

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 301 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today will help you lead like never before. This is a fun one, man. It's Albert Tate this week, and Albert has quickly become one of my favorite speakers. He is absolutely hilarious, if you've ever heard him speak. And you probably also know if you're a regular listener, I'm a little bit perhaps envious/also a student of a really funny communicators, because I think it's a really hard thing to do on stage.

Carey Nieuwhof: And so, we break down comedy and he's got some really good insights I hadn't thought about. If you've ever heard Albert, he usually starts by roasting someone for 10 minutes. He's roasted me a few times at conferences that we've spoken together. We actually recorded this live in San Diego. We were both speaking at the Sticky Teams Conference on the West Coast and it was just a lot of fun to sit down together behind the stage backstage and have this conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: We also did a flip-the-mic, so I will be on his podcast this year. So, you can check out Albert on his podcast. Albert is a pastor, soon-to-be an author. Also like I said, one of my favorite speakers. We talk about a lot of things, and actually he gets really personal. After we talk about comedy, he talks about his struggle with porn, accountability, and sex. We get really personal about sort of the backstory of leadership and the pressures of leadership. I think you're really going to find this a helpful conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, a couple things we want to tell you about before we jump into more of the show. If you are looking to really grow in 2020 as a church, and who isn't? Pro Media Fire and Pro WebFire are creating a custom tailored plan for 20 churches to ignite church growth in 2020. This isn't for everybody. They're only accepting 20. You have to apply, but it includes strategies such as digital outreach on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, custom graphics and videos, and a new church website. It's custom tailored to your church.

Carey Nieuwhof: Here are the requirements. You got to be prepared for growth and have systems in place. So, you got to be ready and serious about it. Secondly, you got to be willing to make a monthly financial investment throughout 2020, but in return you'll get a discount of up to 30% off the normal rate of services, and they want you to be able to provide a testimony. So, if you're ready for church growth and you need some help reaching more people, apply online today. Only 20 churches will accepted. Applications can be received only through December 1st. So, act now by going to ProMediaFire.com/2020. If you've been looking for that turnkey custom tailored solution, this is probably your chance, ProMediaFire.com/2020.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, I so love our listeners. One of the reasons I love being on the road is I get to talk to you in every city we go to. And guess what? You guys have already saved over... Are you ready for this? A million dollars on healthcare simply by listening to this podcast and going to RemodelHealth.com/Carey. Remodel Health is a new company that has already helped people save \$7.2 million. A million dollars has come from listeners of this podcast who have said, "You know what? We're going to provide the same or better benefits for our staff and plow that money back into the mission at the same time."

Carey Nieuwhof: So, here's what Remodel Health does. Most healthcare plans, they're just like, "Yeah, here's a one-size-fits-all," which of course never fits everybody. And they actually do the time through technology to figure out, "Okay, you've got 20 employees, they have 20 different needs." And so what happens when you're done with Remodel Health is you get custom tailored plans that provide the same or greater level of benefits to your team at a much lower rate. And that's where podcast listeners have already saved over a million dollars.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, if you're interested in becoming one of those churches or faith-based organizations that wants to save money, visit RemodelHealth.com/Carey to learn more, and download their health insurance buyer's guide.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, guys, we got an Ask Carey coming up at the end of the show. If you listen to the very end, the question is, "What is one piece of advice you have received that has helped you dramatically shape your approach to leadership?" I don't think I've ever talked about this piece of advice I'm going to give you, but it's very true. It's nuance, but it's very true. I'll give that to you at the end of the show.

Carey Nieuwhof: In the meantime, so thrilled to bring you my conversation with Albert Tate.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm so glad to have Albert Tate on the podcast. This has been a long time coming, Albert.

Albert Tate: Oh, yeah. I've been waiting. I've been calling my mom to practice and been praying, like, "Lord, one day, I'll be on the Nieuwhof-"

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I've been on your show, right?

Albert Tate: Yes, you have. That's what it made awkward with the prior request, because I hadn't been on yours yet. It took awhile, but-

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, and you're like, "Where is this this guy?"

Albert Tate: Where's the love, bro? Where's the love. So, finally I am feeling the love. It's a privilege and an honor, seriously.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's good.

Albert Tate: Bro, you are the leadership guru. What God has been doing in your ministry and in your journey, just helping leaders. I told you, I heard about you. I was getting ready to go on this sabbatical and I said, "What do I need to be listening to?" And he was giving me this long list and he said, "Of course, Carey Nieuwhof." I said, "No, I haven't heard... Who is that?" He said, "Forget everything else I've said. Just listen to Carey Nieuwhof and that'll take you for your whole sabbatical." And he was 100% right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that's why we're doing one hour episodes, right? We've got to fill up some peoples' sabbaticals.

Albert Tate: Sabbaticals, baby. But that's how I heard about you, and I've been hooked ever since.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I got to tell you, I mean, you're a pastor, you planted a church. We're going to talk about that a little bit later, but you're an incredible public speaker. We've been at the same events. Actually, that's what we're doing here right now. We're at Sticky Teams together. You and I are both keynoting today, tonight, tomorrow, whenever.

Albert Tate: I have the hardship of coming after you tomorrow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, well that... At least I don't have to follow you, so that's good. Because one of the things I've noticed, you seem to have a lot of fun.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And you've spoken at the Global Leadership Summit a few times. What is that? Like 200,000 leaders? It's insane.

Albert Tate: Oh, yeah. Well, when you count the international thing, the numbers get crazy. Upwards of 300,000 to 400,000.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Albert Tate: It gets crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's insane. And you always make me laugh. I remember, we were in Nashville and I spoke before and you followed me and you just spent basically 10 minutes making fun of me, but in the best way. I was trying to get a copy of that to play for my wife.

Albert Tate: Oh, my goodness. That's called insecurity at its best, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, come on.

Albert Tate: That's what it is.

Carey Nieuwhof: Come on. And then you made that thing, you did the slow jam announcements at Global Leadership Summit, if some of you saw that in August of 2019.

Albert Tate: I think it's on YouTube now. I think you can-

Carey Nieuwhof: Is it on YouTube?

Albert Tate: ... look up Albert Tate does slow jams.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, we're going to link to it.

Albert Tate: Oh, my goodness.

Carey Nieuwhof: We're going to link to it. That'll be great. You also made the comment about Pat Lencioni. It's never as funny the second time, but walk us through what you did.

Albert Tate: No, it's never... There's this amazing testimony that happens where this guy in Pakistan, this pastor who is about to take his life, came to the Global Leadership Summit the year I was speaking. And he said something that I said the Holy Spirit used to just spark renewal in him. And he ended up recommitting his life to ministry, leaning in, and his church is doing well. So, it's basically about this pastor that my talk saved his life in Pakistan.

Carey Nieuwhof: And they played this video, right?

Albert Tate: And played this video-

Carey Nieuwhof: They played this video of this story.

Albert Tate: So, that's the background. And I know that it's not me that did it, but I had that backdrop. But then I said, "But you would think that the Leadership Summit would have invited me back to speak by now, but they haven't. And Patrick Lencioni is there every year. He ain't never saved nobody's life in Pakistan, but they got him up there every year. We don't even know if he's saved or not." You know what I mean? He is, because I led him to Christ backstage after this last summit, but they got this guy back. So I'm like, "Yo, can a brother come back to the Leadership Summit?" So, that was the joke.

Carey Nieuwhof: I was dying listening to that. I mean, it's just so much fun. And regular listeners will know, one of the things I wish I was, was more funny in my delivery. We have a lot of fun in life, but that is a really difficult thing to do on stage. So, I

want you to talk a little bit about that. How do you create those moments in your talk? Because a lot of it seems unscripted. Is it?

Albert Tate: Yeah. Well, it is. It's very unscripted, but I think I have subconsciously a knack for looking for the funny moment, and then knowing when to take it and when not to take it. One of the beautiful things that happened though, when you talk about ministry and when you talk about pastoring and preaching, when people laugh, everything opens up. Not just physically. Emotionally, spiritually. And once you can get that heart open and then you come behind it and you say a very hard truth, that probably wouldn't have been as easily digested if they hadn't taken time to open up through laughter.

Albert Tate: So, laughter is literally good for the soul. It opens you up. It's a great medicine. And so, if you can leverage humor, oh, the word of God can sink that farther. One of the most common things I get is people that say, "Albert, I was laughing and then I was crying." So, it's one of those things where using humor, not to be entertaining or not to just be like, "Oh, man, that was a good show. You made me laugh," but to be able to leverage that to say... The biggest compliment to me is not that, "You made me laugh," but, "You made me laugh and then you said something really hard and it hit me." That means the laughter worked.

Albert Tate: So, that's the difference between a comedian and a preacher, I think. But we learn from comedians, though. Dave Chappelle, Mike Jr., Kevin Hart, these guys, they usually say some pretty difficult things, but we're able to hear it and receive it because we're laughing. So, God uses the ministry of laughter to deepen the word in our souls.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've seen that principle. We actually program to it at our church sometimes, where if we know we're talking about something really sensitive, like sex or money or something where peoples' backs are up, we will actually say in a programming meeting, "Hey, we need a comedic moment at some point. If it's not in the message, it has to be earlier." Because I think you're right. Physiologically-

Albert Tate: Something happens.

Carey Nieuwhof: Something happens when you're belly laughing and then all of a sudden, you're open to it.

Albert Tate: Yeah. And then you say something hard. Chris Brown, who's a great communicator, great teacher at North Coast Church in San Diego, he actually said this. I interviewed him on my podcast and he said he actually prays for comedic moments. He prays that the Lord will give him something funny. And I never thought about doing that.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I hadn't thought about that either.

Albert Tate: But I thought, "Wow." Because if it is spiritual, why not pray for it? Why not ask God to... I've just never thought about it. But ever since he said that, I was like, "Lord, help me to be funny. Help me to speak truth. Help me to make huge impact." But praying for comedic moments was an interesting prayer request.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm going to pray about that. That's good, because my problem is conferences are a lot easier than church, because you can reuse a lot of the jokes.

Albert Tate: Yes. And you know what the funny is, you know what works. Week after week, bro -

Carey Nieuwhof: It's hard at your church.

Albert Tate: It's hard, because you don't know where it is. You don't know where the funny is. I can't write to it. I've got to feel it in the room. Some people have the gift of just being able to write it and they know it works. There are things, and preachers will relate to this, there are things that I thought were going to be, "Whoa, this is going to blow up in the room." And then I get to it and it's a dud and it's absolutely nothing. And there are things that I thought was a just a passerby, that ends up taking the whole room.

Albert Tate: So, if you have the privilege of preaching more than one service, oh, that first service I'm still writing. So, by the second service I'm able... Because I hadn't gotten the audience input. I think in order for me to write a sermon, I need to contribute by way of the Holy Spirit's leading, but the audience also gets to contribute. And after they've contributed, then I feel like I've got a whole talk, because they've told me what resonates with them in a significant way.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, that's a really good point. And the hardest thing, too, is coming up with new content every week. When you're-

Albert Tate: It's brutal.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because then you're like, "Well, I've already used that joke. I've already told that story. I've already said something like that," and you're looking for fresh content all the time.

Albert Tate: The other thing I've got some encouragement from older preachers is, "Use it again. They weren't there. And if they were there, they don't remember." Our illustrations are way overrated in our head. We think, "I used that before. Nobody's going to..." They were into it, but not that much. You can come back eight weeks later and tell the same story and you'll get the same reaction. Half those people weren't even at church that Sunday you used it. So, sometimes we overthink it.

Albert Tate: Easter, oh, I pull out the greatest hits from the previous year, because you got to be hitting on all cylinders on Easter. All tried stories. No new stuff. I'm grabbing

stuff that I know that have worked. The people hadn't heard it. I've never gotten a complaint where it says, "Hey, you've used that story before. It messed up my spiritual experience to hear it again." That's never happened before. Never happened.

Carey Nieuwhof: I learned that when Mark and I, we were talking about preaching courses. You're going to do one. But when Mark Clark and I did The Art of Better Preaching, and we were developing the content for that course, he said, "Reuse your stories." And I'm like, "Even at your church?" And he's got this massive church in Vancouver, and he's a young communicator. He's like, "Dude, I use them..." I'll do my Mark imitation.

Albert Tate: Yeah, because that sounds like him.

Carey Nieuwhof: That sounds like Mark.

Albert Tate: Smoking a pack of cigarettes of day, that's what you sound like.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, he used to. I guess when you start at 12 and stop at 19, that's what you sound like at 38.

Albert Tate: Hey, it works for him.

Carey Nieuwhof: We love you, Mark. But he's like, "Dude, I'll use them like every three weeks and nobody remembers." Right? That's Mark. Sorry, Mark.

Albert Tate: That's a great impersonation.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is totally Mark, though, right?

Albert Tate: Oh, man. He sounds like he drinks a lot of beer and a lot of cigarettes. But he's a great Godly man.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, he is.

Albert Tate: Thank you. Praise God for Mark.

Carey Nieuwhof: No emails, please. Okay, so talk about comedic timing and comedic moments. You said you have eyes for that kind of thing. What do you look for?

Albert Tate: The feeling of the room. You kind of know when the room is with you and when they're not. I think a lot of communicators read the paper and they need to be trained on how to read the room. Because you can capture the paper, but if the room isn't ready to receive it... You can just tell when the room exhales on a point. You kind of read the posture and the motion and the disposition of the room. Over the years, I've just kind of got a feel for when they get it and then

I'm able to move on. Or when there's some tension building and it's like, "Okay, we need to release some of this tension. We need something funny right here."

Albert Tate: Or when you don't have the room. I was teaching at Willow Creek a couple of weeks ago. Willow Creek is this big auditorium, but the cool thing about the auditorium is that-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah. It's like 8,000 seats, right?

Albert Tate: It's got an intimate feel and you can see everybody. So, you can see each other. There are two guys from the back all the way down to the front row. And then they get to the front row and they're looking for something. So, they're like ushers. So, they're digging around. And bro, I just know I don't have the room. Everyone's looking at these guys.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because everyone's looking at them, right?

Albert Tate: So then, that's my rule. If I don't have the room and everyone's looking at them, then I call it... I said, "Hey, guys. Y'all good? Y'all looking for something? It's not a bomb or anything, is it? Okay. Should we be alarmed? Y'all just going to walk slow like that, huh? All righty. Y'all going to leave? See you later. Thanks for interrupting the message. Thanks. Now we can get back."

Albert Tate: Now, some people think, "Oh, my goodness." But the thing is, I didn't have the room anyway. So, to keep throwing my good content on an audience that I know isn't listening at that point, I'd rather call out the distraction, refocus the room, and keep going. It's like when the phone rings. If it rings one time, I won't call it out. If it rings two times, no. But if it's ringing three times, I'm like, "All right, Jesus may be calling somebody. Can somebody answer that, please? Can somebody, please? Thank you. Answer that. Tell Jesus I said I'm working on what we talked about, delivering his message. Call back later." Because everyone now is paying attention to the phone. So, learning how to leverage and use distractions to advance the moment. So now, people excited, people are laughing and they're ready for my next point and we can go onto the next thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, what about preparing for message? You say you notice things.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, you're noticing things in the room, you're watching the crowd, but what about when you're writing a message? Do you prescribe those moments or is it more spontaneous?

Albert Tate: No-

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you have comedic eyes? So, I'm with a mutual friend. I'm sure you know Jon Acuff, right?

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm with Jon Acuff last week. We're speaking at the same event and we're in the green room just getting ready to go on and he's cracking five jokes about what's on the buffet. And I'm like, "That is a set of eyes." And I've talked to Jon about this before. But I'm just so interested in people who are really good at something, sort of deconstructing, I want to see the world through your eyes. I want to see what you see. So, what are some patterns, what are some things that you notice that other people like me might miss?

Albert Tate: So, when I'm at a conference like this, when I'm sitting in the room and I know I'm about to come up and speak, I'm looking for a point of reference of what people are thinking, that no one is saying, that I can get up and call out instead.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, you're looking for the elephant in the room?

Albert Tate: I'm looking in the elephant in the room. And that could be bad, that could be small, that could be something interesting, and sometimes it's nothing at all. So, two things. So, I'll talk about in the room and I'll talk about the writing process. The writing process for me is the first two minutes I need to win the room. And how I win the room, some people win it through storytelling, I win it through comedic... Something funny. It could be a story that sets up something funny or something like that, but I was really nervous. I was going to preach at Bishop Kenneth Ulmer's church, one of the most influential, largest churches in Los Angeles and Englewood. And Bishop Kenneth Ulmer is a mentor of mine. I'm preaching 7,000 to 8,000 African American church. It's amazing.

Albert Tate: So, but it's me going to Mecca. It's me going home and I was like, "Bro, I'm so nervous." He was like, "Man, you'll be nervous until you get your first laugh." And I didn't even know that's how I came at it, but he helped to describe something that I do always. When I get that first laugh, my nerves are done, we got a connection with one another.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Me, too.

Albert Tate: So, in my first two minutes, I want to be very strategic about my first two minutes. I want to be very intentional that I introduce myself well and I do something to win them over, to make them decide, "All right, I'm going to put my phone down and I'm actually going to pay attention to this guy," because I'm competing against Instagram, I'm competing against Twitter, I'm competing against ESPN. So, I got to grab them in those first two minutes. And how I do that is through comedy.

Albert Tate: So, I will try to write something that captures. And I got a couple of those in my pocket. I got a couple of ones that's tried and true and that's funny, but when I'm at a conference and when you're with pastors and leaders and they've heard the stuff before, it's harder, because they do this for a living. So, you really got to work hard to get them. So, what I'll do is-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, if you're at a conference, all the pastors are there thinking, "How come I'm not up? How come it's Tate? How come it's Nieuwhof?"

Albert Tate: Oh, yeah, "I can do this."

Carey Nieuwhof: "Why did they invite them? I can do this. I can do it better."

Albert Tate: So, I got to grab it. One of the funniest things and one of the most inappropriate, when you talk about me roasting you, I grab you because I know everybody loves you, everybody's just enamored by who you are, so it's easy to poke fun at you. I did it with Rick Warren. Rick Warren had just got up and spoke and he's at a church planting conference, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Albert Tate: And these are church planters praying about getting off the ground, all this other kind of stuff. And Rick gets up there to inspire us. And he says, "The Bible says we should go to all nations. Well, I just thought one day, 'We should go to all nations.' So, we put together a team and October 16, 2016, we went to the final nation. Saddleback has been in every nation." And I get up and I'm like, "Way to inspire us, Rick. Great. You went to every nation. I'm just trying to go to my neighborhood and struggling, trying to get a budget, and you've gone to every nation. I want to quit before I even get started."

Albert Tate: So, I just went... Because every pastor out there is kind of low key thinking that. They're kind of thinking... And it's not a reason to disqualify his message, but it actually qualifies the message to say, "Don't be intimidated by the numbers. Look at his passion, look at his commitment, look at his prayer life, look at his tenacity."

Albert Tate: Same thing with Francis Chan. I got in trouble for this one, because Francis... We were at Exponential and we got to the end of it and I said, "And I know you guys look at us, Francis up here, Francis talking about do this stuff and he's sold a million books. He's rich. So, it's easy to say this stuff when you're rich. No wonder you be crying all the time, Francis. I would cry, too, 'Jesus, you gave me a million dollars. This is great.'" The room was busting up. I got a couple of bad emails, though. So, I heard you. I'm not picking on Francis.

Albert Tate: But my point was, don't allow the success of people on stage to disqualify their message. You don't get the right... Because if you look at Francis' life, he gave most of the money away.

Carey Nieuwhof: He did, yeah.

Albert Tate: And continues to and he lives generously. Rick Warren lives very generously, gives a lot of stuff away. Don't allow peoples' success and their platform to disqualify their message. If I had the prayer life of Francis Chan, if I had the passion and the pursuit of God in his heart that he has, oh, my goodness, I would be a much better preacher, a must better pastor, a much better father. Don't allow his success to disqualify him.

Albert Tate: So, since I know that's how people are thinking, I'll just go there to call it out, just so that way it's not another stumbling block to keep them from receiving the word. And it's fun.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is a lot of fun. So, I want to name the elephant in the room right now, and that is there are some people listening who are like, "Really? You think the first... We're preaching the word of God here or you're communicating a timeless truth and the first two minutes is you got to get the room and you've got to make people laugh?" I can imagine some people are saying, "Isn't that just..." They're just pushing back against that.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't disagree with you, because I think the same thing. I'm like, "Is the crowd with me or not?"

Albert Tate: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I'm not a people pleaser, but at a certain point, if they don't like you, they're not listening.

Albert Tate: Oh, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: If they haven't connected with you, they're not listening. Can we drill down on that a little bit?

Albert Tate: Yeah, let's drill down. First of all for the people that feel that way, go have a pack of cigarettes and a six pack of beer. Relax, bro. Take the edge off. I'm just kidding. It all depends on your denominational background.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think I'm going to leave that in.

Albert Tate: Yeah, you should. No, I think when you... Jesus Christ was a master communicator. He was a master communicator and he used stories and illustrations. I'm not saying you need to use comedy, but when you stand and you deliver the word of God, it is the most transformative book. These are the

most powerful words. They are worthy of your due diligence and for you not to deliver them off of some... They deserve to be delivered with your best efforts.

Albert Tate: So, in the first two minutes, you get to awaken the souls of people. You get to bring them alive and declare, "Hear ye, hear ye, the word of the Lord." Now, however you do, "Hear ye, hear ye," is up to you. If you want to use comedy, if you want to use an illustration, but Jesus would always start off, he would say, "There were two men walking in a field," and immediately he's got people's attention, because they know what it's like to be men walking in a field. And he talks about them putting their hand to the plow, and whoever looks back isn't worthy of the kingdom.

Albert Tate: Man, now he hadn't started talking about the biblical truth. He's just using a story to illuminate the biblical truth. He's doing a, "Hear ye, hear ye. Listen, I'm about to say something hard and true, but if you hear it, it'll change your life." So, it's worthy of the setup. The word of God is worthy of the setup. It's not that it needs it or you're adding to it. No, don't be ridiculous. But Jesus Christ is setting up with parables and with illustrations the greater biblical truth so that it might change your life.

Albert Tate: So, when we stand before people in a culture that has a really low view of Scripture, a really low view of the church, we get to stand and say, "Hear ye, hear ye. Listen to me. I've got something powerful to say. It is worthy of your attention." That's what your first two minutes should mark, however you use that. You may want to use a song, you may want to use an illustration, you may want to just tell a story about yourself, or you may just want to get into the Scripture. Some people use that and it works. Just make it good. It's the greatest story that's ever been told. It's worthy of a, "Hear ye, hear ye."

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you think whether you're preaching or even if you're giving a talk, like a TED Talk, within the first 60 seconds, are people making a decision about whether they're in or not?

Albert Tate: 100%. I'm sure there's a stat somewhere that proves that, but ever since I've been schooled... For the 20 years I've been doing this, I've always been told people decide whether they're going to listen to you in the first 60 seconds, two minutes. They're deciding whether they're going to listen to you. And then if you don't believe that stat, just think about yourself. Think about that. The next time you go listen to somebody, look at your posture the first two minutes. And if they get you, they got you. If not, they can get you back later. They can try to grab you along the way, but by this point, they're having to drag you along. You're not-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, you're in your phone or whatever.

Albert Tate: Exactly. You're so easily distracted.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I have done that as a listener.

Albert Tate: Oh, all the time.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm like, "You know what? I'm not listening right now, blah, blah, blah." But then all of a sudden, the talk catches fire and I put down my phone-

Albert Tate: And it's like, "Yo, let me listen."

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm going to listen.

Albert Tate: Carey, there are people right now listening to this podcast that checked out that just checked back in because they were like, "Yo, this is getting good. Let me pay attention."

Carey Nieuwhof: No, it's 100% true. And that's just the nature of how people relate to other people when they're communicating. And just because they're in the room, don't assume you have their attention.

Albert Tate: Exactly. Don't assume, don't take it for granted. And as a communicator, as preachers of the Gospel, it's our responsibility to make this message... Not to make this message, but to deliver this message in a way that's worthy of its content and worthy of its richness. So, we got to do our due diligence.

Carey Nieuwhof: The word has its own power, which is far greater than any power-

Albert Tate: 100%.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... I can bring to it. But I don't want just the Scripture itself to be the only interesting part of the message. I want to try to help draw people's attention to that.

Albert Tate: Yeah. And another way to say that is, I don't... The word is great and powerful. I don't want to be a distraction from the greatness and the power of the word.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Albert Tate: So, if it's amazing and I'm mediocre, that's a problem. Now my mediocrity is getting in the way of the greatness of the Scripture. Speak the word.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anything else on comedy, like what you look for? If you see something funny during the week, do you write it down? Or is it just a mental thing, it's more of a stance? Or-

Albert Tate: No, I'll see something funny, my kids will do something really funny and I'll be like, "That's a good illustration. That'll be a good funny moment." And it's not

necessarily always comedic, but just illustrations. I'm just always looking for a better way... Because we're translators. We communicate and we have to translate every single week. So, I'm always looking for a better way to say something. I'm always looking for parables, whether it's in the news, whether it's with my kids, argument me and my wife got into, a story, a movie, something that's happening in the culture. I'm always gleaning. So, in some sense, I'm always writing, I'm always consuming content, because you've got to deliver on such a regular basis. And I'm always looking for a better way to say something.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anything else about your... Because I love your communication. Anytime I've heard you, it's been fantastic. Anything else about a message or talk design process? How do you do that? How do you break that down?

Albert Tate: I mean, I think the simple way, which is very elementary, but it's... You look for the context. What is the Scripture saying? Is there a way for me to illustrate what it's saying? And then, I can apply what it's saying, apply it to them. And this is where the Black Church and black pastors have been so influential and so impactful. They do this better than anyone. They don't leave anything on the table with application. They bring it all the way to your neighborhood so that you can begin to see yourself in the passage. They don't leave it for you to figure out. Oftentimes, they bring it close.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would an example be? How would a non-black preacher handle it and how would a black preacher handle it?

Albert Tate: Well, in white culture what I've experienced is there's a lot of, "Here's what's happening in the text. Here's an illustration of what's happening in the text. Let's close our eyes and let's pray and consider these thoughts." You see what I'm saying?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Albert Tate: And not to be derogatory or anything. Obviously, there are phenomenal... I've been shaped by phenomenal white communicators. What I experienced and loved about the Black Church is, one guy comedically says it this way, he's talking about... He's like, "Man, in the White Church, they be talking about the Garden of Gethsemane and where it is and what Jesus was. At the Black Church, they be like, 'What's your Gethsemane? What's your place?'" You see what I'm saying?

Albert Tate: So, it's not that Jesus is just that garden, but as we live our lives, there will seasons and places where we will find ourselves sitting in that same garden. And how do we identify that? Some are you experiencing divorce right now. Some of you are experiencing a hard season in ministry right now. And you would say, "Lord, let this cup pass for me. I don't want this trial." But you're willing to say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done." Some of you are sitting in that

same seat right now. What does that mean for you? Masterful at bringing that to that personal application. And I'm not saying... I'm using generalizations, so don't email-

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I hear what you're saying.

Albert Tate: ... about, "White people do do that." But culturally, we tend to be strong on application, as well as Gospel centrality and black preachers are just phenomenal. And I mention that because in seminaries, a lot of those books, a lot of those black pastors aren't mentioned in seminaries and homiletic classes. So, it would do yourself some good to check some of those out.

Carey Nieuwhof: I had what I would consider to be a fantastic preaching professor. I learned so much, but one of the things he taught us was, "Do not do the application for your audience. Assume intelligence." And I learned within a few years... In other words, exactly what you said. White preaching, it would be like, "Here's Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. You know what to do with this. Let's pray."

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I realized early on, a few years in, people have no idea what to do with that.

Albert Tate: No idea.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is my job to say, "What is your application point?" Can you talk more about that? How do you make specific application? Do you run through a list of what people in your church or in that audience are struggling with?

Albert Tate: Yeah. Well, let's look at Jesus. Jesus uses these farming agricultural metaphors all the time. Why? Because a lot of the people he was talking to were farmers. They were people that worked out in the field. So, when he talks about seed and good ground, they immediately pull up images and they know exactly what he's talking about. So, he's bringing an application to them. You're a farmer. Don't allow the seed to get on... So, your heart need to be open. Is this word falling on good ground? So, he's giving parables that are directly applicable to the reality of their life.

Albert Tate: So, you look around in your congregation. If you've got a blue collar congregation or if you've got a really mixed... Our congregation is very diverse. So, we've got single folks, we've got married folks, we've got hundreds of college students. So, I'll talk about, "Hey, some of your biggest struggle is a failure last semester and you had a bad relationship that went bad and God is saying, 'I want to renew it this year. I want to do something new. Don't fall back into the old traps of last semester.'"

Albert Tate: So, in my sermons, I'll actually say semester, because I know that's resonating with students who are in college in my audience. I'll say, "To my single brothers

and sisters who are navigating singleness." A lot of times in church we talk about parenting, we talk about marriage. Single people are just sitting there, just hoping they can catch a nugget, "Can anybody see us here? There are single people here." So, I call them out, "Single people, you're navigating relationships, navigating community."

Albert Tate: We had a pastoral team meeting and we've got single people on our staff and I said, "I want our families to be a priority." Now here's the deal. When I say families, single people assume that I'm not talking to them. So, I have to then qualify. So I say, "Here's the vision." I said, "To my married folks, don't allow your spouse to use the ministry as an excuse for not making you first." So families first, and you're hearing it from the senior pastor. I want your family to be first. So, if you're at home and they're saying, "I got to get this done, I got to get this work done," and they're blaming them not being present on us, I want you know that's not because of us. Don't allow marriage and your family to become second.

Albert Tate: Now, they need to prioritize, they need to be organized, but a lot of spouses who work for people in ministry get frustrated with the church, because we feel like the mistress, because their husband isn't present or their wife isn't present, because they're at work. So, work becomes the deal. So, I did want to call that out. But then, so I'm having this moment with our staff and married people are grabbing each other's hands and they're like, "Yeah," and they're relating.

Albert Tate: But I got my single people sitting there looking, and I said, "And single people, your family comes first as well. And you've got community. I want to see on Instagram you hanging out with your friends. I want to see on Instagram you having a life outside of church, because just because you're single doesn't mean that you need to live here in the church. Some of you, your friends are like, 'I haven't seen you since you started working at that church.' That's not okay. I want your friends to know who you are. I want you to have relationships. I want to see you turning up on Instagram in a Godly, spiritual way. I want to see you living life and having a community and don't use the church as an excuse to isolate and not have community around you."

Albert Tate: So, that kind of application is based back to your bigger point, is based off of my audience, I know my audience, I know their tendencies. Tim Keller would say, "I know to the idols of our region. I know the idols of our..." So, I know the idols that they have the proclivity to bow down to. So, I'm calling out those idols, because I know that's what's happening in our world.

Carey Nieuwhof: Little pro tip. I just finished rereading Counterfeit Gods, and there's an appendix at the end. It's either a footnote or an appendix where he lists off all the idols. And if you want application fodder, just get that page.

Albert Tate: Oh, it's phenomenal.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is unbelievable. And he does such a great job in his communication.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I think that's what makes it specific, right? As a writer, as a speaker, when you're like, "Wow." And then you get emails, it's like, "You read my mail. How did you know?"

Albert Tate: Literally. When you go the extra mile and bring the application, people will literally be like, "How did you know? Were you on the phone? Did you get my messages?" That's why honestly, I don't like to talk to people before church, because I've had it happen before. People will talk to me before church and then they think I've inserted their stuff in the sermon, because it's so applicable to their life. They're like, "Did you..." And I was like, "No, I didn't. First of all, if you think I was thinking that... I wasn't even hearing you, because I was trying to memorize this sermon. I was trying to get this third point down."

Albert Tate: But I just, I don't communicate with a lot of people before, because I don't want anything to take away from them experiencing what God has for them and what he wants to say, and their cynicism to get in the way of thinking, "Albert, you did that because my wife talked to you or somebody said something to you."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, in a similar vein to that, and I get a lot of those conversations, emails, texts from people. It's like, "How did you know?" So, in my last book, *Didn't See It Coming*, some of the blog posts I write, some of the other stuff I do or the talks I give, I have people say to me all the time, "How did you know?" Well, one of the secrets to that is, "No, this was in my head. This was my struggle. I struggled with insecurity. I'm struggling with being the control freak. I'm struggling."

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I'll say, "Hey, you may be struggling with control or whatever," and they're, "How did you know?" And I'm like, "Well, that's actually just a brain dump out of my head." Do you ever do that as a communicator?

Albert Tate: All the time. I think that's how you really connect with people. Because I not only give the generality, but then I begin to talk about the symptoms of what it is, because I'm experiencing them. So, I know what it's like to be a control freak and I know the anxieties that come with that. I know what it's like to... So, for example, one of the big ones when I first started, I had a season where I struggled with pornography significantly. And I talked about what that struggle is and what it feels like and what it looks like. And how it shows up and how it never satisfies, but you find yourself longing and desiring and grabbing for something that really won't satisfy you, and the isolation and the loneliness.

Albert Tate: And when I began to talk about that, guys are really relating. And then the disrespect and the betrayal that the wife feels. Women, they really relate to that, because I'm telling my own story. I'm talking about my own life, so I know

what it's like. When I'm talking to pastors and I talk about the loneliness and the isolation... Most of the time at these conferences, we don't talk about that. Most people aren't platforming that.

Albert Tate: But for me, there are seasons where I felt like nobody really understands the struggle. I feel very isolated, I feel very lonely, and there are moments when you can be standing in front of thousands of people, hearing that applause, get back in your car and you feel absolutely alone and isolated, because that applause did nothing to satisfy the deepest longings of your soul. Although you gave something to God. It was all for God, it was all holy and it was all beautiful. How can you do something so holy and beautiful and then still be so empty? When I started talking about that, that relates with pastors, because I'm telling my own story.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you talk a little bit more about that, that season in your life? Because it is... I mean, I did stats recently. It's like 98% of all men on planet earth have sought out porn. Not like, "Oh, I accidentally stumbled on it," but sought it out in the last six months.

Albert Tate: Yeah. I mean, it's a huge epidemic. To be honest, Lisa Ling just did a special on CNN where she talked about just the negative effect of pornography that it does. So, the un-wiring and the reworking and the work that the Holy Spirit had to do within me was phenomenal. But the problem is not... For me, it was not pornography. It was me knowing what to do when I felt isolated, when I wanted connection, when I wanted intimacy, when I wanted... And not just sexual intimacy, when I wanted just connection. You want to feel. And what's coming out of that is, that's an easy, cheap way to feel very quickly, but that feeling fleets in a matter of seconds.

Albert Tate: So, once you've looked at pornography, you've done that, the emptiness that comes right after that is so hollow. It makes you feel worse than you did before. So, it's learning how to say, "I'm really longing for God. What does it mean for me to reach for the one I'm actually longing for? Instead of me reaching for a cheap counterfeit, let me reach for God." So, filling those moments and acknowledging, guys, you're actually longing for something real.

Albert Tate: So, it's not like you're just a... The worst thing we can do with this conversation is cheapen it and say, "You're just a perv, get it together." No, there's something deeper going on. There's something happening and you need a better way to respond to what's really happening. And what you have found is a cheap counterfeit way to respond, which is happening in other areas of culture when you look at the opioid deal and all the pills that people are taking and all the stuff. We are finding ways to numb ourselves and to cope with life. And we have found cheap counterfeit ways to do it, when God is saying, "I'm offering something real and something substantial, but you've got to come after me and not coming after cheap, quick fixes." Because God isn't cheap, he's not quick, and he's not a fix. His grace is priceless and it's not quick, it's eternal. And it's

more than a quick fix. It's a wholeness. It's a complete transformation. So, he's calling us to something deeper and you'll never get there by grabbing pornography.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, you knew that all along, right? The theology underneath that was not... That's not rocket science.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But how did you discover that? What was the process of going, "Oh, that's what this is?"

Albert Tate: Instinctually I knew, theologically I know this is bad, this is wrong. I didn't know what was happening in me. I didn't know that I'm really longing for community. So, instead of looking at porn, call your homeboy and be like, "Yo, bro. I'm struggling." This is a real thing. I got a best friend, a group of us. We'll call and we'll say, "Man, I'm struggling. Let's get together and let's hang out, let's kick it." Or they'll pray for me or I lean into my wife. Not for sex, because it's not her job to try to curb my porn struggle, but I lean in for intimacy and connection. I need to find something real and get it around me quickly.

Albert Tate: So, real friendship, real connection with my spouse or my family, or physical activity. Go play golf, get out of the house. Turn the lights on, get out of that room, go play some basketball, go for a walk, go jog, engage it. That part isn't rocket science either, but it's about knowing theologically what's happening, but even emotionally, psychologically, and biologically what's happening with me also helps me to know that... It also helps with the lies that I'm just a pervert, I'm just inappropriate, I'm just screwed, I'm a hypocrite. No, you're more than that. You've got challenges that you need to the Holy Spirit to help you work through, or may need to get some counseling.

Albert Tate: There are tools to get you there. You just got to know that this is a problem big enough that's worthy of you finding tools other than just your will power. This isn't something you white knuckle, "Oh, I'm just going to try harder." No, the Gospel isn't about trying harder. It's not about what we do, it's about resting in what Christ has done. How do I rest better in the peace and the shalom and the identity that Christ provides for me? Because right now I'm not resting. Right now I'm grabbing cheap counterfeits, and it's hurting me, it's hurting my family. Those girls on those sites, those guys on those sites that you're objectifying, they're made in the image of God. That's God's daughter, that's God's son. So, even that helps me to say, "I can't go there, because that's God's daughter." So, bringing all of that to bear helps on the road and journey to freedom.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's been such a pivotal thought for me, realization for me, when it comes to lust or porn or anything like that. That's, "Wait a minute. Everybody is made in the image of God."

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you can see the soul behind the person and the heart and the love that God has for them, it's life changing.

Albert Tate: It changes the game. It opens your eyes to see them clearly.

Carey Nieuwhof: How has your wrestling with porn and sort of... I don't know whether there's ever a victory, because temptation continues, but it's not the act of struggle it was years ago. How has that changed your marriage and your leadership?

Albert Tate: A lot of grace. What I had no idea and I think I'm still discovering, even with my wife, even in recent conversations with she and I, I'm still discovering the level of betrayal and impact that it had on her. And I just grieve that, because you're not thinking about that. There's my understanding of pornography, there's her understanding, and then there's the truth of what it really is and how do we acclimate? So, counseling and conversations and tools, because it's so present with everybody and all around. How do we navigate that?

Albert Tate: So, there's a grieving that's on a low burn now, but I think it's still... It impacted my marriage, it impacted my wife more than I realized and more than she gave voice to at the time. Partly because I'm not even sure that she was able to articulate the depth of insecurity that it tapped on. So, you've got to realize, the enemy wants to destroy us all. So, if the enemy can use me to double down on lies that he's been telling my wife and use her to double down on insecurities that he's been whispering to me, oh, man, he wins.

Albert Tate: I talk about this whole bit in Genesis, where the snake is speaking to the wife and sometimes I think we speak in the tone of the snake. We talk to the snake in a way that... I mean, we talk to the wife in a way that resonates with what the snake has been saying. So in other words, what happened with me is, the enemy was talking to my wife about insecurity, struggles with sexuality in the sense of us being intimate and sex, and I was struggling. And then pornography shows up. Well, that completely goes in line with some of the lies and some of the doubt that he's already been sowing in her. So, when I show up with that, I double down on the narrative that the snake has already been giving. And for me to-

Carey Nieuwhof: Does he really love you? Does he really care about you?

Albert Tate: Oh, just all of those insecurities and doubts. So, what I've learned is that number one, I've got to do a lot of work to lean in and to love and to reverse those lies. And as a leader, as a pastor, as a shepherd, I want to be as transparent and as vulnerable as possible, because I know many, many, many, many, many men are struggling with some of the same thing, but very, very, very, very few are talking about it and the reality of that struggle. And the more we can shine light on it,

the more we can open it up, the less strategy the enemy can implement in our lives and in our ministries.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm so grateful you would talk about that. We hadn't planned that, but Albert, just thank you.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you so much.

Albert Tate: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Talk about the pressures of leadership, because you are... I mean, we started the interview that way. You have a lot of fun, you're a fun guy. Every time I see you, you always got a smile on your face. Fun and leadership don't always go hand in hand.

Albert Tate: No.

Carey Nieuwhof: I talk to a lot of leaders who are just ground down, they're tired, they're exhausted. And that's true whether you're leading something small or large. Leadership is hard. You lead a large church. Talk about fun and leadership. What do you do in your life that's fun? What keeps at least a good amount of joy in your day to day?

Albert Tate: Well, I think my wife and my kids are amazing and hilarious, and we just have a lot of fun together intentionally. It's just really a big deal. Ray Johnston says something, pastor of Bayside up in Sacramento, California. He says a pastor's number one job is to stay encouraged, because once you get discouraged, it opens up the door for everything else. But if you can stay encouraged, it helps you as a leader thrive.

Albert Tate: One of the greatest gifts to me are a group of guy friends, that we get together, who are all pastors. And we get together in a very unfiltered way and we talk about the realities of where we go and what we struggle with, and our victories, our losses, sermon ideas. We just get together, and that community, man, I don't know how I would make it without it. And I see guys out there doing it by themselves and ladies out there doing it by themselves and living in isolation. Nobody knows what they're struggling with, no one knows their insecurities, no one knows the person on staff that they don't like, that they wish they could get off, but they can't. Or the elder that they... You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof: I do, yeah.

Albert Tate: There are some real things that are happening that they can't talk to anybody about. And I wouldn't be able to survive like that. So, God has blessed me with

some great friends that I can sit in a circle with and do life with. God has blessed me and my wife with some great couples that we can do life with and really talk about real things. We got a couple that we talk about sex and they mentor us, they pastor us, they encourage us and we hold each other accountable.

Albert Tate: If the sex count is getting low, we challenge it. Literally, this is the truth. I can show you the text message. I literally went over to the guy's house the other day. We were talking and I was like, "Man, y'all need to have sex. It's been a long time. I can just... Y'all are discouraged, y'all need to have sex. Send me a text tonight with a confirmation. It's a fireworks text of confirming that y'all have actually done it." And bro, 1:00 AM I got a fireworks text. And you know what I said? I sent back, "Amen. Praise the Lord."

Carey Nieuwhof: Amen.

Albert Tate: And then he sent me a text that says, "Hey, this week, we want to set a three times this week challenge. So, we're going to see if we can have sex three times. Are y'all in for a challenge?" I looked at my wife, I was like, "Babe, you in?" She was like, "I'm in." So, which was this week, by the way. So, that's why I'm excited.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, that's why you got the smile on your face.

Albert Tate: Oh, my God. I'm so happy. I could sing Handel's Messiah up in here, man. But a part of the key to having fun in leadership I think is accountability. I think having community around you and having a safe space to really live out loud, everyone... Someone should know everything. You shouldn't have these isolated spaces. And that's the freedom to having fun. You can't have fun if you don't have freedom. If you're living in secrecy and silence and struggling with stuff that nobody knows about, your fun is just a performance. It's just a performance. If you want to have authentic fun, you've got to have authentic freedom.

Carey Nieuwhof: How did you cultivate those kinds of relationships and that kind of dialog?

Albert Tate: Yeah, so you start slow. I'm not talking about 10 people.

Carey Nieuwhof: No.

Albert Tate: I'm talking about two, maybe three. And you're looking for kindred spirits. You're looking for vulnerability. You're looking for friends that aren't judgmental, that aren't always talking about what they have. Friends that have proven a sense of humility, friends that have proven a sense of loyalty. And friends that have just as much to lose as you do. You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Albert Tate: So, don't-

Carey Nieuwhof: So, it's a pretty equal relationship.

Albert Tate: It's a pretty equal relationship. And it's not about status, but it's just about, they get it. You know what I mean? Because this is a friend... This isn't pastoral mentor type, no, no, no. This is a circle of peers. So, whether it's a business leader or someone that knows what it's like to have employees, so that way when you're venting about employees they can give you perspective, whether it's another pastor, and it can be cultivated slowly, but it needs to be intentional. And you don't need to allow your fear of someone being disloyal or someone not being safe. Don't allow that fear to cause you to delay on building these friendships.

Albert Tate: Find a couple of guys... And here's the deal: pray about it. Ask the Lord, say, "Would you lay a couple of people on my heart, Lord, this year, so that I can build some relationships with?" And lead with it and say, "Brother, I'm going to be honest. I'm looking for some relationships where I can be vulnerable. I got a lot going on. I need a safe space. Man, are you willing to enter into that kind of relationship and just do that?" It sounds weird to say, but bro, I'm telling you, people are looking for it. Ladies, I'm telling you, people are looking for it. And they exhale and they're like, "Yeah." So, we've got guys... And we don't talk everyday. It's not like we're BFF's.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, no, no.

Albert Tate: But once six weeks or something, we send a text and we'll get together and we will just, "Oh, man, this happened and I had to let this person go." And this is the party line, but I get to give you the real of how I felt about it and how I was hurt and betrayed. What room does a pastor get to say, "That actually hurt me"? What room can we say that in?

Carey Nieuwhof: And for those people who are in ministry, I think it's a lot... There's a lot of people in the C-Suite who listen to this, both in corporate and in the ministry thing, and the problem is, you've always... And I love our elders or our board members, right? But the reality is, you have a relationship that can bear about 98% of the weight of life, but not that 2%.

Albert Tate: Nope.

Carey Nieuwhof: And because you've got that relationship where you're accountable to them or they're accountable to you. And if you're the CEO, if you're the senior pastor, you end up having the power to hire and fire everybody in your organization and you think, "They're my friend." And they are your friend, but on the other hand they also know, "You could fire me tomorrow and I'm out on the street."

Albert Tate: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I think it's that last 2% to 10% that is the vacuum in a lot of leaders' lives and they're like, "I got nowhere to go," and your spouse can't bear the weight of that.

Albert Tate: No. And I don't think it's fair to put that all on your spouse. And people have said, "Well, I tell my spouse everything." Well-

Carey Nieuwhof: She's tired of it.

Albert Tate: Yeah, because here's the thing. Sometimes I'll work through it, but she didn't benefit from the conversation that we had. So, I can say, "Hey, that thing with Jimmy, we worked it out." She's like, "Worked it out, huh? I still don't like what he said." You know what I mean? So, we at the staff party and she rolling her eyes at Jimmy, because... You know what I mean? So, it creates a dynamic there. Everyone who has a boss needs a place to be able to lament and vent some of those things.

Albert Tate: Because here's the thing for me. People say, "Well, Albert, it's just not personal. You can't take it personally." I haven't figured out how to do that yet. When people leave, it's personal. When people are upset or are dishonest or disingenuous about their experience, it's personal. When something happens bad, even if I contributed to it, it's still personal for me. And I know how to handle it professionally and I walk around and all that, but I need a room to be in where I can look around and say, "Guys, that was personal and it hurt. They left and I didn't appreciate the way they left. Or they said this, or this elder called me out on this and it was completely out of..." I need a room to say, "That wasn't cool. That hurt." And I need someone to look at me and say, "Bro, I'm sorry."

Albert Tate: Me and my friend, we got a thing, Ricky Jenkins, he's the pastor of Southwest Church in Indian Wells in the Palm Springs area. The biggest church out in that area, just doing a phenomenal job. Something will hit the fan and we're venting, and at the end, we'll just say to each other, "Man, I'm sorry." And it sounds so simple, but it is the most healing things, like, "Yes, I needed that from somewhere. I needed that. Now I can go on. I'll do what I got to do." You know what I mean? But just having someone to look at you and say, "Bro, I understand and I'm sorry."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's so good. Albert, you have talked about personality driven leadership and you have a big personality. On stage, off stage, you have a big personality. Can you talk a little bit about that tension between the personality? And that's one of the criticisms of the kind of church that you and I lead or the kind of company, is that, "Oh, that's just a big personality. It's all going to fall apart when Albert Tate isn't there anymore one day." Do you want to talk a little bit about personality driven leadership?

Albert Tate: Oh, man. It's been something that's been a challenge for me, because I do have a big personality, but the conversation hasn't helped me. To be honest, it's doubled down on insecurities with me and it's tempted me to have to shrink or shade who I am, as opposed to lean in fully to who I am. I think it creates this abusive dynamic where for me, I'm trying to fight against being personality driven, but it's my personality. So, it's who I am. So, it's not like I said, "I want it to be about me." No, nothing about me announces that I want it to be about me, but I am who I am.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, you're-

Albert Tate: And do I get to be who I am? Do I get to be on the stage and lean in fully and live out loud and to do that? And for a lot of times, I wrestled with my spiritual identity in Christ. Do I get to do that? Even the audacity to doing a podcast, who do you think you are? Oh, so you're a person now... So, you're going to do a podcast because people want to listen? So, to me, seeded in that critique, for me, it lands on some of the most insecure parts of me and it causes me to question who I am.

Albert Tate: I had to grow through the place to where, I think what people are saying is that the ministry is more than just you and if they look at our church, we've got discipleship happening, we've got a team of great other pastors, we've got other communicators that communicate great. Nothing about how we're designed or structured says it's all about the Albert Tate Show. But when people give that critique, where it lands on me spiritually is it doubles down on the insecurity that says, "Man, do I get to be me? Or do I have to be some abbreviated, shortened version of myself so that other people can be comfortable with the anointing and the call that's on my life?"

Albert Tate: Now, you can imagine where I concluded. I just said, "I've got to hear the criticism, so I don't want to dismiss it. And I want to build a ministry where I can be there or not and it still runs." And I feel like we have that. However, I do think there are some things inside of me that God wants to do on the earth for his glory and I'm humbled by that, but I want to lean into that. So yes, I want to be on the stage, I want to tell the greatest story that's ever told. I want to invite conversations through podcasts, through books. I've got something to say and I think it's worthy of an audience. And regardless of whether I have a big personality or not, I feel like God wants to do some things through me and I want to push through that.

Albert Tate: And I think there may be people out there listening that have a big personality, that feel like you got to shrink in order to fulfill other peoples' expectations. Blow right past that. Hear their critique, walk in humility, allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify you and speak. Say what God has put in you to say. Make that album, write that book, do that podcast. Don't allow the, "Who do you think you are?" question to cause you to question that. Who do you think you are? Tell them who you think you are. I'm a child of God, called by him to fulfill his purposes in

the earth for his glory. That's who I think I am, and because of that, I'm going to do it.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've mentioned it a few times in our conversation, but insecurity. How has that been a battle for you? And how are you working through that?

Albert Tate: I think it's playing down the voices of who the world says I am, who they say that I am and who God say that I am. And I feel like the insecurity deal, it shows up in all of us and it starts early. It starts on the playground in the third grade. It starts when you didn't get picked to be on the basketball team or whatever that thing is, and it just gets longer and louder. So, I feel like there's a recording tape that we've all got to just identify, name, and then begin to call out and say, "Yeah, that's an insecurity because of what happened when I was young." Or, "That's an insecurity because of the job that I didn't get." Or, "That's just an insecurity because of my size," or, "That's just an insecurity because of my color. That's just an insecurity because of this." Naming those things and saying, "Now, Holy Spirit, who I am according to you?"

Albert Tate: Yeah, I'm not the most intelligent. So, I didn't graduate from seminary. I dropped out of high school, I got my GED. So, I've always been insecure about my intellect. So, when I'm sitting in rooms... The other day I was on the stage with John MacArthur. And I was just so glad he came late, because I was like, "If this guy here is my sermon, he's probably going to release a blog and just be like, 'This is...'" You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Albert Tate: MacArthur, he's just like, "Ooh, Mufasa. Say it again. MacArthur, ooh." You know what I mean? It's like, "This dude." Anyway, I won't get in trouble about that. But when I get around people... A good friend of mine is the president of Fuller Seminary, Mark Labberton. And Mark Labberton will come and sit in the middle of my church in the third row. And to preach in front of someone that's fired homiletics teachers... You see what I'm saying? It's like, "Whoa!"

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, it's intimidating.

Albert Tate: But the Lord says, "This is who I've called you to be. This is how I've wired you, this is how I've gifted you." And to have someone like Mark Labberton come alongside and says, "Albert, that was a phenomenal sermon. Here's how it blessed me," for me to invite Mark Labberton... Here's another thing. To say, "Hey, listen to three of my sermons and give me feedback."

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow.

Albert Tate: So, that punches that insecurity in the gut. You know what I mean? It punches it in the throat. It's like, "I'm not about... The fear of insecurity to limit me. I'm about to take that fear and squash it by inviting feedback, inviting..." And he, I

mean, some of the most gracious feedback I've ever gotten in my life. And he just poured into that.

Albert Tate: So, that's how I feel like I've overcome insecurities, but how we all need to overcome them. Let's name them, identify them, and then invite the Holy Spirit to tell you the truth about who you are, where that insecurity is threatening to tell you a lie, that you're really tempted to believe. Some of us are more likely to believe the lie than the truth. To me, when I see that show up in my life, that's when I need to inundate my soul with truth so that I can know the difference between the truth and the lie that's trying to infiltrate my soul.

Carey Nieuwhof: Albert, this has been so rich. What's next for you? What are you looking at as you head into the future?

Albert Tate: So, I'm excited about, I'm launching a digital talk show called Kingdom Conversations, where I want to just sit down and have conversations, really and just invite God's kingdom in and shape culture. So, talk to people that are in the entertainment industry, everyday people, ministry people, and just talk about how the kingdom is just invading areas of their life and encourage ordinary people to trust and follow an extraordinary God.

Albert Tate: So, that's one of the things I'm working on. I have the Albert Tate Podcast. I'm finishing a book proposal, so hopefully I will have a book out in the next year or so. And another big thing, we've been talking a lot about communication, so I'm launching a preaching masterclass. We haven't even gone public yet, but by the time this comes out, probably it will be. But a preaching masterclass where we're going to invite just some masterclass faculty to come and open it up. We're going to only open it up to a small audience. We're going to cap the audience. So, we're going to invite people. So, if you hear about it, sign up if you want to come and be trained on preaching. Some of the best communicators in the country will be there and we're going to have two and a half days of intensive masterclass preaching. So, I'm really excited about that.

Carey Nieuwhof: And all things Albert Tate can be found where online?

Albert Tate: All things Albert Tate online, so @alberttate on Twitter, Instagram, social media. Alberttate.com, you can go to the website, all that kind of stuff. You can follow and see what God's doing as I lean into who God thinks I am.

Carey Nieuwhof: Albert, I'm so grateful for you. All of our time together has been so, so rich and so has this conversation. I really appreciate it. You encourage me, you bless me, and thank you so much for being on the podcast today.

Albert Tate: Carey, honored to be here and really, I'm calling my mama, call the prayer warriors off, I've been on the Carey Nieuwhof Show. I have officially made it. I've made it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Love you, man. Thanks.

Albert Tate: Love you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that was funny and rich and real and all that stuff. And guys, if you want transcripts, you can find it at CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode301. Or you could be easy way, because everybody knows how to spell my name, is to go to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com and search Albert Tate and you will find it there. Also, make sure you check out Albert's podcast. He interviewed me, we had a great conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: Later in this episode, in just a few minutes, I'll do Ask Carey and tell you a piece of advice that I got early on, like really early in high school, that I still think about all the time. And in the meantime, if you want to save some money on healthcare in 2020, go to RemodelHealth.com/Carey to get your free buyer's guide. Be one of the churches that saves now over a million dollars that they piled right back into their mission.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you are looking for a custom growth solution that will ignite what you're doing online, head on over to ProMediaFire.com/2020. They're looking for 20 churches. It's application. Not everybody will be accepted. They're going to hyper stimulate your social media, your website, all that stuff to help you reach more people in 2020. So, head on over to ProMediaFire.com/2020 to get more on that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we got a lot of guests coming up that you are going to be excited about. Carlos Whittaker, Rebekah Lyons, Larry Osborne, John Mark Comer, Jasmine Star, and so many more. That's just 2019. So, if you haven't subscribed yet, please do that. Plus you get the back archive with now over 300 episodes of just what we hope will be leadership fuel for you.

Carey Nieuwhof: And next week, I had another in-person conversation where I sat down with Steve Green, who is the president of Hobby Lobby. And this is a fascinating conversation. For those of you not only in the church world, but in the marketplace, we talked about the rise of the Hobby Lobby empire, why their retail is still growing when everyone else is shrinking and so much more. Here's an excerpt.

Steve Green: Yeah, when I was in high school, I remember one of my teachers, which was a coach, making a comment and joking about how our family, when the ashtrays filled up, we would sell our car and buy a new one as if we were affluent. And you look back and you don't see that it was being all that affluent. When I graduated high school, we had eight stores. Now, that's good, but it was not to the degree or the pressure it was today. We were still struggling at the time. As a matter of fact, a few years after I graduated and was working full-time at the business, my father thought we were going to go out of business because of the struggles in the economy.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys, that's next week. I also love the part of the conversation where I talk to Steve about why they pay their entry level workers double the minimum wage. It's just fascinating. I love it when people break models and conventional wisdom. So, that's an awful lot of fun on that one, guys. And if you subscribe, you get it all automatically.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, onto Ask Carey. And so the question this week is, "What is one piece of advice you have received that helped dramatically shape your approach to leadership?" I'll tell you exactly what it is. And I got it in high school in a really strange setting. So, I was kind of a nerdy, annoying kid in high school. And there was this TV show at the time. I'm Canadian, so this was in Canada. It was called Reach For The Top, and it was basically a trivia show for high school students.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I was on the Reach For The Top Team and they would just ask you, "Who did this work of art?" It's kind of like Jeopardy. That's really the closest analogy. And so we would practice after school, multiple times a week just with these trivia questions. And of course that's based on how much you've read and how much you know. And I was okay at it, but my coach, you know what he kept telling us? Because really what Jeopardy is and what Reach For The Top was, is you've got to come up with the answer fast. Having the right answer right after, two seconds after the other guy has the answer is not going to help you win.

Carey Nieuwhof: And so, his piece of advice was simply this, "Trust your gut. Trust your gut. Trust your gut. Trust your gut," because you look at... I'm just picking at a piece of art. You look at a piece of art and go, "Oh, that's a Picasso." And then you're like, "Well, is it a Picasso? I don't know. Is it a Picasso?" And you start to overthink it, right? And he says, "Trust your gut." He says that first instinct, that first, "Oh, I know what it is," he said that is right a lot of the time.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, in leadership, this is how it translates to my time in leadership as an adult leading organizations, churches, companies, that kind of stuff, and even in law, where you got to come up with an argument in the courtroom on the spot. I'm like, "Okay, what's your gut telling you?" And often, with something like... Let's say you're hiring somebody and you're like, "I don't know. There's something about this person, I'm not really sure." But then you talk yourself out of that and then eight months later they're leaving staff and you're like, "I knew there was something there, but I didn't know what it was." You know what that is? That's trusting your gut. Your gut is telling you something. There's something in your subconscious.

Carey Nieuwhof: Sometimes I look at, because I have a large team for this now, and sometimes we look at ideas. And of course I don't come up with all the ideas and I'm like, "Nah, that doesn't really work." Now, I'm open and I want to be open to my team. And sometimes they'll tell me things and I'm like, "Oh, you guys are absolutely right. I'm wrong." But if something seems a little bit shady or a little bit... Not that people are doing shady things, but a little bit like, "I don't think that feels like us," or "I don't think that's really us," or "No, I'm going to..." I

had an opportunity, because we have a lot of people who want to sponsor this podcast and I'm very fussy about that, who gets in and who gets on and obviously they pay to sponsor it. But I've walked away from a lot of money because I'm like, "No, they're not our right partner."

Carey Nieuwhof: And I had an incident recently where somebody wanted on the show and I'm like, "Nah." And I had my reasons, and obviously I'm not going to tell you what or who or why, but then I checked it with the team. And they're like, "You know what? You're probably right." And so, we walked away from that. And I think you just have to trust your gut.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, sometimes your gut's going to be wrong. And you're like, "Well, when it is right, when is it wrong?" I don't know. Okay? There's the reality of leadership. I don't know. I don't know when it's right, I don't know when it's wrong. But sometimes if it's ethical or moral, it's really good to err on the side of caution. And then of course if you're really not sure, you're not on Jeopardy, you don't have to press the buzzer right away, that's when you go to your team and say, "Hey, I just had this feeling about this partner, about this person we're going to hire or about this decision we're making. It doesn't feel quite right to me. What do you guys think?" And then you have a really good discussion about it. And sometimes your gut's wrong, sometimes your gut is right, but I'm still trying to lean into that first initial reaction. Trust your gut.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, that's one piece of advice that for 40 years now I've been leaning into. Hope that helps. Thanks for asking. You can submit your question on any social media channel, Instagram or Facebook or Twitter. On Instagram, I'm @careynieuwhof. Please do a follow. I'm pretty active personally there. We also share a lot of our content on Facebook and Twitter. I'm @cnieuwhof there. And leave your question. We will find it and hopefully we will feature it. So, next week we'll bring you another Ask Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks so much for listening, guys. 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.