'm in some kind of special rare air. It's an honor to be here. I got to tell you before we get started. Your interview with Gary Chapman.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Brad Formsma: Something he said really got me, and it was, "Yes, it's Toronto, yes, it's 20 below whatever, yes I'm just doing a breakout, but somebody hasn't heard the message yet.

Carey Nieuwhof: That got me. I'm going to remember that till I die Brad. If you heard that episode we'll link to it in the show notes guys. That blew me away.

Brad Formsma: It was so good for me to say ... It's easy to say audience of one. After you've been in front of 5,000 or 10,000 like I have, you have. I'm just being honest, sometimes you think, "Is it worth it?" And I love that.

Carey Nieuwhof: To do a breakout in Canada in January when it's -25, because people haven't heard the message, and yet you've sold 12,000,000 books. That's insane to me, and very highly motivating, and convicting all at the same time. Your message is in love languages, it's on generosity.

Brad Formsma: Right, but I feel that way about getting the message out. But if I could just go back, just a little bit. I'm 11 years old, and my grandpa was a big dutch bakery owner. He picks me up and he says, "Bradley," with that big bellowing voice, "We are going to go to the test kitchen and make 16 loaves." And I'm thinking it's all about bread, and fresh bread, and Saturday morning with grandpa. Yet, by the time those loaves cooled off, they went into the trunk. That really started the trajectory of my life shifting, where he modeled the generous life to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: What was he doing with those loaves?

Brad Formsma: He would drop them off. First drop off was to a widow with two loaves, and he was just so affirming and kind with his words. He was modeling generosity of words. The next stop it would be two more loaves of bread, and a check. He was modeling generosity of money. I'm thinking, the next stop, let's pull the car over

and share some bread for us. He was like, "No, the next step is going to be two more loaves of bread." This time it was a letter of recommendation.

Brad Formsma: He explained to me, "I'm being generous with my influence." Those are just few of the ways that I started to see and learn the generous life being modeled for me. Then I went into business and I was minding my own business like grandpa for almost 20 years.

Carey Nieuwhof: What did you do?

Brad Formsma: I was a landscape architecture guy in Midwest, in Michigan. I had a company of about 30 people at its height. One day I was minding my own business on a natural beauty road, which in Michigan is code for gravely, muddy, dirty, I don't know if you have those in Canada too.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I was born in Windsor, so I know Michigan.

Brad Formsma: Everything in my life was working. Good business, beautiful home, out in [inaudible 00:09:33] overlooking all these acres. I said, "God, what's missing?" I got this clear message, I'm going to use you to encourage people in their giving. You are going to bring greater hope and joy to people, and then this was the part, you'll influence influencers who will take this message out, which is my message to many other people. Carey, I went home and journaled, and I thought, "What the heck? I don't even leave town for spring vacation?"

Brad Formsma: Our business was seasonal. Within about a year or that, I ended up selling the company. I didn't get extremely wealthy by any stretch I sold the service business in Michigan, but it was a transition, and I went for it. What I started to do, because I do want to answer your question about what do I do? I started pulling people together to talk about generosity without asking them for anything. They tended to be-

Carey Nieuwhof: Can I ask you?

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Were you generous in your company or were you like average generous prior to this call moment?

Brad Formsma: That's a great catch. At 28, I transitioned from being the best make believer to really giving my life over to Jesus. I grew up as a perfect Christian home, Christian school, had all the answers, but it was at 28 with the birth of our firstborn son that I really turned my life over to Jesus. We always say, the seeds that grandpa planted laid dormant for a while, but as I started this business and built it around these seven ways of living generously, those seeds started to bloom as I gave my heart to God.

Brad Formsma: Yes, we used, the business to be generous. Which is a great gift. If you are out there and you have a business. It is so fun to be generous with your business, outside of just a check from the business, because my employees knew, we are doing this one, and Brad is not invoicing it. They all felt like they were part of something bigger, and I would always say to them like, "I'm not going to give at your expense. You are going to get a paycheck. This is our decision, this is how we feel led to lead the business."

Carey Nieuwhof: What would you do with your employees? Because we do have a lot of business owners listening as well as a lot of church leaders.

Brad Formsma: For us, I believe in that Southwest model, that your employees are your customer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Brad Formsma: I would, it was probably to a fault, I was like a bank for car loans. Sometimes I would buy somebody a used minivan if they had been with me, a foreman for a couple of years, and I knew they were having more kids and they needed space. I'd just buy them a car. We'd just make it happen.

Carey Nieuwhof: So just a surplus in the company, just like, "I'm going to buy you a car."

Brad Formsma: Absolutely, I'd do that. The other thing was we are real sensitive, if somebody had something come up where they needed time away we would just do it and make it happen. Then when we would landscape churches, I seemed to have a knack for finding widows. If you read my book. I mean, I just have seemed to get on an airplane and I'd find widows to help. It's actually a very good way to live, by the way. I would find widows, and we would do stuff at Evelyn's house, and then I'd just tell the guys, "You know we did that all that stuff, and we are not billing for it." There was just a modeling, and you can do it, daily, weekly, monthly.

Carey Nieuwhof: You did some pro bono.

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm curious, I love the fact that you would buy somebody a minivan or that kind of thing. Were you ever worried? Because I know this comes up in church. It's like, it comes up in business I'm sure too, but you had to be fair to everybody, is it like, "Well, you get a car, and you get a car, and you get a car." Did you have to turn that into an Oprah moment where everybody gets a car, or how do you manage that seeming inequality where you do something for somebody, but maybe not for somebody else.

Brad Formsma: One day I was meeting with Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest, and Colleen, and we had this discussion about the very thing. I said, "How do you guys do it?"

50,000 employees, there is no way. You just told me an incredible story." In fact the story was, we had an employee whose ratings with customer service were dropping, but they were high for years. So something is wrong.

Brad Formsma: They went and checked on her, and found out having a divorce, just tough time, \$1,800 legal bill hanging over her head like a ton of bricks. Next morning Colleen said she just tucked 18, 100s in an envelope, left it on her desk. I was asking them the same question as you, and I think the point is this. You do what you can do for one. And you respond in that moment. The other employees get it. They know, if they are really sitting around thinking, "Where is my car?" They probably should leave the building.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly, right.

Carey Nieuwhof: You are doing it based on what you perceive there to be need, and that kind of thing. That's really cool. So you led your business then, which is a landscape architect firm.

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You led that with those principles of generosity after your faith was rekindled in your late twenties.

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then God gives you this vision, and he's like, "I'm going to put you around influencers." Did you have a pretty impressive contact list by that point or?

Brad Formsma: Well, I had wealthy customers, because usually of the kind of landscaping we were doing, but no, it was amazing to watch him work through prayer, and then I would just get out there. I love relationships, I love to meet new people, I'm probably woo on the strength finder. It's like the world is full of neat people I haven't met. Today, I speak on generosity across the country and churches, in businesses. I also work with some real high net worth families, to just help them communicate this generosity message through the generations.

Brad Formsma: So that their story and their values pass on. That's what I do. Then there is a stealth side, which I guess isn't going to be so stealth after this interview, but it's how you and I met. I two or three times a year convene high level influencers or wealthy Christians together to just talk about generosity and life. I usually in the process introduce them to some of my interesting friends. It's a private setting. It's something I feel called to. I enjoy it-

Carey Nieuwhof: Invite only, right?

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

- Carey Nieuwhof: Tell us a little bit about that. As much as you can, as much as you are comfortable sharing, because I was privileged to be invited there. Probably more in the influence side, than the wealthy side, but it was still great to be in the room.
- Brad Formsma: Peers influence peers, and I have a big heart for a leading pastor of a larger church, who is trying to say, "I want to help grow generosity, but I also don't really know how to talk to my mega givers if you will, high net worth givers. One of the things I do is I'll have a senior pastor come with one or two of their top givers, which creates a shared experience. There is no ask around these gatherings. They are super informal.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That was a big surprise is, you are not like, "Please give to my foundation, or whatever." We got to see somebody, and I won't say who, but I mean, it was a person who has a very ... Like they are on the Forbes list. Let's put it that way.
- Brad Formsma: Yeah.
- Carey Nieuwhof: When you are on a Forbes list you are doing okay. It was just really they kind of opened their book, and said, "This is what God's done in the business, and this is what he's done for our heart." You could see that the business was almost a means to an end. That it had really become a way of becoming more generous.
- Brad Formsma: Yeah, and I think that in those environments, people are looking for a safe place to have a conversation.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.
- Brad Formsma: As you noticed, I didn't send a bio sheet out of anybody coming in the room. Which, I had the president of Disney come one time, and he was like so bent out of shape that I didn't pass it out. "I didn't know so and so was going to be here." I'm like, "Well, it's my event, and I'm a card carrying nonconformist. This isn't about our day job." What happens when we can just get together, and be in a story? My whole theme of life is stories move people to action. That's how-
- Carey Nieuwhof: I was connecting through Houston, and I ran into a guy at our gate, and I'm like, "You are going to that event?" And he's like, "Yeah, I'm going to that event." I'm like, "Did you get any details?" He's like, "Nope." I was like, "Me neither, I guess we are going to find out when we land, right? I know we are supposed to meet at Panera Bread for lunch. That's all I know." It was fun, it was great.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That is ... I want to get to high net worth individuals, because that is a really awkward setting. I think it's awkward for high net worth individuals like who do you talk to about that? Then for a lot of pastors if you have a successful entrepreneur in your congregation, or a business owner, or family. There is that awkwardness because you don't fly in those circles so you don't know to talk to

them. I want to come back to that but I want to talk about abundance mentality, and giving.

Brad Formsma: Awesome.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm a firm believer, I work with leaders all the time. And there is two kinds of leaders Brad as you know.

Brad Formsma: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: There is a leader who is like, "I'm telling you how hard it is in my community, and this is why it's not going to work, and this is why we can't reach anyone, and this is why this isn't going to grow." I'm a firm believer in what Henry Ford said, whether you think you can, or whether you think you can't, you are right.

Carey Nieuwhof: An abundance mentality, it's not a stupid mentality but just that kind of, there is all kinds of opportunity here, what are we going to do? How do we make this happen? Do you find that there is a link between an abundance mindset, and generosity?

Brad Formsma: Absolutely. Here is what I find interesting though. Some faith based leaders talk abundance mentality, but they don't full circle it, and so they are not living it themselves.

Carey Nieuwhof: They want you to be abundant.

Brad Formsma: That just drives me nuts. You know what? I love all of you, but knock that off. Don't do that. I mean, check your heart as somebody says.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, it's John Crist.

Brad Formsma: You just go, what there is really going on? From an abundance standpoint, what I see is, it's like a muscle Carey, so the more that we give, it gets exercised, and it's a faith, it's a whole faith experience, when we live generously, and when we see the world from an abundant standpoint. Because you are really saying, trust in God, oh my word, we are going to write a bigger check, or we are going to move in this direction. Do I believe that he's got it?

Brad Formsma: You are also going up against the scarcity mindset, and this is really pervasive in nonprofits. I won't tell you the name of it, but the other day I heard someone say, "I work for so and so. They have hundreds of millions at our budget, and we are such good stewards. I'm not allowed to buy Starbucks at the airport." I'm like, "Do you really sit in a donor's living room and tell them that? I want to throw up in the bush, right now." They are like, "Yeah, we tell them that. Yeah, they love that."

Brad Formsma: I'm like, "That's just gross." You are traveling and you can't expense a cup of coffee? That to me, we use these words, and we try to cover that stewardship. I'm like, "No, I love to give good gifts, I don't like to give junk." I think Jesus gave us the ultimate gift, let's not do junk for Jesus. That's a whole another one of my soapboxes. If I see another old computer out at our church, in southern California, that somebody donated, I'm like, "That's not giving, that's dumping." Stop that too.

Carey Nieuwhof: I got this beautiful HD TV from 2004. I'm sure you can use it.

Brad Formsma: Yeah, three and a half feet thick.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's interesting. Every time I hear someone use the phrase, "I'm just being a good steward." That almost always to me seems to be a codeword for cheap. Am I right in that?

Brad Formsma: You know what? It sure feels that way.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm just being a good steward. No, you are being cheap. In the long run I think cheap is more expensive. You got to buy it twice, right? If you have a dollar store mentality. There is nothing wrong with the dollar store, we get stuff at the dollar store too. I'm just saying, that idea that, we'll just have used everything, or we can't do it. That's good. Say more.

Brad Formsma: Well, when I think about how the church world has told itself if we advertise our frugality so hard, that somehow that's going to invite somebody to want to give more. I appreciate good financial standards. I was just at a wonderful church, Calvary in Albuquerque. I mean, they are dialed in. There is accountability and all that kind of stuff. It was still a wonderful setting, they took great care of us, you could tell they didn't have a worn out carpet. There is a balance there. Be good with your financial controls, but let's not play to try to get something from somebody just out of the lack. There is not enough, the sky is falling. If we don't do it today it's never going to happen. It doesn't seem to work.

Carey Nieuwhof: Where would you say the line is between cheap and extravagant? Maybe even extravagant isn't the word. I know when we built a few years ago at Connexus Church, and that was one of my last sort of acts as lead pastor before I moved into a founding role, I said, "The line we want to find here is we want to find excellent but not opulent. I don't want anyone to walk through this place and go, "Wow," but I mean, it's going to cost you some money on AVL. It's going to cost you some money to ... I just got a new iMac. It's like, it's Canadian pricing, but it's like five grand.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you really want to podcast well, you are going to get the RAM, and get the hard drive, and get this, and get that. I want the team to have the tools they need to do the job. Rather than sitting there behind some penny and fork

computer that got outdated 20 years ago waiting for data to load. Where is that line, do you have any guidelines?

Brad Formsma: Carey, look. I live in the backyard on a hill behind Mariners Church. That's my home church. I don't know if I'm a good guy to speak to this.

Carey Nieuwhof: The spa. Sorry Eric.

Brad Formsma: We have just a beautiful campus. It is debt free, that's another wonderful story.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Brad Formsma: I think Kenton did a great job with it. He said, "We are going to build to the somewhat relative to the culture here."

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, it's Orange County.

Brad Formsma: Yeah. That is ... I'm a little bit maybe not the guy to ask on that line. I would say-

Carey Nieuwhof: You know what? I don't know that Mariners is opulent, because I've spoken there many times at events.

Brad Formsma: I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's gorgeous. I mean, the landscaping is incredible. You go inside it's not like gold lined this, and platinum this. It's a nice auditorium that seats a couple of thousand people.

Brad Formsma: You know what? Function is huge, that place ... I'm so proud of our church. I mean, I drive by there on a Saturday morning, the entire corner is filled with the farmer's market, and they don't pay a dime. The church trains are running, you have conference after conference there. I love how they use our facility, and so it's not just, "We built this beautiful opulent place for us on a Sunday morning," which I've seen in some denominational settings, where it's like, "No, you can't come in here." Let's build it well, and then use it, and share it.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's interesting too when we talk about the psychology of giving, or what it does for you. I love the part of your book, your book is called I Like Giving. You got a couple of books, you wrote one with your son as well, which we'll talk about at the end. In I Like Giving you quote research that says ... Again, this isn't Christian research, but they looked at business graduates who were focused on profit making.

Carey Nieuwhof: They discovered that there were generally higher levels of anxiety, stress and depression if you focused on making money, which is really interesting. What do you find about the benefits of generosity as opposed to hoarding, or skimping?

Brad Formsma: I got that research from Daniel Pink, who I've written about him, he's written about me in his books. I really like just his perspective on several things. He was talking about the intrinsic, and extrinsic kind of positioning. The intrinsic is more of outside focus of you know what? I care about a greater good. I put it in terms of this. Setting a goal that I want to make money to give money, versus that extrinsic was more of, I'm all in this for the money. That room that we sat where there was a bunch of CEOs, clearly there was a desire to make profit.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Brad Formsma: Legally and everything else, but that was like number two. Number one was the why. We are doing this so that we can give away like recklessly crazy. I think if I look back at that research in the book, which has been out a number of years I would say, it's really about what order do you have those in? From a health benefit standpoint, my friend Steven Post wrote this book, Why Good Things Happen to Good People. I always bring this up when I'm at churches speaking, because I like to talk about the benefits of giving.

Brad Formsma: He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. A generous person will prosper. It's there. That word prosper gets banged around a little bit. I love it. I think it's a powerful word. Steven Po says, you live 10 years longer, and take half of the medicine if you are generous in three ways each week. I Like Giving at my work ... We talk a lot about seven ways to the generous life. Generous with thoughts. That's a big one. Love your neighbor as yourself. I'm like, man, I feel sorry for some people's neighbors. Even my self-talk, and self-thinking. I got to go on a walk and clear that out.

Carey Nieuwhof: Generous to yourself.

Brad Formsma: Yeah, and then the second one, generous with words. That's so important. Build up or tear down, and generosity of money of course. That softens our heart. We are more like Jesus. Generosity of influence, that's one that I push on a lot, because I'm with a lot of people who are worried to do that, and share that in the light of, my friends are maybe going to expect me to have ... They are going to put me on some list somewhere. It's very spirit led, but I've really been stretched on being more generous with my influence.

Brad Formsma: I mean, the other day I was a brunch at The Montage. Sorry, somebody had to do it. We ended up at Henry Cloud's table. The five of us were sitting there, and we got chatting. It just popped in my head. There is a billion dollar company I'm working with right now. From the adventure leadership stuff that Henry is doing, they would really benefit. I've done some things with them but not a ton. I drove home and I thought, "I'm going to share that relationship. I'm going to give that."

Brad Formsma: Henry's assistant was our president was like, "Are you crazy?" And I'm like, "We are all going in the same direction I hope. He didn't ask me for that, but if I can

help him ... I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't of another pastor friend having introduced me to you years ago." You got to trust it, it's got to be spirit led, but sometimes we get so focused on our own program that we realize, I can help other people.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. That's really interesting. I want to park on influence. We are going to come back to money and I do want to talk about that, because we don't talk about it in this podcast a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof: Occasionally, I don't get this every once in a while, but sometimes people will be like, "How do you get those guests? Do you pay them?" It's like, "No, I've never paid a guest." It's like you invite them, hopefully it's helpful, at the beginning I think it's an act of charity to be on a podcast, right? Andy Stanley kicked this one off when I had zero listeners, which was really nice of him. Now obviously we have hundreds of thousands of listeners a month to the show, which is unreal. And so it's helpful. People getting introduced.

Carey Nieuwhof: There is that mutuality. I found when it comes to influence networks and connecting people that I don't know ... I just feel like you can't be too generous in just giving your time and influence away. What are your thoughts on that?

Brad Formsma: Well, I think that's true, but I think you also have to really really be aware that it's not always going to have the end result that you want. I write about this in my book. When you give a gift, are you expecting a certain kind of response? I heard it a couple of weeks ago. There is a big conference going on right now, Not Yours. I made a connection for them to get their leads bigger, I never heard anything from the guys that do it, and I don't even really know them. On one of my low days with my self-talk going, "Poor Brad." I thought, he didn't even ping me back to say thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: To say, "Hi, thanks for setting that up."

Brad Formsma: Yeah, I'm not a gatekeeper or anything like this, but I shared a relationship. Sometimes my wife is like, "Does that ever frustrate you?" And I said, "Only briefly." Then I realize, it's not about me. There is something bigger going on here. You know what? You do reap what you sow. I'm not a give to get kind of guy, and I just keep showing up. I probably won't be jumping up and down to think about that person, and how I can help them more. Not in a punitive way, but just kind of like, "I don't know if our relationship is there." I'm so relational about it.

Carey Nieuwhof: There should be a reciprocity and a mutuality to it as well, right?

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then I often find that the harvest comes, if it comes, well, you do harvest what you sow. It often is delayed. You might think, I did something for that guy two

years ago. Again, I don't have a scoreboard, I'm not that kind of personality. Then you are shocked, because two years ago they remember you, or two years later they remember you, and it's like, "Hi, do you want to meet so and so?"

Carey Nieuwhof: The principle there is be generous with your influence, be generous with your relationship.

Brad Formsma: Yeah, then it rolls into time. Generous with time, which really works great on the church side, because we've got data that says, "Look, when volunteering goes up, giving goes up." I think every mega pastor, every pastor listening just said, "I heard that." When we come in, I camp on these seven ways, and we'll get to attention and sharing our stuff in a second. It's, helping people realize it's a form of generosity to give your time.

Brad Formsma: When you do that your treasure goes there, your heart goes there, and they begin to connect more with the needs. They are more familiar with what's going on. They are seeing some things behind the scenes, how the money is being used, which is a big deal. And they give more. Bernard did this beautiful study, and a huge correlation. So anyway, then generosity of attention, that one I almost wish I didn't put it in the list of seven, because it's like, it's killing me Carey.

Brad Formsma: I mean, we were at a gathering the other night, and I was talking to a guy, and I kept gazing over a shoulder at someone who I wanted to catch up with, and I kept going, "You ding-a-ling, you talk about this, you are supposed to be the generosity expert."

Carey Nieuwhof: Sole focus.

Brad Formsma: "What are you doing?" Then it wasn't 24 hours later, I'm at a nice restaurant with my wife on a date, it's just everything is going well. I happen to hear my phone buzz, looked at it, and then looked around the room before getting back to looking at her.

Brad Formsma: In that moment I looked around the room and I'm like, "Look at all these stupid people on their phones at this nice restaurant, and I was on it." I'm like, I think that five ounces of plastic, and glass and technology we are carrying around is like this anti-attention generosity thing. I just bring it up to say, we all can do better on this. I'll use the I statement, I can do better on this, because we know when someone has been fully present with us. We know how it feels, and I think it could be one of the most powerful ways of being generous.

Brad Formsma: I just have to tell you the day I spent with Herb Kelleher, and he's sitting at his desk, and he's sucking on a cigarette, and there is another one in the ashtray, and I walk in, and he jumps up, and comes over and bear hugs me, and I'm 6'4, and I think he's about the same height. I hear a crackling over my ear, and he's

like, "Brad, it is so good to be here. You are my new friend." He was eyes locked on me, and I'm going, "This guy has got 50,000 employees."

Brad Formsma: We got towards the end, and he says, "I want to get my picture with you, but I came in here they cut my hair. I got to comb my hair." He ran down the hallway to get a comb, and he came back, "How does my hair look?" They are like, "Herb, you got a conference call." We can't say the four letter word that ... Not in the podcast, but he's like, "I'm not doing that, I'm here with Brad." I will never forget that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Man oh man Brad.

Brad Formsma: Can we give people that gift? You can go, "Wait a minute, I have got a church of all these people, how do I that as a senior leader?" It can be a brief moment. Full attention. I saw you do X, Y, Z, be specific, and then move on. People understand, you don't have to turn an hour conversation into it. You can't always engage every time, but I've yet to meet a Southwest employee, and I talk to them all the time, just because I love the culture, I love the company, who says, "You know what? Herb blew me off."

Brad Formsma: They had brief encounters with him, but they would say things like, "I'll take his call 3:00 in the morning, and be down at the jet bridge in Nashville for him." How long did you spend with that guy? 30 seconds, one time in training in 77. Attention matters, and then sharing our stuff. That's the last thing. You had asked me about how do you engage with high capacity donors and such? Characteristics of them, and those that have a lot of resources that are generous, they share their stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like go use my house at the beach kind of thing?

Brad Formsma: They share ... Kind of like, I have a house in Park City Utah, and here is the gate code. When you go in just stop at the front desk, and you can charge at the clubhouse, and by the way, did you need money to get out there with your family? You really see that. Part of my calling I think is to just speak reality into some of these guys, because I love them, but they get out of touch with the reality, because they've had a lot of margin for a long time. I always say, I like the idea of yearly bread, these guys live in decade bread. I know Jesus says daily bread, but you know what I'm saying.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. They've got it bad.

Brad Formsma: They haven't had a scare in a while, you know what I'm saying? You try to say, if you are going to give somebody the opportunity to go to your lake house, or your wherever, why don't you buy them flights to get there too? Because that's kind of like giving me a jet airplane, I can't buy the jet fuel.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly.

Brad Formsma: Just helping them see that. One time they were like, "Really? That's an issue?" I'm like, "Yeah, they got six kids." You are giving them your 14,000 square foot house up in the mountains. I get it, that is awesome, and you are covering everything, but he's a pastor. He can't just buy six flights. They love it, because they are like, "Thank you for that perspective."

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't know that you've met Reggie Joiner or not, but I met him, almost 15 years ago now. They were just starting Drive Conference at North Point. He said, "Why don't you come down? Andy and I just put together the drive conference, and I'm "That would be great." He says, "Well get you in for free." It was exactly that point, I didn't have the budget for flights, and our church didn't. They flew me down. It was incredible. Not only me but our staff.

Brad Formsma: When was this?

Carey Nieuwhof: This is in 2005.

Brad Formsma: So 14 years later we are still talking about it.

Carey Nieuwhof: 14 years later, exactly.

Brad Formsma: It matters.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've worked with Reggie, it's funny, it's a fun thing, I've worked for free for a number of months too just with a border thing, which has been a lot of fun. It just creates that kind of loyalty, and that stuff you just never forget. Now, I can afford my own ticket, but you remember when you couldn't. That's really good. Again, I think the principle here for most listeners is yeah, I'd love a 14,000 square foot lake house I could send out, but you got to be generous with what you have.

Brad Formsma: What you have.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean, right down to ... We live in a neighborhood, I've got a brand new fertilizer spreader, I'm sharing that with my neighbor. Or here, you want to use my snow blower? He's got this tractor, and I still do that myself. I enjoy doing it, but I got a nice snowblower, so it's like, the neighbors want to use it, you go ahead and use it, you want to use my car? Use my car. That kind of stuff. You are talking about average every day stuff.

Brad Formsma: Absolutely. And it's also so good for our heart. I have a convertible that i happen to love.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've offered it to me. You said, "When you are in Orange County."

Brad Formsma: Yeah, I did that, and I meant it. I bring it up to say, I don't ever want to hold to my stuff too tight. It's just a good exercise to go, "Carey is going to be in Orange County in the next month, and he's going to have a lot of fun. And I don't know how it's going to come back, but you know what? I want to share it." Number one thing I hear from pastors, they'll say, "Hi, tell me how to talk to our major givers. Tell me how to engage them." We actually put together a resource, a free resource at [ilikegiving.com/pastorguide](http://ilikegiving.com/pastorguide).

Carey Nieuwhof: Cool, we'll link to that in the show notes.

Brad Formsma: That's got a lot more of a detail. One of the things is, understand it's important to be relational. Put yourself in their shoes. Because I'm not a mega millionaire, but I can speak to what they think about, they don't want to be viewed as an ATM. They don't want to always be asked. Look at it relationally. I had a leader of a huge university tell me one time, "Brad, I never expected a six, seven or eight figure gift inside of five years with less than 20 touches."

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Brad Formsma: We live in this instant world, where it's like, building fund. We need our down payment. If we don't do this the neighbor is going to buy it, and then we can't expend our church. Urgency, urgency. And yet it takes time. If that's where you want to go, good on you, but understand it will take you time to cultivate and develop relationships with these givers, and get to know a few things about their family.

Brad Formsma: Some people might be listening to this going, "But I got a church of 20,000, how do I do that?" You know what? You are going to have to find how to work that out in your schedule, how many touches a year? Three, six, once a month. You know what? If you aim at it, I think they honor it. All the people that I know that have wealth, they love to be asked if they know they are not the only ones being asked. Remember that room we were in, one of the people in the room was a billionaire, and I said to him, "How do you handle this at your church?" He said, "I just want to know other people are playing."

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't want to be the only one.

Brad Formsma: Yeah. And so they want to do that. There are so many other details on that resource that I really encourage people-

Carey Nieuwhof: I'd love to know more about that. I think you are right. Having sat in that lead pastor seat for two decades Brad. I can tell you, one of my early rookie mistakes was, you only talk to key donors when you need money, which is a mistake, or you only talk to your church. It's like, every time you open your mouth about money from the platform should not be when you need money. That you should be doing things for people, like helping them with their personal finance, just preaching on it, and not doing a specific ask.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what do those touches look like? Let me ask the question that I'm sure is on some people's mind, because I can imagine the comments. It's like, "Wasn't that favoritism?" Then you should have touches as you call it, or relationship build with everybody, or with all donors, or the people who give nothing. What do you say about that?

Brad Formsma: Well, I think most of the people that I know that have a lot of resources have the gift of giving. Now, whether they've developed or even realized that they have it is another thing. I think as a senior pastor as you are shepherding and leading people, it is helpful to understand that it's not ... You are not trying to get something from them, as much as you are trying to get something to them. There is something about helping them understand that there are other people like them at church. I know when I years ago went to a church, I was like, "Can I find anybody that likes to give, and who dares talk about it?"

Brad Formsma: Because it's an exciting thrilling fun life. I mean, all the generous people I know, they just have more fun. I mean, you never say, "I want you to meet my Sally, she's so stingy, she's awesome. She'll take you out for lunch." It'll be, you'll sit there, and you'll wonder who is going to get the check. No, it's always like, I want to meet your friends so and so, they seem generous. It's not just with money, there is usually a spirit about it.

Brad Formsma: I say, I don't think it's favoritism. I say it's part of you discipling them in a unique way. There are so many other areas outside of the church that you can have shared experiences. It's part of why we do some of the events that we do. Because we want to help give givers an opportunity to be able to be with peers, and to be challenged. The way the touches could look like ... This is basic stuff, a simple shorthand written note, a couple of sentences, "Just thought of you today." Or, "Hi, I heard that so and so was sick in your family."

Brad Formsma: You can put this in a CRM system, this does not take a ton and ton of time. I've put these resources together. Literally I had all the time. We are not talking to our major donors the right way. Part of it is, this is the one I get most. Help us talk to our major donors so we can pay this place off. I'm like, "Okay, I love you pastor. I'm here, but I'm not the giving hit man. You had me on one Sunday to talk about a generous life." They are not going to respond that way.

Brad Formsma: We've heard some funny stories of people giving big checks, but that's beside the point. I'll say to a pastor, "I noticed your seven phase plan on the back wall on the north x." Do you know what your givers see there? I go, "We get you out of the hole, he's going to jump right back in." They are ROI kind of people. They want to see where the money is going to go, does it make sense? They'll do it, and they'll step in, and they'll take risks, but they just don't want to feel like they are the only ones. They have a filter that would blow your mind.

Brad Formsma: I say put your shoe on the other foot. Pastors kind of have that feeling inside. Like this person is trying to get to me, or get something from me. Business

people, people with wealth, inherited or whatever, they have that radar strong. They can smell motive a mile away. If you check your heart, if you care about them, and over time, and then you are clear on vision, I think you are going to see amazing things happen, but it's a process. We live in an instant world. I said it before. We want it right away.

Brad Formsma: I want things right away, but I noticed the givers that are real serious about it, they'll maybe step in a little bit, and watch how it's responded. If they tell you, we want to give you \$1,000,000 to pay down debt. I got an idea for you, pay down debt, and keep the receipt from the bank. I know one story where the giver came back the next year and said, "I just don't the debt at our church. If I gave you some more money, would you pay down the debt?" Pastor said, "Yes." "Will you show me where last year's million came off the books?" Called this bookkeeper and she came right in, showed the million came right off.

Brad Formsma: The guy wrote a check to pay the remaining debt of the church. I'm not all big on giving with strings attached, but I'm just saying if you have a giver someday ... I tell pastors, "Pray that a giver will say to you, "What do you need?"" And you can say, "I'm believing we can go debt free, and we'll never go back. We want to model something different to the church. Because I really care about that side of it." The church keeps borrowing, why would we expect the people at the church to not borrow?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's very very true.

Carey Nieuwhof: You mentioned the filter for large donors, for large givers, high net worth people. What are they thinking?

Brad Formsma: They are human beings. Nobody wants to feel like they are an object, or an ATM. It gets gross. Then when you are uncomfortable with that person they can feel that. If you go into it from a relational standpoint. Even, I had a pastor call me the other day and say, "I've got a \$20,000,000 campaign. How do I talk to him?" And I'm like, "Okay, well now we decided as the board to do the campaign. Now we want to figure out how to talk to him. Maybe we are a little bit late to the party."

Brad Formsma: I'm not the quick fix guy. This is a hard thing, but I think that they are looking for people that can clearly articulate vision.

Carey Nieuwhof: Another issue I know is a lot of pastors are intimidated by people, because pastors are making a pastor salary. This guy who is making 5X, 10X, 100X what you are, depending on the situation, or a woman. How do you get ... If you feel intimidated, what are some keys? Any tips on overcoming that?

Brad Formsma: Well, I'm a vulnerability junkie. Townsend lives down the street, John Townsend, we've done things together. He's always like, "The missing thing in relationships is vulnerability." Think about this, you are a senior pastor, and I'm

got lots of bucks guy. We go out for coffee, and I say something to you like, "You know Carey, I'm a little uncomfortable. I'm not sure I understand your world. You might not understand mine, but I just would like to be friends. I also want to pastor you and lead you well, but I don't want it to be weird." Express some of your feelings or express how you ... Take that risk.

Brad Formsma: Do you know how disarming that is for a giver to go, "I never saw it." I think we miss so much of this stuff by just not calling it out. This is interesting for me. I don't know how to connect with you, because you got a Telluride every other month. I had a giver one time, that's not the right word. Giver is not the right word. I had a guy who thought he was generous, which is an area we should talk about for a moment. There are people who think they are generous because of the way the church and other ministries have treated them. Because of the size of their gift.

Brad Formsma: I would say it's all relative. So I'll tell you, 25 grand or more in Christian world. It will get you to all the events, probably closer up to the pastor. I mean, generally speaking, and if you go to 50, you are for sure in that tight club. It's all relative, and zeros and commas baby.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly.

Brad Formsma: You know what? I was sitting with this one guy who sold his company for over \$100,000,000, and he's like, "I've been looking at helicopters." And I'm like, "I haven't looked at them in a while. What are those sticker for?" He's like, "Well, the one I need to get," and I love the need word in there. I was like, one, nine. I'm like, "Oh." He's like, "Do you think God would be mad with me if I bought a 1.9 million?" I said, "Ask him, I'm not God. I mean."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a good answer.

Brad Formsma: For crying out loud, Ramsey calls me the giving guy, but I don't have all the answers. I said this to him, and I think it was the holy spirit. I said, "You know, what if you gave 1.9 million away? And took some time to do that. You just didn't throw one big check somewhere, but you said, because I challenge these guys. You spend so much time earning and accumulating and making this fortune, and you spend almost no time figuring out where to deploy it or where to seek the voice of God.

Brad Formsma: Would you just take some time alone, go to your lake house for two days, pray, skip one meal. There is a thought, and just go, "You know what? What would you have me do lord?" I bumped into this guy two months later, he's all excited, showing me pictures of his helicopter, and I'm like, "Dude that is awesome. I know you are getting trained and I won't be flying with you any time soon."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's right. Come with me on my maiden flight. No.

Brad Formsma: I said, "How did that process go? Deploying that other, one nine?" "Oh that, I didn't didn't do that." I just walked away like, "Dog on it, I've had subsequent conversations with that guy." He said to me, "I'm the rich young ruler." I mean, he's literally said that to me. I see him at events, he writes checks.

Carey Nieuwhof: But it's 50,000, \$100,000 check is-

Brad Formsma: It's like a 50 to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's like \$50.

Brad Formsma: I'm not saying this in judgment, please don't hear me in judgment. I'm just trying to give a perspective that as leaders we also have to be careful that we are helping grow the giver and the grace of giving. We are not giving them extra status. That's a hard one, because you are not getting into their financials, you don't know.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, you really don't know. And what seems generous may be stingy, and we always talk about at our table, at our local church. The single mom who might have a gift of \$1200 for the entire year. That could end up being way more sacrificial, than the guy who is dropping 50 grand, probably is actually, because a loaf of bread costs the same whether you are a millionaire, or whether you are poor, same with a tank of gas. Prices don't vary according to income. We try to be really sensitive to that, to realize that the size of the check is not always indicative of the size of the gift.

Brad Formsma: Yeah, and one of the reasons, when I got the call to start, I Like Giving, and do the work we do. It was to say, how do you take generosity and make it daily, weekly, monthly? I really had this group of people in mind, I think it was like 175,000 families in the U.S that have a \$25,000,000 or more networth.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a lot.

Brad Formsma: I've heard some of them say, particularly one billionaire said to me, "You've changed my daily interactions in view of people, because of the kind of pedestrian level stories that you tell." I wanted to get them back into ... It's okay if you ... It's not bad to have tens and tens of millions. It's just that you are still a human being, and you are walking past other people, and you have a lot of power and influence, but your heart, for your heart is a giver. We need to constantly be positioned to being generous.

Brad Formsma: I like the seven, because you can take them wherever you go, including the airport, and including for me at the doctor's office. I'm in a battle Carey. I got to go with my doctor ... He's an interesting piece of work, and that's generous with my words. He's ... I can do simple things, and give in a way that will soften my heart, and the focus off of me and onto others.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would be an example with your doctor?

Brad Formsma: My doctor, I went in one day, and he said, "What are you thinking about?" I said, "I'm believing that God's going to heal me of this blood cancer, this rare form of leukemia." He goes, "I like your shoes." I mean, that quick, half a second. I'm like, "What in the heck?" He's like, "I like the buckle." And I'm like, "That's kind of weird."

Carey Nieuwhof: I just talked about my cancer.

Brad Formsma: Yeah, and then he moved to the stitching on the shoes. I'm like, now we crossed the line to really weird. So I said, "What are yours like? Size 10?" He goes, "You think you are so smart. They are nine and a half." I'm like, in my head I'm like, "You are so dumb, you just gave the answer." Because, I'm Dutch, but I like nice. I go to Nordstrom Rack for stuff. I went to that Nordstrom Rack, and they had a nine and a half on the shelf. I bought them. I brought it home. I wrote a note, and the note I wrote, "Dear doc, thanks for using your God given gifts to help a guy like me stay around a little longer." Then I think Jesus is okay with this second part I wrote. A little snarky. I said, "Well, these will help me be one step more like me."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome.

Brad Formsma: He called me up a week later, after he got them. He was like, "I read your book. You are crazy. You think a generous world is a better world for all of us." I said, "I do." In that moment, the focus off of me, and off of chemo, and off of, hey, look, I'm human being, poor Brad. I don't have to screw around with this, I don't like this. I don't like having depression feelings. I don't like fatigue. You know what? God called me to something here Carey.

Brad Formsma: You know what? I want more people to experience the joy of living. I think the word generosity goes way past the church, and that's why as a business guy I feel called to the marketplace. It's so fun to bring these seven ways to work. Just think about it. Is it generous to think about pushing send? Think about it this way. I would restate it. You write your email that you are just furious about, and you want to punch it out and just send it over the bow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Always a mistake.

Brad Formsma: Is it generous to wait a day? I was at a company, a good size company in the Midwest. And they got a report back from one of their employees, whose wife says to him, a week after I was there. It wasn't me, it was stories, and I think God working in his life. She said, "Why are you being so nice to me?" It had nothing to do with their core business. I just told the story about, you know what? We can be kind with our words, it doesn't take that much more effort. It's good for our heart. I mean, these are all some companies I go to.

Brad Formsma: They are billion dollar companies, they are not faith based, but they are goodhearted. I just talk about the spirit of generosity. Some really want you to take it up further. These stories are the way Carey to help break through I think the crust around the heart.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want to ask you a few more questions. Then I want to get to your videos too. What would you say the biggest barriers to giving are, to a generous spirit? When people just say, I don't think anybody ever says, "I'm not going to be generous." Maybe that does happen, but who end up living a non-generous life. What do you think some of the reasons are that people are like, "Yeah, I'm not opening my pocket book, I'm not going to be charitable with my words. I'm keeping my stuff." Why is that?

Brad Formsma: What I've discovered is ... I'm going to go with wrong teaching. I'm going to go on family of origin, your upbringing. The number of people that say to me, "Well, my grandpa always said, "Watch out for those churches, all they want is your."

Carey Nieuwhof: Money.

Brad Formsma: And you all finished the sentence already. We have that problem, but I think it comes straight from the pit of hell. I think the devil himself knows that this message is so powerful. You let your light shine before men, when your kind ... Somebody goes, "Why did you do that for me?" When you are generous with your resources, Jesus knew this. Soften your heart. I talk about these four letter words, debt. You guys should have seen Carey's face. I just said four letter word, he's like, "Oh no, four letters, don't do it."

Carey Nieuwhof: I trust you Brad, we are good.

Brad Formsma: Debt, beer, busy, duty. I mean, if you just start to unpack some of those words, they start to make sense like, yeah. Some of the giving we've done over the last couple of years has been hard. Why? Because I don't know what my future exactly looks like. I have life insurance, whatever, I don't want to go down that road. You know what I'm saying.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Brad Formsma: We've made a decision as our buddy Batterson says to a pre-decision to live generously. So then when the storms of life come, when cancer comes, when short things ... You are a little short, or it's just not a good time. You still ... You've made a commitment to be consistent, and regular.

Brad Formsma: That's a characteristic I see in a lot of my generous friends, they are consistent, and they are regular. They don't wait until December to see how the year shook out. The other thing is, I just think about fear is so gripping. If you have an unhealthy view of money, and we went back, we started with abundance earlier

today. I mean, that's a really big thing. I don't know if I'm going to have enough, and so I'm not going to give. I'll wait. That's another four letter word that we left out.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wait. Yeah, I'll just wait see what the accountant says.

Brad Formsma: yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Fascinating.

Brad Formsma: Carey, I believe so strongly that there is a chance for us ... I mean, you are helping multiply this message. People can't even pronounce my last name. I mean, this is a God thing-

Carey Nieuwhof: Formsma, it's Dutch.

Brad Formsma: You got it. It's like, I believe we can move the needle on generosity, and it's not me, it's God working through us, but you really don't see much of a change in giving since the depression. And newsflash, there is some more abundance than back then.

Carey Nieuwhof: We are doing okay, aren't we?

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a weird thing though. I remind our congregation of this on a regular basis. We are the richest generation that's ever walked the face of the earth. Yet, most of the people I talk to would say they feel broke, and strapped, and all of that. How do you get past that? What would some early habits, if someone is like, "Man, I know debt is a bad word, but I got lots of it. I'm not worth, I'll never make any list of any kind, I'll never be a millionaire."

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some, if you are feeling really tight, if you are young, you are just starting out. What are some habits that people can develop now that pave the way to a generous life? That build ... I mean, and I'm talking about money too. We can all be more generous with our words. We can be more generous with what we have, but financially, how do we become a little more generous?

Brad Formsma: For that leader who's early on, you got to start to start. I think when we make the decision to be regular and consistent, it just becomes part of the fabric of who we are. I hop on the seven things, but I'm just saying, I've seen it in our family, and we get so much back on social, and other ways of people just saying, "You freed me up to think that I only could give money, and so therefore I'll do nothing." Because when you are generous in these other areas, all boats rise.

- Brad Formsma: The most generous people I know Carey, started giving small amounts, and it grew. Set a giving goal. I mean, we set all these other financial goals. I have a friend who is old, and I mean, I'm not talking 80 or 90 old, he's 104.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That counts.
- Brad Formsma: He's in the club. We talk at least once a month. His name is Stanley Tam, T-A-M, lives in Ohio. He had a tiny little business and made a decision to just give half of his money away. That little decision way back then, and he's fine now. He's a wealthy guy, but he's given so much money. I think over 130,000,000. He made that one decision early on that we just want to be generous. I think once you've done that then you say, "We are good to go." The idea that I'll wait to become generous when I'm making 1,000,000 a year," never flies.
- Carey Nieuwhof: It never works out.
- Brad Formsma: In fact, all you got to do is google the math on it. Your income or your giving per your income, over 100,000, the percentage drops like a rock, especially after, 1,000,000 or 5,000,000 or 10,000,000 of income. It just starts moving the dots.
- Carey Nieuwhof: You mean people generally become less generous the more they make?
- Brad Formsma: Yes, absolutely.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, because the check just becomes so much bigger. It's like, "I'm going to give away \$100,000 this year? Are you kidding me?"
- Brad Formsma: This is a really big problem that I think a lot of Christian givers need to address. It's that I gave a 100K four years ago. My income has gone up a lot more, but I can't get past the fact that I could go to 250 or 500,000. I know we are throwing around some large numbers. The point is, we don't often, we pick a number with what they give to church, what they give to an organization, and it flat lines. And 10 years later it's the same number, and yet their net worth has gone up, and all this other stuff.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and you think you are being super generous, and you may be the top donor in the church.
- Brad Formsma: And your pastor is still happy.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and he thinks or she thinks you are amazing, but the reality is, you should look at how many checks you are cutting yourself.
- Brad Formsma: That's what I like about the idea of setting a giving goal. The Rick Warren story, he kept adding percentages. I think Andy talks about this, be a percentage giver.

- Carey Nieuwhof: That was a John Wesley thing. John Wesley did that too, as I'm sure you know.
- Brad Formsma: Yeah, but isn't it interesting the influence of story? I love stories. We are going to talk about the videos in a second.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I wanted to finish with the videos.
- Brad Formsma: Stanley Tam, you see, he was influenced by R. G. LeTourneau, he was influenced by Wesley. These stories matter that they get shared, and get shared appropriately. I love to tell pastors, "Get other people in the pulpit talking about generosity." Yes, you have to and you should, it's your role as a pastor. Like my former pastor Ken Beashel, 30 years, amazing bible teacher, he said, "The reason I have you in is they hear it differently from you. They hear it differently from a marketplace person, and they connect with you."
- Brad Formsma: Sadly, the devil and our society has created this thing, the church just wants my money. There is this stigma. It's there. It's sad, because it's stealing the joy that you get from giving. I mean, I love to give. I know I call the book I Like Giving, but it's fun. I think, just the whole thought about how does it change me, or how is it even growing in my own life? I think I'm really hopping on that attention thing right now. I just want to be fully present.
- Brad Formsma: You introduced me to some neat guys who are running the Orange Conference. I was like, "Was I 80 or 90% there?" I was a little distracted, I got a broken finger and a cast on it. That doesn't matter, I want to be 100% there.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Right on.
- Brad Formsma: I'm aimed at that right now.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That's cool.
- Carey Nieuwhof: I think that's good advice. I remember when my wife Toni and I were first married, we decided we'd be a 10% family to start. It was really easy at the beginning, because 10% of nothing is nothing, right? That's pretty easy. We had a small income. I remember actually on a more serious note, how hard that was. Our very first Christmas as a married couple, I still don't the math added up. Because we had a little ledger book with everything that we were writing down, every pack of gum, everything we bought.
- Carey Nieuwhof: The math didn't add up. We were able to give our 10%, still buy Christmas gifts, and the whole deal. It gives an opportunity for God to show up. And he's just never stopped showing up all these years later. It's incredible.
- Brad Formsma: I love that.

Carey Nieuwhof: You have videos cumulatively, if I said that right, cumulatively, have had over 100,000,000 views online. That's the heart of ilikegiving.com. It's just really cool every day stories. I was watching one the other day, I like 98. 98 years old, right? This woman who lost her driver's license. It's funny the power story, because she lost her driver's license, she said, "Yeah, they were wrong, I went took the test, and now I can bring my neighbor who doesn't have transportation to go grocery shopping every week."

Brad Formsma: That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's just a powerful story, right?

Brad Formsma: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Tell us a little bit about the kind of videos, and I would encourage you guys to go to ilikegiving.com, or search it out on YouTube, if you are on Vimeo, and check this stuff out. Tell us the idea behind that.

Brad Formsma: Well, it started in 2011. I'm an entrepreneur. I'm looking around saying, "Where is good stories? Where is good ways to help inspire more people to be generous? If that's the call," and I could only find a few talking heads at a conference, maybe in a white paper somewhere. I was like, "I just love the story, element of life." We started our first story, I like Bug Shells. Five and seven year old girls, three and a half minute story. They heard about a need for water, through World Vision.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right on.

Brad Formsma: They went around their neighborhood, collected pop cans and soda cans, and change, 67 bucks, but it was just a powerful story, and it went crazy. It had millions of views. So like, that worked. Let's do that again. High quality film. Then we just said, "What can we do about different ways of showing generosity?" We did one called I Like Adoption. Over 20,000,000 views of that.

Brad Formsma: Our new aggregate views are now over 120,000,000. They just keep going crazy. We didn't pay for any of them to be viewed. We've gotten more reports of people being adopted, just because they saw the story, and they heard God say, "That's your sign." One of my favorite ways to clarify a giving opportunity is to just ask a question. I had been reading about widows, and orphans, and then I was getting my hair cut the next week. A light went off, I'll bet Carol who cuts my hair knows a widow. I mean, my grandparents are gone, where do you find a widow to help? She's soaping up my hair. You know how they take your head up?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Brad Formsma: Then you sit up and you are a little dizzy and I'm like, "Where do I get a widow?" It came out a little funny.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome. That's quite question we don't get every day.

Brad Formsma: She says, "I've got Evelyn, she's 88, back on her medicine next week, husband has been gone. She's just tight. We started anonymously sending her money for over four years. We thought we'd see her in heaven, right? Then we met her, this silver haired ... You saw her, you guys have watched her. She's so beautiful. Spunky, fun, radiated the generous life.

Brad Formsma: We became great friends. Then when the book came out we put her in the book, and she has this great line in the book like, money is like a river, it's meant to keep on moving. Sit on that one for a minute.

Carey Nieuwhof: Great.

Brad Formsma: Because we found out from what we were giving her, she was giving money away. Anyway, I said to her, "Evelyn, we got to shoot a film, I Like Being 98." We sat in her one bedroom, 490 square foot apartment, and interviewed it. That sucker is over 11,000,000 views. I just licensed it the other day to National Geographic. They said, "We want 2,000,000 homeschool kids a year to watch this on the picture of a generous life."

Brad Formsma: Carey, one question, one widow, one story. Evelyn went to heaven, and man that week. I just cried. It wasn't a normal tear. It was a treasure heart connection tear. I loved her. We just had so much fun. I'd take her out for lunch and we'd have to split the lunch, because she said, "I went through the depression, I can't pay 14 bucks for salad."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's great.

Brad Formsma: I mean, this is the power of story. I Like Giving ... Continued down, we have 18 films. And I never planned to write a book. Come on, I cheated in high school English. I wasn't the guy.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, it's a great book.

Brad Formsma: They wanted to do it and we put that together. I Like Giving kind of just moved into this place of helping create resources for pastors. We have a course now called Cultivate Generosity, that really helps create a culture of generosity at a church. We are just trying to respond to what we are being asked for.

Carey Nieuwhof: They are really good at telling stories. You got to check it out. Brad, you also do some speaking right?

Brad Formsma: Yeah, I do.

Carey Nieuwhof: In churches, and conferences, events, that kind of thing. People want to learn more, what's the website?

Brad Formsma: If you go to [ilikegiving.com/pastorguide](http://ilikegiving.com/pastorguide). That's where you can get that free resource we mentioned.

Carey Nieuwhof: Great.

Brad Formsma: I really think that will help them understand more this culture of generosity. Then [bradformsma.com](http://bradformsma.com). That's more of our marketplace website. We are always adding new content in there. It's such a big exciting topic, so check that out.

Carey Nieuwhof: Awesome. We'll link to everything in the show notes, Brad Formsma, thanks so much.

Brad Formsma: Thank you Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Man, there is so much there, and who doesn't want to become more generous, and help other people become more generous? We got show notes, and transcripts, and some social shares that you can use by heading over to [careynieuwhof/episode279](http://careynieuwhof/episode279). I would love to have you do that. And thank you to everybody who shares about this podcast for posting it to social.

Carey Nieuwhof: We do some fun things. Actually we've got some fun incentives this summer on the social. If you haven't checked me out yet, I'm Carey Nieuwhof on Instagram, Carey Nieuwhof on Facebook, and C. Nieuwhof on the Twitter. Also our fifth anniversary is coming up in a couple of months. It's a good time to subscribe. We are going to do some fun stuff. Can you believe it's been five years on this podcast in September? Yeah. It's going to be amazing. We are back in a week with a fresh episode.

Carey Nieuwhof: My good friend Ron Edmondson is my guest, he's been on the show before. We talk about his time transitioning your church. Then he just started as CEO of the Leadership Network, and we talk about the changing landscape of leadership. Here is an excerpt from the next episode.

Ron Edmondson: There was this one guy that I could just about depend on an all caps email from him once a week.

Carey Nieuwhof: That guy.

Ron Edmondson: I mean, you could just about depend on ... He was going to criticize something, and he wasn't going to find anything positive. I had to learn how to love him.

Part of that was literally in the gym. He was an older man, but he worked out, and I worked out. We had a gym in [inaudible 01:14:58], all this sort of stuff. We couldn't pay for it, but we had it.

Ron Edmondson: I just went down one time, and worked out with him, beside him. I said, "I need some help with something." I said, "Because I realize, you may not realize it, but I realize you are just difficult sometimes. I mean, you are hard to like sometimes. My job is to like you." I mean, it went something like that. It was somewhat jovial, but yet somewhat. I found out a story of him, that he'd been injured years ago, and he had never gotten over it, and it happened in the church.

Ron Edmondson: Once I knew that story it didn't change ... And he was still somewhat that way, but we had a relationship, and I had an understanding with him. When he would pushback, and he still continued to pushback, I could pushback with him, and it was pushing back towards a friend more than-

Carey Nieuwhof: But you had a bond at that point?

Ron Edmondson: Absolutely.

Ron Edmondson: To the point when I left, it's really funny because I thought, "How is he going to treat the new guy?" I actually heard from the new guy not too long ago about this guy, and he said, "You know, he bragged on you about five different areas that you were good at." I was like, "Wow, I didn't think he liked me."

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you subscribe for free you will automatically get that. Don't forget to head on over to [ministryboost.org/carey](http://ministryboost.org/carey) to get your free volunteer pipeline course, regularly a \$49 value. That's an incentive for you. And [promediafire.com](http://promediafire.com), it is a complete professional graphics media team, creative team for a fraction of the price of what it would cost you to hire your own.

Carey Nieuwhof: Go to [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey), get 10% off your plans for life, as in like forever. Guys, thank you so much for listening. I continue to be on my book writing sabbatical, which is kind of fun. Yeah. I'll be telling you more about that, but summer is the time to write books often for me. My next book that comes out in 2020, fall of 2020. That's what I'm working on right now. Hope you guys are doing well, thanks so much for listening, and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

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