

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

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, hey, everybody, and welcome to episode 298 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I think you're going to love today's guests. We are talking about hyper-growth, the keys to great digital marketing and online influence.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you're not online ... You know what, a lot of business, a lot of churches, it's like a website from 2013 probably isn't going to cut it, and your social media that you started two years ago that you really haven't posted much on lately, probably not going to help, either. And things keep changing. So, what makes you stand out online? Alejandro Reyes is going to help us with that. He is the founder of Digital Napkin. He is somebody who's hyper involved in his local church and has been hyper involved in with me, as well, in terms of getting ... I do a lot of courses, and, so, Alejandro has helped with marketing those with Digital Napkin, and I said, "You know what, we got to take some of what we've done behind the scenes and bring it up front." So, if you really enjoy to wonder, "How does this actually get done? How do you actually get noticed online?," Alejandro is going to be your new best friend after today's episode.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, guys, we've got this new feature this month called "Ask Carey." #askCarey. Today, we're taking J.D.'s question, who says, "How do you tell a guy he's not gifted at what he does?" That's a great question, so we are going to work on that toward the end of the podcast. If you listen to the end, you hear that.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, thank you so much for subscribing, for sharing. I am so encouraged whenever I'm on the road, a lot this fall, whenever I run into listeners, which is almost every day, you guys have such encouraging feedback, and I want you to know this partnership is an awful lot of fun. And thank you as we close in on 10 million downloads. You guys are just the best. Thank you. By the way, we're going to have a big celebration for that, as well.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, one of the things that really surprised me as a leader of our church was, I would've sworn five years ago we had a backdoor problem and I wanted to close the backdoor. And, around that time, I handed leadership of Connexus Church off to my successor, Jeff Brodie, and he brought in Tony Morgan to do some consulting and help us with some strategic planning for the next few years, and I mentioned the backdoor problem, and Tony did some analysis and said, "Actually, you don't have a backdoor problem." And he sat down, Tony Morgan, founder of the Unstuck Group, with Jeff Brodie, my successor, and had a conversation about that situation. Here's what Jeff discovered in the middle of that process.

Jeff Brodie: About five years ago, we asked Tony to come and spend some time with us that year. Little did we know it would be basically the month Carey and I would be

passing the baton in a succession plan, and we began to have a conversation about where our church is at, and you're 100% correct, Tony, we started talking about the number of guests that we were seeing, and we were talking about the fact that, when we looked at our number ... You had said, "Hey, for a healthy new guest number, it needs to be equivalent in a year to what you might see on a Sunday." And that kind of rocked us a little bit, and when you left, we had been counting in a different way, so we said, "Hey, we need to be counting the same way all the time," all that stuff, "And really get down to what the numbers are."

Jeff Brodie: And when we saw them, we realized, "Oh, we had thought all along some of the growth that we wanted to see ..." I mean, we were growing, but not at the pace we wanted to. We thought it was a backdoor problem and realized, no, we actually have a front door problem. We need to be seeing probably at least twice the number of new guests that we were seeing at that time.

Jeff Brodie: So, it was a sobering moment for us because we said, "Wow, we're creating a church, unchurched people love to attend, we're excited, we're talking about inviting all the time. It's not that we don't talk about it and it's not that it isn't happening, but it isn't happening at the level that it should be if we're going to grow at the pace that we would like to."

Carey Nieuwhof: I'll tell you, that was a lightning-bolt moment for me and for Jeff, and for Connexus, and the good news is, we focused on the front door, we doubled, I think, or more, our number of first-time guests. And, yeah, we started growing even faster than we had been.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, to hear more about our experience, about working with the Unstuck Group, or to learn more about their process, head to TheUnstuckGroup.com/Guests. That's TheUnstuckGroup.com/Guests.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, everybody is talking about discipleship these days, but the question is, like, well, how do you do it well? Well, Zach Zehnder created the Red Letter Challenge. A number of you did that a year ago, and the Red Letter Challenge is a turnkey 40-day church campaign complete with everything you need, small group videos and guides, sermon manuscripts and videos, weekly kids' curriculum, graphics, and so much more, designed around the teachings of Jesus. So, Zach has actually distilled five main principles, targets, really, that you can shoot for, based on the teachings of Jesus. Being forgiving, serving, and going.

Carey Nieuwhof: And what you do when you share that with your entire church is, it catalyzes discipleship. Here's the truth. A lot of people say they love Jesus, they've just never read His words, and that's kind of depressing to think about as a pastor who loves your church, and that's why Red Letter Challenge has helped so many churches. It's got proven results, hundreds of churches, nearly 100,000 people have now completed it in the first 18 months of its existence. The curriculum

alone has helped churches increase their small groups by an average of 40%, whether that's a small church or a mega church.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, if you're interested in learning more, they've even added a Spanish version of it, and you can go to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, and you'll find church packages ready to go for you. You can start with as few as 10 copies, if you want it for a small group or your small church, or up to 1,000 and more copies.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, going to that link will get you between 10% and 40% off, and the packages are ready to go for churches of all sizes, including manuscripts for messages. If you need anything else, they can help you out. So, go to the link, RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey, and learn more. They would be thrilled to help you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, guys, without further ado, here is my conversation with Alejandro Reyes. He worked at Pushpay, helped them really catapult their growth online, and now he's doing that for other companies like this one, mine, and we just have a great conversation about how to stand out online in a very, very noisy world. My conversation with Alejandro Reyes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Alejandro, welcome to the podcast.

Alejandro Reyes: So pumped to be here, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, we've been hanging out for a couple of years, working together on projects, and I thought it was about time I brought you onto the podcast. But we're going to talk all things digital marketing. So, how did you get your start in digital marketing? Where did that begin for you?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, so, I read a book, I think it's called either the Road or Path to Success by Bill Gates, and it said, "By the year 2010, half of every single dollar's going to be spent online," and it's still etched into my skull, and I wanted to figure out how to make money. The funny thing, the reality is, actually, in 1998, '99, I didn't have a car. I was 18, 19-year-old, young punk. What ended up happening was, I wanted to figure out how to make money online because I didn't have a car, didn't want to walk to McDonald's and work.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, I figured out how to make money on the internet. I did some ministry, and, so, in order to kind of supplement that income, I was too prideful to send sponsorship letters, so, what we ended up doing was making \$800 here, \$300 here, \$1,500 here. And, back then, it was all about search engine optimization, basically, how to rank your website high in Google. So, I'd rank these website, buy domains, rank these website, and sell little tiny affiliate products. It's kind of how I got my start, and I didn't make a ton of money right away.

Alejandro Reyes: And then, in 2006, learned some things, and 25-year-old young punk, made my first six figures, and the rest was kind of history. And I started an agency after that. It was my first agency. And then, in 2012, I sold that in order for my wife to go to nursing school. So, we moved from California to Seattle. And, as you know, I get recruited by Pushpay, and that was just a crazy story. I think was, like, employee 25 through 30.

Alejandro Reyes: Within 45 days of me working there, we started generating so many leads that we went from, like, 25, 30, to, like, 90 in three weeks. It was absolutely-

Carey Nieuwhof: 90 employees?

Alejandro Reyes: 90 employees. It was absolutely insane. And I was there for a couple years, built the digital strategy for them. We were at 600 customers at the time, and then, by the time I left to move to Eastern Washington, we had over 7,000 customers. So, that was one of the most greatest experiences of my life, really growing as a marketer, but as a leader, as well, really understanding how to scale organizations, and just fascinating experience.

Carey Nieuwhof: How old were you in '98, '99, when you were like, "Okay, I'm going to make some money on the internet"?

Alejandro Reyes: I was seven, Carey. No, I'm just joking.

Carey Nieuwhof: You were seven years old.

Alejandro Reyes: No, I just graduated. I just graduated. I was 18 years old, or 19 ...

Carey Nieuwhof: So, you're right out of high school.

Alejandro Reyes: Right out of high school. And I was like ... I went to college for two weeks and I dropped out, but the real story ... That's a fun story for the entrepreneurial world, but the church world, the reality is, actually went to Bible school. So, I dropped out of school after two weeks, went to Bible school, did an internship, master's commission type program, and that's kind of where I started really understanding marketing, and psychology, and human behavior, and just really studying what makes people tick and buy.

Carey Nieuwhof: Was it a means to an end, you just wanted to not walk and you needed a car, and you read that Bill Gates thing, and you're ... say to yourself, "I think I can figure this out"?

Alejandro Reyes: That was the only thing ... I was a young kid and I wanted a nice little car, and, so, I just had to make money. What it became was ... You're right, it was a means to an end, because here's what I believe. I believe everyone has some sort of calling, some sort of message inside of them, and I felt that same way at

11 years old, that I wanted to share something with the world, and I thought, what better way than, instead of going one to one, going one to many? And the internet is such a great place for anyone to take an idea, a message, a calling, and get it out there to the world, because the world needs what we have inside.

Carey Nieuwhof: What did your first digital agency do, before you joined Pushpay?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, early on, we did search engine optimization, we would do social media. This is when Twitter and Facebook was big. This is before Instagram, which is crazy. This is before TikTok and Snapchat.

Alejandro Reyes: So, we were able to teach people how to use social media properties and Web 2.0 properties and how to rank them. And, so, we worked with local small business owners, restaurants, chiropractors, local churches. And it's like, when someone searches you, they're going to search you before they actually show up to your place of business. So, we want to own that front page.

Alejandro Reyes: So, not only did we own the first listing, we wanted to use several different pages and own the entire page. So, when someone types in "Sacramento chiropractor," or "Seattle dentist," we wanted to own that top page so it gave people a reason to not look anywhere else.

Carey Nieuwhof: Were you pretty much self-taught? How did you figure that out?

Alejandro Reyes: Absolutely not. Not self-taught. I'd learned from mentors. I basically played dumb, I played a opossum and just started connecting with people and wanting to learn how to get better. So, I really believe the shortcut, and this is why people that are listening right now ... The shortcut to quick growth and fast growth is really studying what other people do. And, so, that's what's so amazing about your podcast is really teaching people how to become better leaders, high-impact leaders.

Alejandro Reyes: So, for me, I really just ... YouTube, Google, just really studying how to do this. I was too naïve not to not try it. I just did it, and some of the stuff finally worked.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's incredible. You know, it's so funny, you mentioned that's what this podcast is for. I was listening to another podcast recently and it featured a Princeton professor who was talking about the case method. And, of course, I studied at law school. That's the case method, right? You just read cases, try to figure out where the law landed on stuff, and then you go write an exam and argue.

Carey Nieuwhof: And that's kind of what this podcast is, just a whole bunch of case studies, right? Case studies in leadership. But I'm like, "Oh, yeah, I hadn't really thought about that, but I developed a platform where people are, in truth, the case method."

Alejandro Reyes: Here's what's fascinating. Not only are you the ... I mean, this is your, Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, but you get to interview people and learn ... And there's a big difference between a know-it-all and a learn-it-all. A know-it-all says, "I'm just going to just do my thing and not look for advice, not go to YouTube, not listen to podcasts," and they know it all, they're in the room and they know it all. They're always cynical about people's ideas. But the learn-it-all says, "You know what, I want to go out there and I want to study the greats, I want to study ... Because everyone has value, everyone has something to say."

Alejandro Reyes: And that's what I love about you. You've probably gotten a lot smarter as a result of listening to some of the smartest minds that have been on your podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, so much. One of my longterm goals, probably not for a year or two, but I'm going to sit down, take two or three months off, get transcripts for all 300 or 400 episodes, whatever we're at, and I'm going to write a book, with different chapters on different things, look for all the parallels, look for all the things that work. This is way down the road. I'm pretty excited to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof: But I do find I'm learning, and I'm open, and that's why, when we had the opportunity to work together a couple of years ago, I jumped at it, because I thought, "Okay, you know 10,000 times more about marketing than I do, and a little knowledge is dangerous." So, brought a pro in.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want you to take me back to those early days at Pushpay, and Pushpay, just explain what they do. They're one of the largest online digital giving platforms in the world, are they not? They would have to be.

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, biggest mobile giving platform, I think. I don't know, last time I checked, over two billion dollars had been given to the kingdom as a result, probably more than three billion, I would say, now. So, yeah, you go to church Sunday, and they ... It's just the easiest, fastest way to digitally give.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, for churches, and do they do not-for-profits or is it exclusively churches?

Alejandro Reyes: You know, they have other types of organizations, but I'd say 98% of all the business is done through the church.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, because, of course, people aren't using cash and checks like they used to, right?

Alejandro Reyes: 100%.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, digital giving. But that growth ... And you joined them in 2012, seven years ago?

Alejandro Reyes: No, I joined them in 2015.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow.

Alejandro Reyes: They had been like a year and a half, two years old. And that growth is absolutely crazy. So, yeah, I got recruited. I had no idea who they were. I had nothing to lose. I was running marketing and digital for a university at the time, and then they came knocking, and I just was like, "You know, we'll see what this is all about," and I just believed in the CEO, believed his vision, was very audacious. You've met Chris, and it was a wild ride, but incredible.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I've spent time with both co-founders, Chris and Elliot. So, you only worked there for two years. I didn't realize that.

Alejandro Reyes: Worked there two years. One thing, one insider joke there is, one day, there's, like, three weeks, three months somewhere else. The speed at which you get things ... You don't grow from \$10 to \$100 million in two years just by hanging out. You have rigorous, excellent ... Or you'll get chewed out, you'll literally get washed out of the business as a result if you're playing that mediocre level.

Alejandro Reyes: So, you have to come with your A game every single day. I worked like a dog, and I would never trade anything. I feel like I can go into any organization ... and I still do this when I consult, and it's almost like chess for me, really understanding what it's going to take, the hires it's going to take, the strategies it's going to take in order to make the right small tweaks that would have massive, massive results on the back end, and I ... forever grateful for that experience.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and I think the founders would say it's been a rocket ride that's been exhausting, at the same time.

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Knowing Chris, knowing Elliot, and having spent time with them.

Alejandro Reyes: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: But what I want to do, because I can already see the fingers typing on the phone or the email, going, "No organization should ever be that driven," and, "That kind of growth is not sustainable." So, I get that. I get that, and there's a certain point at which that's not sustainable.

Carey Nieuwhof: On the other hand, if you're really going to make an impact ... One of my pet peeves, Alejandro, and I want to pick your brain on that, is churches and organizations that move at a glacial pace. In other words, the opposite side of that is, you're the mediocre guy. I think one sure sign of decline is that your

timeline for change and decisions is long. In other words, we were talking about it in March, we're still talking about it today. That is a sign of decline. And, obviously, you're saying a day there is like three weeks or three months somewhere else.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you tell us about that culture and some of the factors that ... like, the positive side of that? Because I think most people instinctively know the negative side of that, but could you tell us why sometimes speed and high growth are good things? Like, what did you learn?

Alejandro Reyes: No, I think that's great. One of the things, Chris was an avid reader and he would get us to read books, and one of the books was by Bill Walsh and it's called The Score Takes Care of Itself, and Bill Walsh is one of the best coaches in football of all time, and he had this idea, the standards of procedures. It's basically, you did these things every day. If you make sure to show up every single day and practice, the game will take care of itself. If you focus and lock in every single day and give to your talents and give to your team, give to the organization, the numbers, we'll hit those numbers. And we did every single time as a result.

Alejandro Reyes: And most churches, it just ... Here's what's fascinating, and I may get in trouble for this, you're going to get some letters, Carey, but it's okay, but the church, a lot of times, Pushpay, the business world hires for results. The church world hires for relationships. So, my cousin Andy, he's ... And there's no real Andy. He's the guy that, man, he's amazing, he's got charisma, we should have him be our children's pastor or our graphics guy and our worship leader, and we just hire people based on relationships, and the business world is all about, what can this person do in this organization to help the culture move forward and the organization move forward quickly?

Alejandro Reyes: I actually think the church world can learn from the business world to hire world-class potential and develop those people, because the church is a great place for leadership and podcasts like this. I think the church world has really influenced a lot of the secular world as far as leadership goes, with John Maxwell and your books, and then I think, the business world can learn from the church space as a result of being a little bit more human and relationally and kind.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, I love speed. Why do I love speed? Because the market doesn't care about your glacier, right? That slow movement. The market will pass you by. And, so, people are like, "Well, I don't really care about ... Things are fine." But the world is moving at the fastest, in the history ... the world is moving.

Alejandro Reyes: Now, are you supposed to burn out and people be bummed out, and then you have a bad Glassdoor review, and things of that nature? Absolutely not. There's balance there. But I would always take speed and excellence over slow growth and mediocrity, because what happens is ... And I talk to a lot of churches about this, like, people want to see energy at the church. And, to me, a church is

hitting a lid at 800, 1,000, and just staying there, or 200, there's not a lot of energy and excitement and things happening in that church. And, to me, that's when I think you see people kind of burn out and start dropping off here and there, and if you're not growing, you're dying, they say. So, that's just the harsh reality, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: One of the realities I had ... I was talking to a friend of mine. Because my next book's on burnout and overwhelm, and I was interviewing him, and of course the stereotype is always that the meat-grinder of speed and results, that produces burnout, which it does. Honestly, it does.

Alejandro Reyes: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I'll be talking about that. But what I forget, and what he reminded me of, is that death and decline produces burnout, as well. That, if you're part of a stuck culture, and you're part of a declining organization, that can be a very debilitating, demotivating impact, as well. And, so, I think it cuts both ways.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'd love to know what that ... Because you're driven, obviously. At age, when you're 19, you're like, "Okay, I'm going to go online and figure out what I can learn and get some mentors, and earn some money and drive," right? You're already a self-starter. But what did that pressure-cooker at Pushpay do for you? What did that call out of you that you didn't know was in you?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, just the idea of excellence. We hear that word ... I would say, perfection ... We're not looking for perfection, we're looking for progress. But excellence, like, how can I play at the highest potential that I have, and then how can I keep getting one mile per hour, one percent better, every single day?

Alejandro Reyes: So, the level of excellence, the idea of world-class ... Imagine waking up every single day and going, "I have to be world-class. How can I position myself, how can I grow, what can I read, what can I listen to that can help me become more world-class?" And if you have that mindset going into your every day, you will get one percent better every day.

Alejandro Reyes: On the flip side, you got to find that balance really quickly, because, man, I'd come home, my kids, "Hey, dad," and then my wife would know ... I'd go sit down on my bed for, like, 10, 15 minutes to decompress, because, man, it took so much ... I'd, like, beat down ... But, like I said, I wouldn't trade it for the world, because now I know the next time ... This is a lot like how faith is, like, we kind of go to that next level, and now we know, "Oh, I can handle this." So, now I understand what my limitations are. I still want to play at that world-class level, but not at the expense of being tired and not having energy for my family and spending time with them, because, man, you were on 24/7 there, man.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, what were some of the habits and disciplines that you picked up that you're keeping?

- Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, so, I'm naturally not an organized person. This is why I hired, I partnered up with someone that's way more of an ops person ...
- Carey Nieuwhof: Super Savy?
- Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, she has literally changed the game ...
- Carey Nieuwhof: She's amazing.
- Alejandro Reyes: ... for me. And she was managing, like, 30 plus at Pushpay, that's where we met, contractors, employees, and kind of running traffic control, and going crazy. And, so, one of the best decisions I have ever made was really hiring and partnering up with her.
- Alejandro Reyes: But I would say, the daily planning. They say, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail, and being so rigorous about your calendar. You have a calendar that you give people, the fixed calendar, and for me, we did something similar, and we adopted a lot of what great startups and organizations in Silicon Valley did. So, every single night, every single Sunday night, I'd plan my entire week. The night before, I would look at the next day and I'd schedule the next day, so when I got in, I knew what my day was, and I'd attack it with enthusiasm unknown to mankind. That was the attitude I had to have.
- Alejandro Reyes: And by the time 4:00, 5:00, 6:00 rolled around, I'm planning, I'm finding out, did I do the top three priorities that I said I was going to do? And, if I didn't, let me start scheduling tomorrow.
- Alejandro Reyes: And just that simple thing ... And if you look at salespeople at Pushpay ... One of my best friends is their top salesperson. He is not the most gifted person, and he knows I love him, but he follows up and he's so meticulous with the details and rigorous with his calendar, and if it's not calendared, it's probably not going to get done, just like you're probably not dating your wife because it's not in your calendar, pastor. Sorry.
- Alejandro Reyes: So, we got to make sure to plan ahead versus going with the flow, and speed is accompanied by planning. The glacier movement is accompanied by going with the flow. And, so, that was probably one of the biggest things, is knowing every single day ... But I know what I'm doing 90 days from now and what I'm working towards, I know what I'm doing six months from now, but, every single day, really attacking it like, "I'm going to crush this day." Because, if you don't crush your day, your day will absolutely destroy you.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That takes an incredible amount of focus. How did you deal with all the incoming while planning out your day? Because that's what happens. You have nothing on the calendar one day, you think, "God, I'm going to crush all this work," 5:00 rolls around, you haven't got anything done. How were you able to fend off outside distractions, incoming requests, all of that, in the midst of that?

Alejandro Reyes: It was always calendared. It was literally, if I had something, "Hey, sorry, Carey, I've actually got something on my calendar" ... I literally had a calendar. And you don't work at a place like that and get last-minute ... We would build an entire marketing ... We did it several times, an entire ... "Oh, my gosh, this is the best thing since sliced bread." We're getting word we're completely changing everything, and, actually, we need to change everything, get it ready by tomorrow. Now, we got to work all weekend to get this done.

Alejandro Reyes: So, you got to create margin for those times where those happen, and you adjust as you go. So, a lot of times, the reason that people are pulled in so many directions and so easy is because they're not willing to say no. The moment you say yes to something else, you're literally saying no to a lot of different things. So, one of the things that I love, Steve Jobs, he said, "I'm more proud of the things I said no to than the things I said yes to."

Alejandro Reyes: So, I want to say yes to the right things and no to things that, they just don't impact the bottom line. This is a mistake I see a lot of leaders, especially in the church ... They're focusing so much on the details at the bottom and not leaving enough time to think high-level, macro vision. So, they're so bogged down, and that's really what causes slow growth.

Alejandro Reyes: We're talking about growth, I'm really fascinated.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I'm fascinated by it, too.

Alejandro Reyes: Pushpay was literally a hypergrowth ... Jason Lemkin says, "Zero to 10 million in five quarters," I believe it is, or six quarters, is hypergrowth, and I think they did it in four quarters. So, hypergrowth unicorn, that was literally Pushpay.

Alejandro Reyes: So, if I work at 80% of that focus, I think we're really going to crush it. And that's where, for the agency, I think we're able to help people not only to scale with Facebook Ads and Instagram Ads, and these type of things, but really understand how to make the right pivots, and changes, and tweaks in order to keep up with the speed of the market, because the market literally doesn't care about your feelings, about what your plan ... You got to plan around what the market wants, in my opinion.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. So, then, for the last couple years, you've been running your own agency. Tell us about that.

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, it's crazy. Here's the thing, we moved, my wife got her dream job working in the NICU, so we moved three hours east of Seattle, and my wife got her dream job, and I was going to be a YouTuber, literally. Our family, we have a YouTube channel of 35,000. We worked with Disney, Chase, Kohl's, some really big brands that we worked with, and I was like, "You know, we're just going to roll with this YouTube channel." We were making six figures in YouTube, and it

was amazing, with a very small channel, doing brand deals and advertising, and those types of things.

Alejandro Reyes: And I got a call from you, I got a call from Brady Shearer, a good friend, a mutual friend of ours. You connected me with Jon Acuff. And all in a matter of a week. And I just said, "You know what, I think the skills that I learned over the last couple years at Pushpay, I think those can help me serve the church even better." So, helping people like you, like Brady, and some of the organizations that we work with, to really bring this level of world-class thinking to the church world. I like to say I'm 100% business, 100% ministry. I love the local church and I want to bring a different level of thinking, because not a lot of people in the church space have had this rigorous experience that I had. So, I'm trying to help local churches and people like you advance everything that you're doing, because it's just a new skill that I think the church can learn from.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, your company's called Digital Napkin? Is that the final iteration?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, Digital Napkin. That first week, we didn't want to start it until you and a ... I was just like, "Okay, let's just start this agency."

Carey Nieuwhof: I was, like, client one almost, right?

Alejandro Reyes: You were client one. And I'm like, "Oh, my gosh." I'm like, "Oh, my goodness, I'm working with the amazing Carey Nieuwhof." And just so amazing, it's been amazing to work with you, and you've really helped me a ton in a lot of different ways, and just really, for the folks that are listening, Carey's the exact same person he is on the podcast, where you meet, and smiling, and shaking ... That's literally that guy. We've spent some time in person together, and any time someone's come up to you, you're talking to them, you spend time with them, you're not looking around for the next person, and that's really special. So, you've really helped me understand, as someone that is growing a platform, how to really care deeply for your community and not look for the next great thing.

Alejandro Reyes: So, yeah, it's been fun working. We work with organizations, basically, to help them get to the six- or seven-figure. We're really focused on helping content creators, influencers. That's a kind of big word, Carey, new word, influencers. Like, that was influencers. Taking cool photos on Instagram. That's not an influencer, but ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, exactly. "500 followers, look at this."

Alejandro Reyes: "Hey, I look cute, though. Spent 45 minutes, but I look cute. I look so cute."

Alejandro Reyes: But, no, we've had a blast. We've worked with some amazing organizations and it's been such an honor to serve in this way.

Carey Nieuwhof: What do you find ... Because there's a lot of entrepreneurial leaders who listen, whether that's in the church world or the business world, but what have been some of the best decisions you made as a founder/CEO, in your previous iterations or the current one?

Alejandro Reyes: My friend C.J. said this to me in maybe 2002, 2001, and it stuck with me. He says, "Prayer is the best strategy." And I literally did not understand that for the longest time, kind of did things on my own, and I felt like that unmerited grace, that unmerited favor kind of ran ... I would say, I don't want to get theological, but I kind of lived off that for a very long time. And then, when we moved years ago, I felt like that idea of prayer becoming the best strategy, that really shifted my business acumen, it really shifted my thinking, really partnering with God and really going to Him with everything.

Alejandro Reyes: So, to me, prayer is literally the number-one strategy for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's wonderful to ... You know, that's that old quote from Martin Luther, who said, "I've got so much to do today, I can't imagine not praying for three hours before I start." Which is extremely convicting to me, personally.

Alejandro Reyes: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I can't remember the last time I prayed for three hours.

Alejandro Reyes: It really is, man. You're releasing God's energy on your life, you know? And I say that, I have this tattoo right here, it says "God's Son," and I just think about that, I think about that same DNA, that same power, that same grace, that enablement. We think of this amazing ... we think of grace, like, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch ... We think about it, the saving grace.

Alejandro Reyes: But there's this grace, this unmerited favor that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 10:13, and it's a really fascinating scripture. He says, "But we will not boast beyond limits, but we will boast only with regard to the area of influence God has assigned us," and what he's talking about is this lane, like the Olympics, this lane that you have in your life. So, I guess, one of the best things that I would tell you is, knowing your area of influence, your sphere ... Brian Houston talks about the grace zone. What is the lane in life that you're supposed to do? What is the God assignment on your life?

Alejandro Reyes: And one of the most important things that I think I've done is, I've gotten so close to that perfect lane for my life. I've always refined it, and I see ... One of the biggest tells, Carey, of people that are not in their grace zone, that are not in their area of influence, their sphere, that lane, is their frustration. They're always complaining about their leader, they're always complaining about other staff members. One of the biggest tells of people not doing the right job is, they're just complaining all the time. They're not in the right lane. They're not in the right seat.

Alejandro Reyes: So, I really think one of the most important things is really discovering what it is that you're called to do, the thing you're passionate about, the thing that you're purposed to do. I would say that's probably my mission in life is to help as many people figure that thing out ... Because you figure that thing out, you can do extraordinary things, in my mind.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some of the challenges of leading your own organization?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, you know, hiring friends and firing friends. The reality of it is, there's people that, you think they're going to do a good job, and that's just ... They always say, I've heard this before, like, "Would you hire them again? If you had to do it all over again." And, a lot of times, it's maybe not, and making those decisions to fire people. I guess, personnel. Those resources, the people that you hire and fire, is probably one of the most difficult things as a CEO in a organization. Like, telling people, like, "Hey, man. We got to go our separate ways." And then seeing people cry. It's just like, we're just being honest, here. It's very, very heartbreaking.

Alejandro Reyes: But I will tell you this, partnering with God, praying is the best strategy, prayer is the best strategy. I've seen those people go on to flourish. I've prayed for those people and I've seen them to go off and do great things as a result of ending things well. I think that's really important, is, firing stinks, hiring, it's just so difficult, man. You're always nervous if, is this the right person in the right spot? If you end it well, I think that's the biggest thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you talk yourself through that? Because we've all been there, and I would say that's probably, of all the leaders I've talked to, it always ranks near the top, it's probably number one most often. It's just the people aspect, the conflict, the terminations, the resignations. And I know, when I look back on the lens of my leadership, hands-down, number-one hardest thing I go through is just people stress. And I've been blessed with a really great team in the different organizations I've served. But it's still hard when it doesn't work out.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, how do you walk/talk yourself through those tough moments?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, it's a difficult thing. I think it's really seeking counsel, it's trying to navigate ... And here's what I will say. I see a lot of leaders in the church, because they haven't hired and fired and understand the corporate side, the business side of things, they would go, "Yeah, Johnny's not doing well. I haven't talked to Johnny. I haven't coached Johnny about this situation."

Carey Nieuwhof: "But my wife knows all about it."

Alejandro Reyes: "My wife knows all about it. I put it in subtweets, passive-aggressive on Facebook about it, but I haven't even talked to Johnny to level them up."

Alejandro Reyes: So, I would always say that they should never be surprised that it's coming, when you share that news. "Hey, we've gone through this, we've went through a 90-day plan, we've given you a coaching plan, you've signed it, we've had one-on-ones, we've met together, and, unfortunately, at the capacity, like, world-class level that I know that you can do, is unfortunately the reason we're going to have to part ways here."

Alejandro Reyes: So, you got to really address it. That doesn't mean go fire everybody. If you have not exhausted every opportunity to level people up, that's just poor form. That is absolutely poor form. Because churches are usually understaffed, by half, a lot of times. So, it's like, "Oh, man, I don't have time for one-on-ones, I don't have time to engage and build people up," and I would say that is one of the worst things that leaders can do is to not spend time with their people and help them grow and level up their leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, it's so interesting. I don't know what the quote is, I'm going to mangle it a little bit, but Tim Ferriss often quotes it. It's like, "Your capacity is directly determined to your ability to have difficult conversations." And I think that's true. There was someone I was talking with this morning, again, one of my top team members, and I just adore this person, and it was about hours, and I could feel myself starting to complain privately rather than raise it publicly. We had a really quick, awesome conversation about it, and it was resolved to everyone's satisfaction, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh ..." I knew where that was going, because I've done this long enough where I would be like, "Well, I wish that blah, blah, blah," and I wouldn't say it publicly, and hopefully avoid the passive-aggressive email, or tweet, or social media status update. But all I had to do was say, "Actually, can we talk about this?" And we did, and we actually resolved it in about five minutes. It just wasn't hard at all.

Carey Nieuwhof: But the fact that I have to keep reminding myself of that after all these years astounds me.

Alejandro Reyes: I call it, Savy knows this now ... This is going to sting a little bit. It's a sting. Google actually calls it a nudge. There's an actual thing in Google. They call it a nudge, and a nudge is simply ... And that's what we call it out, like, "Hey, this is a simple nudge. Love you. But, man, we," and they know it's them, "We really missed the mark here."

Alejandro Reyes: Jocko, you know, the gentleman, the Navy Seal, Jocko Willink, or however ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Jocko Willink, yeah.

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, he says, "There are no bad teams, there are only bad leaders," right? So, you need to take the responsibility on you to figure out what you can do better as a leader, but remind them. It's that radical candor idea of really speaking up and, "Hey, this is going to sting a little bit, but it always comes out so much better."

Alejandro Reyes: And the relationship, as a result of that vulnerability ... And we've talked at length of your offset about vulnerability. When you start to be vulnerable with your team and you have that radical candor, I think bond just, it goes through the roof. And, when you create that level of bond, your team will do so much more than they're currently doing for you. I really believe that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and you and I have had to have conversations from time to time where you've said to me, "Hey, excuse me," or I've said, "Hey, we need to talk," and it just makes you stronger.

Alejandro Reyes: It does.

Carey Nieuwhof: It just makes the bond deeper.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, well, this is really ... I love the backstory. I could live in the backstory. But I do want to talk about online marketing a little bit. So, man, things are changing, as you said, not at a glacial pace, but at exponential pace. When people say online marketing or digital marketing, what does that term mean to you?

Alejandro Reyes: To me, it means you have an idea, you have a message, you have a product, you have a service, you have something that you would love to put in front of people, because you believe that it will solve their problem or their pain point. The market has a pain point, a problem, and you believe your product is, you should position it this way, as the only viable option to these people.

Alejandro Reyes: So, online marketing, to me, digital marketing, is really using the web, paid advertising, free forms of advertising, to get this in front of them so that they can make a decision for themselves to buy or maybe not right now, but eventually.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I'm sold on that, you're sold on that, but we've all read our inboxes and we see what gets written. There are business leaders and church leaders who are like, "Convince me that this is even important, and how is that not just all about ego? Why does online marketing matter?" Can you respond to that for a minute, Alejandro? Because that critique never seems to go away, or that indifference to it never seems to go away, or maybe even ambivalence about it never seems to go away.

Alejandro Reyes: Can I give a very polarizing, bold response? Is that okay?

Carey Nieuwhof: Absolutely.

Alejandro Reyes: I think it is grossly irresponsible to not share your ideas ... Keep in mind, Proverbs 18:60 says, "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before the great," right? So, we have these giftings inside of us where Peter, and Peter talks about, "Use your gift" ... I think it's grossly irresponsible not to share your gift. Your gift that has got you to where you're at, leader, it's not yours, so Paul says to share it and steward it with one another. So, you have to share your gift,

your product, your service, and especially for pastors. They spend 10 plus hours crafting a sermon, praying first, and crying out to God for their parishioners, and what ends up happening is, come Monday morning, that was locked in those four walls.

Alejandro Reyes: So, I say, we got to use digital marketing to share our sermons, to share ideas, because it's a good thing, it's a Godly thing to share our giftings and our ideas with other people. And it's really not about you, because that's the biggest thing that I talk ... especially in the church space, it's, man, I don't want to build a platform, it's not about me, it's about God, it's about pointing people back to Him. But I would say, is that, as you grow your platform, you grow your influence. As long as you stay humble, you will have a louder mic, if you will, to share all the goodness that God has done in your life.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, to me, it's grossly irresponsible to not put your stuff out there.

Carey Nieuwhof: You mentioned humility. How do you stay humble while marketing yourself, your message, your product, your service, your business, your church, whatever? Because that is one of the inherent tensions, is people say, "Well, doesn't this just make me a narcissist?" Can you market while staying humble?

Alejandro Reyes: Another polarizing, in my opinion ... If you have the audacity to be a pastor, there a level of ... If you have an audacity to want to climb the corporate ladder, there's a level of significance, not narcissism, ego, there's a level of the human behavior or the human need that would say, "I want to do meaningful work." Who are we to even say that, right? But I think that's actually okay.

Alejandro Reyes: How do I stay humble? Sarah Nicole, that's my wife. She would crush me if I ever got my head big enough. There was a mentor years ago ... Because, before Sarah, I was a pretty egotistical guy. I had this ego. And he would say, "Man, if your bank account was bigger than your head, you would be a millionaire." And, so, I would say, giving the permission, that vulnerability to a community, to your wife, to go, "Hey, man, Carey, I'm starting to catch some momentum online, I'm starting to catch some momentum in my church. I need you across the way to always check in with me, and if you feel that that post, that tweet, the way I'm coming across, give me a gentle nudge." Like, "Give me a nudge."

Alejandro Reyes: Some of the nudges, they sting, but having the community around you ... Banning Liebscher from Jesus Culture talks about, sometimes, God speaks through people, through community. And, so, having those people around you to really speak into your life really has kept me humble, for sure.

Alejandro Reyes: So, find people ... The leaders that make me the most nervous are the ones that don't have anyone in their ear. That makes me nervous. So, you got to have people in your life to keep you accountable.

Carey Nieuwhof: Let's pop the hood open a little bit, because you and I have had that conversation, and mostly, just so you guys know, leaders know, or anybody who sort of follows the other things I do, Alejandro has helped the most, probably, with our courses, right? High Impact Leader, Art of Better Preaching, Church Growth Masterclass, are sort of the three key courses that I'm currently offering, with more to come.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, when we do a launch, Alejandro and his team are the people sort of behind that, the Facebook Ads, et cetera, et cetera. And you and I have had numerous conversations about voice and some of the principles that are going to guide that. I'm not saying I always get it right. I don't always get it right. We all have our narcissistic moments. But what have been some of the principles that have been defining? You want to just pop the hood open and talk about that transparently? As we've discussed, what is the tone we want to strike, the voice of our company and our brand, and what that looks like? Because that's been very clarifying for me, because I do feel the ambivalence around marketing yourself, or even my reluctance to go to those photo shoots that, apparently, are so important, right? Can we talk about that for a little bit? Because I think that would be a good case study.

Alejandro Reyes: All those candid photos.

Carey Nieuwhof: All those candid photos, yeah.

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah. And those are amazing photos. But I would say, when you look at your leaders, when you look at your clients, when you look at your customers, for those that are listening right now, look at them like one word that captures everything about them. And the thing, when we first started talking, Carey, the thing that you made absolutely clear multiple times, and then multiple times again, was that trust mattered most to you, and you wanted to serve, not sell people.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, when I think of Carey to my team ... So, now, I know, as the leader, I've got to communicate that and articulate that to my team. So, I go to my team, say, "Hey, tone, trust is really, really important, so when we're selling to people, we want to make them feel like we're serving them, and we want to make sure that we're staying on brand for Carey, and trust is the most important thing."

Alejandro Reyes: So, for another client, it might be loyalty, or it might be excellence. So, for me, the thing that's really helped me the most is understanding your biggest ... The thing that matters most to you needs to matter most to me and my entire team. So, any time we're writing copy, any time we're thinking about scripting a video, any time we're creating an ad, we're always looking it through that one idea, that one word, which is trust.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. It's so interesting, because we have talked about that, and I think it might've been you who said, "Serving before selling." And that has been so

valuable to me, that I want to serve leaders, and, in the process, if you happen to buy a course, that's awesome. If you happen to do this, that's awesome.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, obviously, we poured a lot of time and energy and resources into the courses, so I actually want as many people as possible to take them, because I think they'll help them, but that whole idea of trust, that you can literally just ruin trust, it takes years to build, you can wreck it in a second. Those have been really good guiding principles.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anything else that comes to mind when you're trying to establish a brand character online?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah. We can get really deep into this, but we've done the core values, principles, those type of things. There's attributes, there's so much when it comes to a brand, but the thing that matters most, I would say, is for any brand, any church, any organization, any personal brand, is showing care for people. I alluded to it earlier about how much you are locked into a conversation, but you genuinely care about your people. You put out emails. Most people send promotional emails a lot, and their email open rates are 5%, 10%, no one's buying, they're wondering why.

Alejandro Reyes: But you've actually increased your email, you've ran that through a lens of care and value, and, "I want to serve people well," and your open rates are up, your email list is bigger than ever, your unsubscribes are lower than ever. Why? Because you're serving people instead of trying to sell them.

Alejandro Reyes: So, to me, I would say showing that care, getting back to that servant leadership idea, I think, is really, really critical for a brand.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, for us, just for leaders, the lens for email, for me, is, "Is this helpful?" It's free. Okay, we have, I think now, over 52,000 people who subscribe to the daily email. Almost daily. I think I take one day off a week.

Alejandro Reyes: Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: And it's short, sometimes less than 100 words. But it links to a resource that we think is important, and the idea is, you paid with your time. Yeah, it was free, but are you a better person for having opened this email? And not just a happy thought, but tangible help, tangible hope, or something that makes you a better leader. And, if we can answer, "Yes," then that's an email worth sending.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do we get it right every day? I'm sure we don't get it right every day. But that's sort of the goal. And, so, it's in the context. And I don't say those have to be your values, but, as you and me and our teams have developed those values together, I have gained more confidence that I'm actually helping people as the platform grows.

Alejandro Reyes: That's amazing. You know, that's what we want. You want to go out there and ... When you started several years ago, you weren't, like ... You know what I mean? You had to build the team, you had to build the structure and infrastructure. I think most people will look at you and go, like, "Oh, my God, to try to start a podcast, to try to start building a personal ... to try to get this book idea, or my third book that I'm working on there," they're looking at Carey and go, "Oh, my gosh, 10 million, 12 million downloads. I just could never do that."

Alejandro Reyes: Were you always that confident when you started?

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, no. And, see, this is another conversation, right? Should you start out to build a personal brand? My goal was not to build a company or to build a brand. My goal was to help people. It's like, "Okay, I'm going to write some articles, then I want to bring some back-room conversations that I'm really enjoying to a wider audience." You know, I had crazy, audacious goals about 100,000 page views in a year.

Alejandro Reyes: Oh, my gosh. Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, now, it's probably, this year will be seven to eight million. I don't know.

Alejandro Reyes: Amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof: And then, the podcast, I thought, maybe, one day, a million downloads, like years down the road. Well, closing in on 10. It's like, what? Like, okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: But tell me if you're wrong, because you work with a lot of different clients, I would often find the people who are interested in the content and the idea tend to eventually get the numbers, or could potentially get the numbers, the people who are interested in just, "Can we get 10,000 followers overnight, Alejandro?," they never seem to do as well. People eventually sniff out your motivation.

Alejandro Reyes: I think that's the difference between an impression and an impact. An impression is like a one-hit wonder. Jay-Z, I saw an interview with Oprah, I know a lot of your audience listens to Jay-Z, so that's why it's...people make that known... No, I'm just kidding.

Alejandro Reyes: But he said, "People can come and go and they can get some energy, they can get some followers, and all that stuff, but try doing it for a decade, try doing it for two decades." TOMS shoes, one thing that was fascinating, they make about \$17 per shoe, and someone asked them, "That's not very profitable." Said, "We never got into this for the profitability. We got into this for the sustainability." So, it makes me think of those guys ...

Alejandro Reyes: I'm pitched, "Hey, you want to get on Inc Magazine and get 10,000 followers?" That's a quick impression. That's a one-hit wonder. And profitable, like, for a day, or two, or a year. But, for people that want longterm growth, longterm

impact, those are the people that, that slow and steady, there's ways to speed that up with paid traffic and those type of things, but that's where impact and impression, to me, are completely different things, and I want an impact. I know you do, too, and that's what matters most to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. This is really good, because it sounds like it's not a conversation on online marketing, but, in my mind, it's 100% a conversation on online marketing. Because I've talked about this, and I've been blogging fairly steadily now for seven years. Actually, this month, seven years. And I've been talking with a few colleagues, and some of us look around, and it's like, "Wow, okay, five years into this podcast, seven years into regular blogging later, remember all the people we started with?" And there's a few of us still standing.

Carey Nieuwhof: And it was just writing when you didn't feel like writing, publishing, trying to serve, getting through the personal angst, and it's not easy, but I think there is that desire, whether or not you're getting the results you want. You know, if you're getting zero after three years, well, you should probably reassess your strategy or whether you're actually reaching anybody, but I think some of that is that longevity and that desire that, no, this is ... Like, I've now feel into this, this is every bit as much of a calling in my life as it was 20 years ago to plant a church unchurched people love to attend. Still, like you, passionate about the local church, involved in the local church, but now my goal is to help leaders, to help people thrive in life and leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I see that as a calling. So, guess what? Kind of, when I feel like just putting my feet up, no, this is a calling, you better get to work. And that is sort of the heart of it. And I think you can sniff that out online.

Alejandro Reyes: 100%. I really believe consistency builds trust and trust builds loyalty, and loyalty's what allows you to do this for a long time. You've been putting out a blog every single week, and then a podcast on a consistent basis. A lot of people, they'll quit after seven ... I think it's, like, seven. I think they say people stop at, like, seven podcasts. And it's like, man, success was right around the corner, but you didn't get that instant gratification, and you quit.

Alejandro Reyes: So, this is why I love talking about marketing, but through the frame of more of psychology, because you've got to understand that the algorithms, it rewards you for posting more consistently, but people that you see, a lot of those people probably quit because they weren't seeing immediate results, their consistency was ... they had no consistency. And, so, they just dropped off because, a lot of times, they were probably just in it for impression and fake influence, I call it artificial influence, versus true influence and impact for people.

Carey Nieuwhof: How is online marketing, at the end of 2019, now, heading into 2020, how is that different than, say, even three years ago? Because you and I have frequent conversations about how Facebook is changing, and we've been through a few

massive algorithm shakeups, and that changes the game all the time. So, how would you say you've seen online marketing change in the last few years?

Alejandro Reyes: I have two answers for this. The first one is really simple. It's, to me, I like to think that ... There's more people here. And, so, people freak out with competition. "Oh, my gosh," like ... I actually love that, because, to me, I have this idea in my mind that best strategy always wins. If you have the best strategy, you will always win, because it's very cyclical. People will come, like, "Oh, I want to be a real estate agent. Oh, that's done. I want to be a loan officer." Now, I want to be a social media influencer. Now, I want to be a YouTuber." And, so, people ride those waves.

Alejandro Reyes: So, more people are coming to the web, more people are becoming influencers, more people are buying followers, and so that kind of washes out. So, what's changed is literally, there were less people doing this influencer thing, this personal brand thing, three to five years ago. And people say, "Well, it's more expensive to spend money on Facebook. It's harder." Organic reach used to be 20%, 30%, 40% four or five years ago, and, now, it's sparse. It's 1%, maybe.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, the reason I like that is because the flunkies, they leave. They're gone. They leave, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: The quick-fix people are all like, "All right, I give up." Yeah.

Alejandro Reyes: They're gone. They give up so easy. But people that have a great strategy will always ... And this is why you say, we're talking about marketing, but we're not talking about marketing. At the end of the day, the same strategy that I implemented 20 years ago is the same strategy that I'm still, I'm refining it, but it's still the same strategy today, and it'll be the same strategy five to 10 years from now. The technologies are always changing, and if I'm a leader, don't worry so much about that. Hire people that are smarter than you, like Carey, to kind of figure those things out. But always stay true.

Alejandro Reyes: You post a consistent podcast, a consistent blog, and that's kind of your constant. And, so, to me, I would say it hasn't changed ... It's just changed because there's more people doing it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's interesting. So, consistency would be a pillar of online marketing, and that would be a ...

Alejandro Reyes: 100%

Carey Nieuwhof: ... consistent voice ... And, again, you don't have to publish every week. We do this podcast about six times a month. I will post content to my blog two or three times a week, couple of podcasts a week sometimes, so that's plenty of content. But it could be once a month. I just post 12 times a year. Or it could be daily, or

it could be multiple times a day, or whatever that would happen to be. But just consistent. Like, if you're every other week, just be every other week.

Alejandro Reyes: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some other pillars that probably are not going to change in online marketing?

Alejandro Reyes: The pillars, I would say it's, to me, it's an audience-first mentality. You know?

Carey Nieuwhof: Love it.

Alejandro Reyes: Audience-first. People that really understand their audience, the moment that you understand their frustrations, their pains, what they want to escape from and arrive to, if you really understand that and can articulate and speak to them back the words that they're saying at their head, that they're spinning around at 1:00 AM as they look up at the ceiling, if you can say those exact words, versus internal jargon and trying to sound so smart, if you can repeat those words back to them because you have an audience-first mentality, that's really what matters.

Alejandro Reyes: And, to me, you talked about content, I would say, you had our mutual friend Sean Cannell on ... Video is very powerful. Video's very powerful. And, so, I'd like to think about ... Five years ago, which was different, people would run an ad to Facebook and sell right away. What you and I've done, you've got some Facebook videos that have ... You have a video that almost has 500,000 views on there. I don't know if you knew that.

Carey Nieuwhof: I didn't know that.

Alejandro Reyes: You have some that have a couple hundred thousand, 80,000, and there's no call to action to buy anything at the end. And, so, to me, what that says is, you're giving value upfront with no strings attached, and then Facebook, and we're going to get geeky real quick, and I won't get too geeky ...

Carey Nieuwhof: I like geeky.

Alejandro Reyes: ... but Facebook will allow you to say, "Hey, these 400,000, these 500,000 people that watched this five-minute video, I then want to send a promotional message or video to people that watched 50%, or 75%, or 25% of that video."

Alejandro Reyes: So, what happens is, think of it like a funnel or like an assimilation-type process, like hopefully you have at your church. You put in front of sales content in front of people that trust you a little more than just people that are kind of on the sidewalk.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, you're kind of warmed up. You're sort of known for that. What video is that that got half a million views?

Alejandro Reyes: And here's the thing, it's why TED Talks are more popular than sermons. And it was a polarizing, bold statement. And I think, a lot of times, we got to be more bold. Not to be controversial, but you have ideas. This is why I love you. You have some ideas and you're just going to say them. You're not going to do it for controversy's sake and to try to ruffle feathers. You actually believe what you're saying, because you want to shake people a little bit to think differently about what they're currently thinking.

Alejandro Reyes: And when you create that level of content, then ... It's like posting something like, if I did something like, "Here's why your church won't grow in 2020." That's going to get someone's attention. But then I would begin to say, "Your church won't grow in 2020 unless you do this one thing." So, you always want to hit them with ... Not always. A lot of times, with marketing, you kind of want to hit them with that fear and then really give them a future hope of what it looks like doing it the right way.

Alejandro Reyes: So, I always like to, with clients, is put out free content and paid traffic through Instagram Ads, Facebook Ads, to that traffic, and then, on the back end, market to people that are more warm and hot, like you said.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. And, yeah, the point of that video, if people want, we'll link to it if we can, I don't know whether you can link to that, but ...

Alejandro Reyes: You can, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: ...in the show notes ... Okay, so, we'll link to that TED Talk video.

Carey Nieuwhof: My point was actually, what is the proper length for a message? And I think the bottom line to that video is, five minutes of boring is five minutes too long, and 40 minutes of fascinating isn't nearly enough. And it was just to debunk that idea that TED Talks are inherently better than sermons, that everybody has to preach 18 minutes. Man, 18 minutes of boring is just boring. I don't care what it is.

Alejandro Reyes: If you titled it "What's the Ideal Length of a Sermon," people like ... You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm thinking about that. Right?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. We were just doing some coaching on the team today about an email subject line, and it was the same thing. It just asked a question that nobody

every asks in their real life, and how often do we do that in our messaging, right? It was what Donald Miller says, "It's not like we're the best lawn-care company since 1945. It's like, 'Your grass is greener than anyone on the street.'" Oh, well, all of a sudden, that's like, "Oh, okay, well, that's something." I'm like, "I want green grass." You know? Or, "I want a weed-free lawn," or, "I want perfectly cut grass, or nice lines." Lines are great.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anyway, but that is the angle. And, so, that can help you think about that. Like, probably people are not going to watch your 40-minute message or your one-hour sales video, but they will watch a three-minute clip, and that sort of warms you up to them, and that can be a funnel into longer content, right?

Alejandro Reyes: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, let's talk, as we kind of wrap up, Alejandro, about low-hanging fruit. So, people are thinking about maybe doing more in terms of online marketing. What are some quick wins, some ways ... Without, you know, I believe they have to play the long game, but what are some ways that people can say, "Hey, if I pay attention to these few things, I will probably have a bigger impact online?"

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah. You know, we talked real briefly about personal branding. Like, you have a personal brand. You're either going to define it or people are going to define it for you. So, the one really quick win is your Facebook page's bio or your Instagram bio. It's just a really simple tweak to your bio, and it's a framework that, it's a sentence, it's, "I help [your target audience] with X, Y, Z," or, "I help Christian entrepreneurs turn passion to profit."

Alejandro Reyes: So, really quick. Because what happens is, when people, especially millennials, they're not only looking at websites, they're looking at your Instagram bio, they're looking at how you're defining in your bio on your website. And, so, for pastors and leaders, before they even buy with you ... I always say people buy people. So, they're going to do some digging on who you are. And, so, if you can, in your bio, really simply, because you get 160 characters I think it is, it's like, "I help," with desired outcome. "I help [target audience] with [desired outcome]."

Alejandro Reyes: So, "I help pastors live like never before," or, "Raise their leadership," or whatever it is. And if you're a pastor of a local church, "I help people of the Tri-Cities have their best life ever," or whatever it is. You just have to start ... That's just a quick win. One easy, quick win.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, "Start a relationship with Christ," or whatever it happens to be. I would just check in my bio, it's like, "I help people thrive in life and leadership," but it's not my first sentence, so I'll have to change that.

Alejandro Reyes: And that's the first thing ... It's almost like a headline, right? So, it's real quickly, what is this person? Who they are, what do they do, and how can they help me? That's what they're thinking.

Alejandro Reyes: When I'm looking at your profile, people selfishly subconsciously are thinking, "What's in it for me?" And, so, if you tell them what's in it for them in that really quick little framework or positioning statement, it really helps big.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's good. Anything else that you would say, "Hey, try this one or two things"? Anything from profile pic, to what you're offering. I mean, just help people cut through their own clutter to get their message out.

Alejandro Reyes: I think the last thing would be to have a big idea, have a framework. It's almost like your life thesis. It's like, "Live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow." That's a big idea, and you would unpack that later, but what is your unique framework, your step-by-step system that you help people do?

Alejandro Reyes: So, not only did I get their attention, but what makes me unique? How do I help people? And, so, some sort of unique framework, some sort of unique system that you do that no one else has done, or you kind of call ...

Alejandro Reyes: You know, Pat Flynn, who's ... you know, in the late 2000s, 2010, people were calling about content distribution. Take one piece of content, blog post, turn it into a video, turn it into an audio, put it on this website, and spread your content everywhere. That was a long way to say what Pat said, and he said, "Here's my be everywhere strategy." So, he named a strategy that other people were talking about.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, if you can name some sort of framework that you've refined and came up with, people buy frameworks, they buy systems, they buy processes. And, so, if you can kind of come up with your own unique process, as a church leader, as a businessperson, entrepreneur, it really defines who you are because it tells people exactly what you're going to get, versus spending hours trying to explain what you do.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, no, that's good. How do you keep up with all the changes? What are some pro tips?

Alejandro Reyes: No, that's good. I follow industry leaders. I'm a part of some Slack groups of ... I'm part of one the biggest, especially for me, media buying, Facebook advertising, paid traffic ... So, I just spend the money. I go to conferences, I spend the money on courses. I spend the money more on access to people than I do on courses, because I can ask questions. There's nothing more powerful than getting access to people.

Alejandro Reyes: So, people that have relationships at Facebook, so, people that have relationships with the top media buyers. And, so, for me, I will always pay for access to those people.

Carey Nieuwhof: What does that look like? Like, a coach, a mentor, or a one-day event, or what does that look like?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, so, I pay \$100 a month to a media-buying ... It's \$1,200 a year, but some of the best money spent. Because, if I have a question, I'll ask. I participate and help other people, too. So, it really keeps me on my toes, helps me refine.

Alejandro Reyes: I've hired a coach before, and I know you have, as well, someone to really nudge you, and it doesn't even feel like a nudge, to really coach and level you up. And we live in a day and age, bro, where people just do not want to be ... Like, "Everything's PC." We want it so easy.

Alejandro Reyes: And, so, when I would say, "How do I try to get better every single day?," it's like, I just do the hard things. I read a ton, I listen to a ton of books, I spend time with people, and I just make the effort. And back to the beginning of the podcast, it was like, I calendar things in. I calendar all those things in, make time for those things.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's good to know, and the whole coaching thing's been kicking my butt lately, and the thought that's really been owning a lot of real estate in me is, the better you get, the more coaching you need. And that's not intuitive.

Alejandro Reyes: 100%.

Carey Nieuwhof: But if you're top-of-the-world tennis player, you've got more than one coach. If you're elite golfer, football player, you got a whole bench of coaches on a football team, and they're hyper-specialized. And, naturally, I just think, "Oh, well, there's going to be a point at which I don't need coaching anymore," and it's like, no, the opposite is true. Actually, the higher you go, the more coaching you need.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, so, 2020's going to be a year where I probably hire another one-on-one consultant coach ...

Alejandro Reyes: Amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... maybe start a Mastermind. I've done a lot of learning in 2019 and I've grown so much from it, and, yeah, that's not an expense, that's an investment. If you're using it to produce something for the future.

Alejandro Reyes: If you start a Mastermind, and I know people were like, "Oh, my gosh, where can I go find ..." Yeah, you'd have 15, 20 people ... I would sign up for that thing. And I'm going to nudge you to do that Mastermind in 2020.

Carey Nieuwhof: You nudge me, you nudge me. It's funny, I had a conversation with another guy who runs a company about the size of my company, because I've thought about joining one rather than launching one, and I'm just like, "Would you be interested in doing one with just peers? Like, we just meet once a month, we do a Zoom call, and maybe we get together in person and just, like, 'Okay, what personnel struggles are you having? What's your company doing next? What are your personal struggles? How's your time management?'" Just that kind of thing, and best practices from peers and people who are roughly the same or ahead of you. Could be pretty cool.

Alejandro Reyes: I think so, man.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm just trying to figure all that out.

Carey Nieuwhof: But, anyway, well, Alejandro, you're doing an awful lot. Tell us where, if people want to find out more about you, you got some some cool things going on, where would you direct them?

Alejandro Reyes: Yeah, absolutely. I would say my Instagram. It's @alejandroreyes. And then, if you are a Christian entrepreneur or someone that's looking to create a side income, if you work for the church, just go to Facebook. I got a great resource, a great free Facebook group for you, where I do a lot of training. Just type in, "Christian entrepreneur school," in the Facebook search bar and you will find our Facebook group there.

Carey Nieuwhof: And you can join it. Now, do you have to work for a church, or could you have your own business and you're ... just happen to be a faith-based person, or how does that work?

Alejandro Reyes: Here's what's crazy. I would say 50% of the people are church workers in there. I was so fascinated and mind-blown when I saw that. So, it's anybody that wants to get a message out there and really turn what they already know into a business.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, Alejandro, anything else you want to share?

Alejandro Reyes: No, that's it, man. Hey, grateful for you, man, and all that you do, all the sacrifice that you've made, all the books that you write about that sacrifice, and burnout, and all that stuff. I just appreciate all the toll that you've taken to ... I've got friends of mine that have messaged me that, "Man, I'm crying reading Carey's book right now." And the impact that you've had on the church has been tremendous, man. So, love you. I'm so grateful that we get to work

together, and I think your best days are ahead of you, man, and so is this podcast. So, thank you, again.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. I'm so grateful for you, Alejandro. We've had some incredible times together, many more to come. Love you, man, and thanks for being on the show, and I'm excited to maybe introduce some leaders who've never had the pleasure of meeting Alejandro Reyes to do exactly that.

Alejandro Reyes: Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, there was some great stuff in that episode, and if you want to drill down a little bit further, we have show notes for you and transcripts, which you can find at CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode298. Plus, this one's on YouTube. So, if you have a friend who prefers to watch, you can send the link there, you can find me on YouTube, subscribe there for free. And, of course, you can subscribe to the audio podcast for free, as well, guys.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, when you do that, you know, you've heard me say this before, I only ever listen to podcasts I subscribe to. So, the fact that you're sharing this, that you're finding it so helpful, is so encouraging to us. Thank you for sharing it on social, working through it with your team.

Carey Nieuwhof: Here's my commitment. We're just going to keep doing this and helping you lead like never before. Remember to listen through to the end for my "Ask Carey" question, where I talk about, how do you tell a guy, "You're not very good at this"? All right? That's going to be a fun one to tackle.

Carey Nieuwhof: In the meantime, do check out some of the offers we have for you this week. The Unstuck Group has helped so many churches, including ours, and head on over to TheUnstuckGroup.com/Guests. They will help you figure out whether you have a front door or a backdoor problem. And RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey is the place to go if you want to help your congregation get into the words of Jesus a lot better in 2020. They've got some specials running there. So, head on over to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I'm very excited to bring you the next episode. I flew out to San Francisco, went to The Table Group, and spent an afternoon with Patrick Lencioni. My goodness, this interview was fire. A few minutes into it, he just started talking about something I've never heard him talk about before, which was a leadership crash he went through 11 years ago, how he moved through it, and I'm so excited about his next book, which comes out next year. It's all about how to check your motives as a leader. We cover all that and so much more. Here's an excerpt.

Patrick L.: My sister-in-law, my wife's little sister ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow.

Patrick L.: ... married my roommate from San Francisco, when we lived in the city. And, so, I thought, "This is awesome." My buddy, he and I were good friends, was going to be my brother-in-law. Well, Laura and I would always argue. I'm Italian and Irish, and she's a convert, and she's an arguer, too, and we would go to dinner, and we would argue about stuff. "Well, why do you say that? Why do you do that?" And then we'd make up.

Patrick L.: And they agreed on everything, it seemed.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Patrick L.: Then, a year and a half after they got married, the year after we did, he left her. They got divorced. And when I went and talked to him, he said, "Yeah, Pat, I always thought you and Laura had a bad marriage because you argued, and I realize now we had a bad marriage because we couldn't argue." Not that we always do, but that you can't go there. Because, if you can't go there, you don't grow.

Patrick L.: And companies that avoid conflict, the executive teams don't grow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that is next time on the podcast. So, again, if you subscribe, you get that all absolutely free and automatically delivered to you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we're going to turn to the "Ask Carey" question this week. Thank you so much, J.D., who wanted to know, "How would you approach a conversation with someone whose gift has shifted, lost effectiveness, and cannot see it for themselves, and is doing more damage by remaining in that gift instead of transitioning into, say, a new area?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, that's a pointed question. And, you know what, we get that one a lot. And, so, what do you do when someone just can't see, "You know what, you're communicating, but you're not a great communicator?" Or, "You're a musician, but you're not ready for this stage of our organization?" Or, "You think you're great at accounting? Well, you are for \$100,000 company, but not a \$1 million company?" What do you do? How do you tap that person on the shoulder and go, "Excuse me, this isn't working?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Here's the first thing I would say. Ask yourself, J.D., are you the person to address it? Because that can be a very sensitive issue, and, clearly, you see the issue. You're probably not the only one who sees it, I would assume. But then say, "Who has the most relational equity to go up to that person and start the conversation?" Because what I've found is that the better you know a person, the better that kind of conversation goes.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, also, in a workplace setting, you got to think about hierarchy. I mean, if you're an entry-level, minimum-wage employee, are you the person to bring the CEO or the lead pastor that information? Probably not. So, you might want to

talk to a manager about it. You may want to talk to somebody who really cares about them, cares about them enough to have an honest conversation. So, ask, who's the right person to address it? And then, are you the right person to address it? And maybe the answer is no.

Carey Nieuwhof: But, whoever addresses it, then, what do you do? It's not easy. You may end up ruining the relationship over it. Not everybody is open. I don't know the emotional intelligence of this person who's kind of missing the gifting. But here's how I would approach it.

Carey Nieuwhof: If I'm the right person to have the conversation, I would ask a question rather than make a statement. And I might say something like, "Hey, John," I'm just going to call him John, I don't know who he is, "Hey, John, you know what, man? Here's what I appreciate about you." So, start with something really positive. "Man, you're so good at so-and-so," or whatever. And then, ask the question, "Hey, did you ever think, did it ever occur to you that maybe, for the size and the stage, or the place we are right now as an organization, that maybe you would be better suited serving in area X?"

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I would affirm something they're good at and then try to point towards something else that they could do, where maybe their contribution is better. So, for example, as our church grew, and even as my company grows now, I'm not the best manager in the world. I can do it okay, but I have a great team, but I'm going to have to hire a manager. And, so, it might be somebody coming to me and saying, "Hey, Carey, you know what, you're such a visionary, you're great at communication," or whatever they think I'm good at ... Maybe, "Hey, Carey, you're really good at mowing your lawn." I don't know what that is, but, you know, "Hey, you're really good at X. Do you think, for the size and the stage that we're at, that it would be better for you to focus on communication and vision casting, and maybe fundraising, which you're good at? And we could get someone else to lead and manage?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you see how that feels? That just feels a little bit different than, "Man, you stink at leading and managing." So, just to summarize, ask yourself, who's the best to address it? Are you the one to address it? Secondly, affirm what they are good at. Third, redirect them to something else that they're good at, and then ask a question, don't make a statement. That's how I would handle that.

Carey Nieuwhof: J.D., I hope that helps. Ask your question on any social channel at #askCarey. That's C-A-R-E-Y. And, guys, we're back next week, thank you so much, with Patrick Lencioni. So excited for this one, 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.

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