

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 304 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before. Today's episode brought to you by our new partners, RightNow Media, and Married People. Make sure you hang on to see. They've got some pretty cool things in store for you. Also, we have an Ask Carey at the end of this show, and we got a great question this week. We've got Jay, who says, "What are the most significant tensions, status quo versus strategic change, traction versus innovation, that organizations, churches must face moving forward?" Great question. I've got an answer I'm kind of intrigued by, and also a free download for you at the end of the podcast, so listen all the way to the end.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then, my good friend Chris Lema is my guest today. Chris and I have known each other for almost, I guess the better part of a decade. He is one of the reasons, for those of you who read my blog, he designed the whole infrastructure behind my website, and has just come onboard as part of a team member over the last decade. He's somebody who got his start in the 90s in technology in Silicon Valley, and so we talk all about how to get traction online, what really matters, what really doesn't in your platform. Chris is a public speaker, a blogger, a WordPress and WooCommerce evangelist. He's a Vice President of Liquid Web. He's also the creator of one of the most innovative conferences for WordPress professionals in Cabo San Lucas, CaboPress. And for those of you who are in the WordPress community, Chris is pretty much a household name, so really, really excited to have him on the show today.

Carey Nieuwhof: And really excited about our new partnerships, too. I know you're probably always looking for content. I'm looking for content. Have you yet checked out RightNow Media? They've been dominating in their field now for a few years, and if you're looking for anything from personal care resources, to leadership training for you and your team, they are helping already more than 20,000 businesses, schools, churches, and organizations who subscribe to RightNow Media's streaming platform. What happens when you subscribe, it's kind of like Netflix, you get access to tens of thousands of videos, anytime, anywhere. That includes resources produced by past podcast guests like Henry Cloud, Patrick Lencioni, J.D. Greear, Francis Chan, Ann Voskamp. Everybody gets access for free once you subscribe as an organization.

Carey Nieuwhof: So they've even got a free trial, and here's how you can access it. Go to RightNowMedia.org/Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, and that's where you'll find a free trial. So if you're not sure, just check them out, subscribe to your free trial, and kind of go from there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then, one of the most important investments you can make as a church is in the marriages in your congregation. I know my wife worked in family law for a

number of years, and one of the reasons she's working on the book she's working on right now is by the time it gets to a lawyer's office, it's almost too late. And if you can get in on the solution side, if you can get into the side where you just help couples through some difficult times, man, you can make a huge difference. And that changes the trajectory for generations.

Carey Nieuwhof: There's a survey done, so why do most churches not do marriage ministry particularly well? Well, in 2010, a study on marriage ministry found people said, "Well, honestly, it's preachy, boring, outdated, and feminine." That's not really a shocker, but that's why you need to check out Married People. Married People is the marriage division of Orange reThink people that I have worked with for over a decade. I have known Ted Lowe, who runs Married People. And it's kind of marriage ministry 2.0, marriage ministry that actually works in today's culture. Everything they do is relevant, professional, helpful, and they flip the old model upside down. Even better is they have everything you need to start a marriage ministry from scratch, and it's so simple and done for you, you can hand it to a volunteer. You don't even need staff.

Carey Nieuwhof: So here's what you can do. They've got a special offer because you're a podcast listener, if you go to MarriedPeople.org/Carey, you'll get 30% off the annual marriage ministry resource bundle. That gives you everything you need to create an entire year of marriage ministry, so it really is marriage ministry re-engineered in the best way. So if you're passionate about families, and marriages, and the next generation, go to MarriedPeople.org/Carey. I think you'll be really, really glad you did.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, without further ado, let's jump into my conversation with my good friend, a WordPress entrepreneur, a guy who has really made a difference in the tech community, Chris Lema.

Carey Nieuwhof: Chris, welcome back to the podcast.

Chris Lema: It's great to be here.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's fun to be in your hometown.

Chris Lema: It is. It's great to have you here.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, which is, by the way, for the record, San Diego.

Chris Lema: That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Way back on episode 39, you gave a masterclass on building high performance teams, which we will link to, because that was like the first year of the podcast, right?

Chris Lema: It was, yup.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm (affirmative), which is awesome. You've also been heavily involved in the WordPress community for a decade and a half. Can you give us a quick bio, some of the things that you've done in the tech world?

Chris Lema: Yeah. I worked at a government research lab in 1993, '94, '95, '96, when we brought the internet to the world.

Carey Nieuwhof: Literally.

Chris Lema: Literally. So one of my first projects was working on a project where we multicast enabled routers, which meant video could stream over the internet.

Carey Nieuwhof: I still remember the first time I saw video playing on a computer. I'm like, "What!" It was like TVs and computers fused. It was the weirdest thing.

Chris Lema: It's crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was the mid-90s.

Chris Lema: Yeah, so I started that, I worked on that project, and I worked at a government research lab. We built the first online courseware. In those days, it was computer based training with CDs, and specialized computers. And we built, I worked with a company called Macromedia to develop something called Flash while I was at-

Carey Nieuwhof: Flash. You helped develop Flash?

Chris Lema: ... while I was at Berkeley Labs. So we were doing this collaborative thing, and we built, at Berkeley Lab, we built the first online courseware, which then, a couple years later, we introduced to a small company that became Blackboard, which is the leader in LMSs, learning management systems. We built the first version of that online.

Chris Lema: From there, I went and started several software companies, and sold most of them, and got married, and worked in a Toronto-based technology company for eight, nine years because Melissa wanted me out of the startup game. I went back and did another little startup. And now I work at a hosting company, Liquid Web, where we've built a new managed commerce offering, which allows people to do eCommerce, like you would with Shopify, but on an opensource platform that you have far more control over.

Chris Lema: So it's been a long run, and unlike people who wanted to be a travel agent, or a wedding photographer, my job didn't get disenfranchised and didn't get diminished without my doing, it just took over the world. We had no idea that

software as a service, that online applications, and the web would grow to take over every space in the world. But you can't book a trip, you can't do banking, you can't visit online church, you can't do anything without the internet and the web today, and I've just been doing it for a really long time.

Carey Nieuwhof: You and I have known each other for almost a decade, which has been great, and we've worked together. So if you've ever taken one of my courses, or read my blog, Chris is the architect behind so much of that. But we've never really talked about those early days of the internet, so take us back to 1993 to 1996. What was it like to be pioneering on video? Where did people think this was going? Did anybody have any idea?

Chris Lema: No one had any idea, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: No?

Chris Lema: Yahoo wasn't Yahoo, it was Jerry's Links, and we would go-

Carey Nieuwhof: Jerry's Links, seriously?

Chris Lema: Yeah, it was one page, and it had a set of links, and we could send links, right? So we would build a new site, and then we would send the link, and Jerry would put it on the page. It was all manually done, there were no bots.

Carey Nieuwhof: And who is that, remind me, who started Jerry Links?

Chris Lema: Jerry was one of the original Yahoo guys.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, but I'm trying to remember his last name.

Chris Lema: He was the founder. Jerry ...

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm trying to remember it.

Chris Lema: Yang, Zhang?

Carey Nieuwhof: Chinese, right?

Chris Lema: Yeah. It was amazing, right? And it was all automated. When AltaVista came out, and Excite, and several others, they were bot-driven, or computer-driven. So the first time I wanted to buy a Spider, I wanted to buy an engine that would browse the internet, and make a copy so that I could create an index of the-

Carey Nieuwhof: Now Spider, you mean like it's a web-

Chris Lema: It's a piece of software. But just think, there was a point in time where I thought I could have an index of all the websites in the world on a local computer. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's crazy.

Chris Lema: And I called the guys at AltaVista, and I said, "You sell the Spider. I'm from Berkeley Lab, I want to buy a Spider." And they go, "Yeah." I go, "How much is it?" And the guy said, "A buck fifty." I knew that it couldn't be a dollar and fifty cents, but I had no idea what-

Carey Nieuwhof: Was that 150,000?

Chris Lema: Yeah, is that \$150? Is that 150,000? And I'm a 25 year old kid, right? I have no clue. And I'm like, "You don't mean a dollar fifty cents?" He goes, "No, 1,500." And I go, "Oh, okay, well, I want to buy that so you can ship me ... " So we bought this Spider, and we started indexing the internet so that we could build some other software that we would sit on top of that. Nobody knew anything, right?

Chris Lema: And we built some of the first systems that connected to databases, right? At that time, people were putting catalogs online, all static content, right? We were building dynamic stuff, things that would change. I worked with companies like Microsoft, and Borland, and IBM because I was at the government research lab, so they would call us and say, "What's your take on this? How do you think about this?" I worked with venture capitalists to help evaluate whether that company or this other company should get funding, and what they're doing on the internet. It was crazy days.

Chris Lema: We also worked 10, 20 hours a day without blinking because it was fun. We were just doing things that people thought couldn't be done, and on top of which we were doing, so it was fun to keep trying. Then you'd get little bugs in software that you couldn't track down, and nobody had told you how to track down because nobody had stepped in that space. So then we'd be there for three days. And thank God Berkeley Lab had a shower. But it was like, "We're just not going home until we figure this out." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. So take us into the mind of 25 year old Chris, programming all this stuff. Where did you, at that time, think it was going?

Chris Lema: We honestly had no clue. We thought about it as could we build business software? I was a precocious 25, 26 year old. Could I build business software in a browser rather than the way we delivered software at the time? At the time, you installed software on every computer, which meant if you wanted-

Carey Nieuwhof: It was still floppy disks, wasn't it?

Chris Lema: Yeah. If you wanted to change software, you had to go to every computer and change it, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: And if you happened, you were running Windows at the time and you put a floppy disk in to update software, if the current device drivers, the little bits of software that go with the software to work with the hardware, if those DLLs were in use at the time, then you couldn't replace them with the ones you were doing. So then you'd get into this nightmare where the software was kind of updated, but not really updated.

Chris Lema: So we had this idea, like couldn't we build web software? And more than one venture capitalist, more than one technologist who were known in their space would say stupid things like, "You can't build an office inside an elevator." What they meant was, you can't build what is software inside a browser, the browser has no connectivity.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah, chain.

Chris Lema: Right. So they're like, "You can't do that." And we were young enough, and dumb enough to go, "I think we can." And so we did, we started building web-based applications in 1996, '97, '98. And those things, that's how I left the lab was one of the venture capitalists and one of the startup companies came over and said, "Just bring that out, and let's go build this for a real company and make a lot of money," because we had demonstrated, you could build applications in a browser.

Carey Nieuwhof: What was that first web-based application?

Chris Lema: We built a task management system for distributed teams, particularly software engineers that was process oriented. And we sold my first clients, which again, it's crazy now, you think about it, my first client was Bank of America, and my second client was Shared Medical Systems. We built software that a small team of three or four of us spent a lot of time on over several weeks, and then we sold it for \$350,000. And you're like, "What just happened?" That's crazy, right? Then we sold it again to Shared Medical Systems, and we sold it again to another. Then a company wanted to come buy us, and we're like, "Yes, sell. Sell now!"

Carey Nieuwhof: So you got your first buyout.

Chris Lema: We did, we sold the company.

Carey Nieuwhof: You sold the company.

- Chris Lema: We sold the first one, and we built another piece of software that was for wireless, selling wireless plans to companies, all business to business. And we built that up in a year and a half, and then another telecommunications company came over and said, "We want to buy it," so we sold that one. Then we started, and we just kept doing it.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Serial entrepreneurship.
- Chris Lema: Just one after another, where people said ... Like when we built that telecommunications expense management, the term telecommunications, expense management didn't exist. We had to spend a lot of time with Gartner, the industry analyst, to suggest that it should exist, because it used to be done by people, and now we had built software that automatedly did it. Right? And we built all these bots and automations that would find and track expenses, and analyze them, and determine that something-
- Carey Nieuwhof: So almost like a precursor to Expensify or that kind of thing.
- Chris Lema: Yup, but more complicated because it was tapped into AT&T Telco bill, not someone's expense reports.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Oh wow.
- Chris Lema: We had customers like AMD, Intel, Hilton, where they had a million dollar Telco bill a month. Right? Then we were analyzing it to go, "Oh, AT&T charged you 200,000 for something that you shouldn't have been charged." Right? We were building the bots that analyzed this.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Man.
- Chris Lema: So every time we did something, they said, "No, you can't do it." And when you're young, you're like, "I'll show you." And we did it. Then because we had done enough in that early round, we would do discovery and figure out things, we could then sell the company to someone bigger who said, "I value the work you've done. I value the R&D you've done. I value the customer development that you've done, so I'll just buy it and take it from there," rather than them trying to do it. Right? We did that several times in a row, and it was a lot of fun.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. So you're talking to pretty much all of the leaders listening will have some kind of web presence, whether that is a personal Instagram, or obviously Facebook, or that kind of thing, or TikTok, but obviously a lot of leaders, because it's a leadership podcast, are trying to get a voice on the web, try to show up. So you and I have tracked for the last decade. What has changed over the last decade in getting a message out online? You helped me build my first blog back when it was a few thousand a month, not a half million.

Chris Lema: Yeah. It's changed dramatically, right? What we would have said five years ago, "Just do this and it'll work," today, it's very different. What we know is that Facebook has their own agenda for what they're going to surface, what articles they're going to bring to light, and that surfacing algorithm is tied to how they're generating revenue, not just being generous to every person who writes and shows it. In fact, not only do they have a surfacing algorithm, you have to pay to get your content to surface on greater-

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, if you're an organization-

Chris Lema: If you want your content to show up on more people, even people who have liked you, you end up having to pay to promote the post to get broader viewership. Those avenues, places where you do Facebook ads or Facebook promotions, or anything else, those have all changed the nature of discovery, right? Google and YouTube continue to be the main dynamic for discovery, but they have also changed. Right? So how you write, how you title, how often and how consistent you write, those things used to be things that you were like, "Oh, kind of important." Now they're paramount.

Chris Lema: A pastor or a leader, a technology leader, a church leader, any kind of leader can't just write a post and expect it to go viral. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Is it harder now than it was five years ago?

Chris Lema: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: I thought so, because even with our content, we've had to switch strategies a number of different times to keep getting through to the people who want to hear from you.

Chris Lema: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right? It's not like they don't want to hear from you, if you trust Facebook or Instagram with it.

Chris Lema: No, they clicked because they wanted to hear from you, and Facebook still holds it back. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Chris Lema: So publishing on your own website versus publishing somewhere else. What we saw over the last couple years is we saw this dramatic thing that now has played out where Facebook told the world, and they were wrong, and they may have been intentionally or unintentionally lying, but Facebook told the world that the engagement they had on videos native to the Facebook platform was 900%

more than YouTube. So what happened? Everybody shifted to Facebook. Turns out, those weren't the real numbers. They weren't right at all.

Carey Nieuwhof: I didn't know that.

Chris Lema: Yeah. So everybody left YouTube and went to Facebook to win at this game. Right? And whole websites, whole media sites, who were growing on YouTube, just disappeared off the face of the planet because it turned out those ... Again, part of the thing is, leaders, they have a gut instinct. And so let's say you posted something on Facebook, and it said you had 9 billion people look at it, you'd be like, "That seems unreasonably high." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, there aren't quite that many people on the planet.

Chris Lema: Yeah. Like, "I think we'd have to be terraforming other planets for this to make sense," right? Yet what happened was, and this is true of most leaders, we have an incredible ability to lie to ourselves, right? So what happens is, not nine billion, but let's say you post a video on YouTube and you get 200 views, and then you post it on Facebook and you get 2,000, and you think, "Yeah, I'm popular," instead of, "Hold on a second. Is this really what's happening?"

Carey Nieuwhof: So was that jacked a little bit?

Chris Lema: It was.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Chris Lema: It was jacked, and it was wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof: We know that?

Chris Lema: We know now. We know that it was wrong. Right? And yet, what that meant was we have to hold all of those stats and data points with really loose fingers, because they have their own agendas, whoever it is, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, whatever. So today, it's harder than ever. It still doesn't mean it's impossible, because the truth is, there's a ton of content, and most of it's not very good. So if you are consistent, and you are producing quality content, you're not copying someone else, you're bringing your voice to the world, and you're bringing it consistently, and it's good, I think you can surface that up.

Carey Nieuwhof: Interesting, because you and I started working together in 2012, when I wanted to start blogging, and in those days, the internet was pretty flat, right?

Chris Lema: Yup.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like content went viral because 100 people read it, or 1,000 people read it, or 100,000 people read it. And a lot of the reason I can even do this today is back in 2012, 2014 when I launched this podcast, it was flatter, and you could get your message out a lot easier. And now, I mean, I've gotten the most traffic I've ever had, but we've had to switch strategies, we've had to pivot numerous times. In 2018, when Zuckerberg sort of announced to the world that, "Hey, Facebook has got too much company on it, too much content on it. We want to make it go back to the friends and family site," I saw my Facebook referral traffic drop 75 to 80% overnight. And there were internet businesses, Facebook businesses that went out of business, like literally in two months they were out of cash and out of this.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I switched to an email strategy because I had been building a list for a little while, and we're at all time records and 40% growth year over year, blah, blah, blah, whatever. But that is harder and harder to do all the time. And right now, I think I have an incumbent advantage, in that when you start with a half million or a million people, it's pretty easy to keep going with those million people if you can figure out how to find them.

Carey Nieuwhof: But talk to someone who wants to get the word out. You and I just did a breakout at a conference here in San Diego, and that was one of the questions was like, "If I'm starting today, not in 2012, listeners want to start a podcast, some people are publishing books, they want to get it out there." Other people are like, "Well, I want to be an influencer on Instagram." Or, "We just actually want our sermons to get watched more, or our website to get visited more." What are some tactics that you would advise the first-timer or the person getting started to use today?

Chris Lema: Invariably, we are people who we look left and we look right. Right? We look at what someone else is doing, and you're going to end up trying to borrow someone else's strategies and tactics on your site, and my first recommendation is just don't do it. Just don't.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Chris Lema: Right? Because they don't have your audience, they don't have your downloads. So if they copy you, it's a recipe in not getting the same results, and they get frustrated. Right? Because we just see, "Well, this is what Amazon does. I want to build a site like Amazon." Or, "This is what Carey's training does. I want to copy." And you're like, "Well, it's not the same context," right?

Chris Lema: So the first thing you have to do is stop looking left and right. Right? You're going to start where you are, start by building something small, and start building it successfully. So the first thing is don't look left and right. The second thing is make it fast. Right? Make it load fast, make it load lightning fast. So that means you're not going to go overkill on how beautiful it is, you're not going to go overkill on how big the photos are, you're not going to go overkill on

anything, like all the JavaScript little add-ons that you want to do, or the plugins you want to introduce. Don't do it, right? Because you're trying to add little things that make it more exciting. The chief driver to Google saying that you're customer friendly, and now more so with mobile, is how fast it takes to load up your site.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're talking load speed. In other words-

Chris Lema: I'm talking about 2.2 seconds. 2.2. The average site is loading in seven seconds. It's loading in seven seconds because they put all these super big photos on, and it takes a while to bring them down, right? So you start doing something, and you're like, "I want a beautiful blog, really, and I want videos, and I want that." And you're like, "Whoa, hold on a second." Find yourself a technology partner who can help you get down below two seconds, because if it loads up in a second, Google will say, and especially if it loads up well for mobile in less than a second, Google will give you a good score, and it will surface it online. If you're not being found by Google, you're not being found period, right? So the second thing is, focus on performance. Focus on it, get someone who can help you with that, before anything else.

Chris Lema: The third things, which you know, is the content has got to be ... Now, you can't tell someone the content has got to be amazing, but also, produce consistently. Because they're like, "Wait, no, it takes me six weeks to produce something amazing, and then I can only do that once every two months." You're like, "No, no, no." It doesn't have to be six weeks good, it has to be half a week good. But if it's a half a week good, it's two posts a week, every week for the next 50 weeks, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, some of that, going back to the 90s, like that entrepreneurship that got you and your 20-something friends saying, "I think we can build this," I'm sure that wasn't the most perfect software in the history of humanity.

Chris Lema: Nope.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right?

Chris Lema: No. In lots of cases, it was the cheap version of what an enterprise company would do. We just cut corners.

Carey Nieuwhof: You were young, you were hungry.

Chris Lema: We cut corners, and we just said, "We're going to prove that it's possible." And a lot of times, what we attracted, in terms of people who bought our companies, we attracted visionaries who saw a V-1, and extrapolated what a V-10 was, right? My particular background wasn't that I was the greatest programmer, I wasn't the most amazing developer, but I'm a storyteller.

Carey Nieuwhof: You are.

Chris Lema: So I would craft the story into the product, and I would say, "If you've had trouble with this, if you struggle with this, if you've done this, people said this couldn't be done, here it is." And they went, "Oh my ... You've done that, which means you could probably do ... " and they would list all the things they saw, and we'd go, "Yes, eventually. Not yet, but eventually." And they'd go, "Okay, I'm going to buy the whole company." We embedded the story into the product, right?

Chris Lema: But we didn't build the whole thing. We didn't build the version 10 that we wanted. We built the version one that we were embarrassed of, but we got it out the door. So you got to not look left and right. You got to focus on performance, you got to create quality content, useful content, and you got to just hit publish, you got to get it out the door. Because I know, I have a buddy of mine who is an executive at a software company, he has 28 posts, all in draft. He has two posts published.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh man.

Chris Lema: That's a useless website.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: I love my friend, but it's a useless website. It'll never be found by Google. It'll never be found by anyone until his mom looks at it. Right? When he posts that link on Facebook, he'll get a couple people to click the link, and that's it. But he has 28 posts that are in draft because I want to make it a little better, I want to make it a little better.

Chris Lema: And you and I both know, right? Waiting to make it a little better, it'll never get published.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup. Perfectionism is the enemy of progress. How do you know when it's good enough or not good enough? That is something so many leaders struggle with, because I think we do live in an age where design is so important, and where everyone's like, "Oh, we can make it better. We can make it better." I'm a believer, as you know, because we work together on minimum viable product, but where is that line?

Chris Lema: I always use Wikipedia as a reference. Every person I know has looked up stuff on Wikipedia. Nobody I know has ever said, "Wikipedia would be so much better if it had a blue border, a left navigation, images in the thing." You're like, no.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's kind of ugly, isn't it?

Chris Lema: It's ugly. And it's lightweight. But it loads up fast, and it gives you answers. Right? So my general take to people is build it like Wikipedia. Build it lightweight, build it fast, build it useful. If you're helpful, you're going to be in a good spot. Right? You're going to be in a good spot.

Chris Lema: So if you write sermons, which we've both lived in that world, there was a point in time where we were like, "I have a six point sermon," right? Then eventually, we got to a point where we were like, "I have one main point. I may have some little flourish to it. But I have one main point." What I tell folks when they're writing a blog post is write one main point. You don't have to write the whole novel in the blog post. Write one useful point, put a little story around it, make sure people can connect to it and get the aha. Then if you have another one, you're like, "Oh, I could put it in here too." Really? Write another post in three days.

Carey Nieuwhof: For another day.

Chris Lema: Yeah. The internet is going to just keep accepting what you're writing. You don't have to write the novel on day one.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you're doing video, I mean, people are like, "I got to buy an expensive kit. I've got to ... " Like I've had Sean Cannell on here before, who I'm sure you know. What would you say for video?

Chris Lema: I was going to say start really simple. If you have a computer that you bought in the last couple years, it has a webcam on it. Make sure that you have lighting. But the most important part to the video is not video, it's audio. So spend a little bit of money on a microphone that actually works, plug that microphone into your computer, hit record, and capture it. You don't have to get super fancy. You have to develop an audience.

Chris Lema: The same way you were talking about you're collecting this audience on the web, and so on your website, that goes into your email list, then you can send an email to the email list that says, "Hey, I just published another YouTube video." Then you're not asking for Google or YouTube to surface you. You're sending it to your audience, right? They click on it, which drives that number of links, the number of likes on the thing, and then that surfaces up higher.

Chris Lema: So collecting the email, building that list is critical, but also, just publish, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: Just get in the habit of publishing. People would say, "How do you write every day?" There was a period of three years where I wrote every single day.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, you did, you wrote every single day.

Chris Lema: And they go, "How do you do it?" And I go, "Well, I have conversations every day. Right?" I don't wake up in the morning and go, "I've run out of words." Right? So it's a discipline thing. You get up and you write. I would tie that discipline of writing to a certain part of my day when I knew that, "Okay, I'd taken a nap, I'm freed up, it's before dinner time, I have an hour and a half. This is when I write. And I know I'm not going to go into the dining room and eat until this blog post is done." Sometimes you're really hungry, you're like, "I'm going to get this thing published. It may not be the best version of whatever I had, but I'm going to hit the publish button, and I'm going to go back to dinner."

Carey Nieuwhof: And for me, for years, that was 6:00 AM, before it became my day job. You know, and on the minimal viable product, too, I mean, here we are, I have my mobile recording setup, so I have a really good \$500 microphone in my home studio. This is a \$79 microphone that I'm recording on. You're on a \$79 microphone, and the cables don't even match, and I'm recording into the laptop on really expensive software called GarageBand. And you know what? Most listeners will have no idea. And we also have Toby, who's a great producer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, that's good. What are some rookie mistakes people make in getting the word out when they want to get the word out online, whether that's video, audio, website, social?

Chris Lema: I think what ends up happening is people quit before the magic happens, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Chris Lema: They're like, "I published. I published a YouTube."

Carey Nieuwhof: Two people came.

Chris Lema: "And no one came, right? And so now I'm done with it." And you're like, "None of us in our day jobs quit that soon. Right? In everything we do, we're like, "Okay, let me collect some feedback, let me make it a little better, let me tweak it. Let me get better and better." Right? And yet, when it's something we don't understand, this new technology space that maybe not every leader is comfortable with, they do it once, and then like, "I'm out of here."

Chris Lema: The other mistake that people make is they assume that every network is the same. LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, they're not the same.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. So you use buffer, and you're like, "Publish to all sites."

Chris Lema: Publish to all. They're not the same. The messaging ... So I have an Instagram account. My Instagram account, which I don't know if you've ever seen-

Carey Nieuwhof: It's 98% cigars.

Chris Lema: It's all cigars.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Chris Lema: That's it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, I was close.

Chris Lema: Yeah, it's all cigars. I think maybe one photo on there is me and my family. Everything on that Instagram account is cigars. Why? Because cigars are photogenic, right? The people who I want to know what I'm smoking, that's where they go to look. I don't post that much of cigars on Facebook. Facebook is family, Facebook is vacation. Twitter is where I talk about WordPress and startups, and technology. And LinkedIn is where I publish long form research, and content, and even our podcast episode on eCommerce. Every one of the networks is different. They have different audiences, they interact differently.

Chris Lema: When you just do the, "I put it somewhere," and you don't understand the platform, and you don't understand what makes the platform work, you're going to get easily frustrated, and then you're going to quit. Right? So don't quit, keep pursuing it, and understand that different platforms function different ways and have different audiences, and so your call to actions are going to be different, and how you interact with them is going to be different. You just have to go into it knowing that.

Carey Nieuwhof: How is a call to action different on each platform?

Chris Lema: For example, I coach a buddy of mine who had never used LinkedIn before, and I said, "I want you to write ... " I gave him some topics, "These are topics you should write on. I want you to write them on your website, put the blog post on your website. Now I want you to take 90% of that post, and I want you to go put it in LinkedIn, and I want you to write it natively in LinkedIn."

Carey Nieuwhof: Natively.

Chris Lema: Right, natively in LinkedIn.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which means you're cutting and pasting, or you're directly-

Chris Lema: You're cutting and pasting into there.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's not like, "Hey, I got this new post. Click."

Chris Lema: Nope. Then you're putting most of the content in there, then you put in the end, the link that says, "Hey, this was originally posted here. And to get the big aha," or, "to get the big takeaway, click here," which then people would read, and the

call to action was finish the article. Right? Or read the rest. So then they go to the website. Well, on the website, at the bottom of that website, was a, "Do you want to work with us? Here's a form to fill out." And all of a sudden, he's going, "I'm getting leads from LinkedIn." I go, "Right." He goes, "But I post the link to my blog posts on Twitter, and no one comes." And you're like, "Right, because people didn't go to Twitter looking for someone to hire for what you do."

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: But people go to LinkedIn looking. That's why the topics that we put in LinkedIn were the topics that people would look for when they're looking to hire someone, which is different than the topics you put on Twitter. Right? So you have to think through who is coming, and what problems they're trying to solve when you publish, and how you drive that call to action when you publish on different platforms.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup, and I'd find totally different audiences. I spoke at South by Southwest last year, I'll be back in 2020. If you're a 25 year old male, or a 30 year old male entrepreneur, you're on LinkedIn. That's where you hang out. So it really depends on your audience, too.

Chris Lema: It's also incredible for 48 to 65 year old men.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ah, when looking for that final job.

Chris Lema: It's amazing. Well, or they're looking, they're the owner of a company, and they're looking for a vendor. Because they look at Facebook, and they go, "That's for kids." Right? They look at Instagram, then they're not on it. They look at Twitter and they go, "I don't get it. It's just a bunch of yelling." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: It is.

Chris Lema: You're talking to a 60 year old executive who the only network he's ever been on is LinkedIn, and you say to him, "Hey, we need to hire a guy who does our Facebook ads." He doesn't go to Google, he doesn't go to YouTube, he doesn't go to Facebook or Instagram. He goes to LinkedIn, and he searches for this. Then, here comes my buddy's article, and then he goes, "Oh yeah, contact this guy." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Chris Lema: It's a completely different ball game.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's interesting, because I think Facebook is, what, 70% women?

Chris Lema: Correct.

Carey Nieuwhof: There are about, I don't know ... and if you're thinking about who to reach, even at your church, if you're a church leader, you're looking for men. Men tend to use LinkedIn.

Chris Lema: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And most churches completely ignore it.

Chris Lema: Ignore it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Any advice for a church leader that wants to get started on LinkedIn? What would you put there?

Chris Lema: Don't ignore it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Don't ignore it, great, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Chris Lema: Don't ignore it, and be helpful. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Like dumping your sermons on there, probably not going to help.

Chris Lema: No, dumping your sermons not going to be helpful. But be helpful. Think about, if you walked into ... The best example I could give you is let's say that you're going through an airport, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup.

Chris Lema: Most leaders, executives fly a decent amount for their job. So you go, "Great," you're in an airport, and you walk into a United Club, or an Admiral's Club, or the Delta's Club. You walk in the club, you sit down, there's a gentleman sitting next to you. What's the conversation you have with him? You don't know each other, you're strangers, but you both fly, you're both business people, you're both roughly in the same demographic, and you look at the guy and you're like, "How's it going?" Where are you flying to? What are you up to?" Then he says, "What do you do?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup, within the first two minutes.

Chris Lema: And when he says, "What do you do?" You likely don't say, "I'm the CEO of company name." That's silly. You're like, "This is what I do. This is how I help the world." Right? So right after you say that, what does he do? He normally says something like, "You know, I have a buddy of mine who needed something like this. His question was blah, blah, blah." And you're like, "Oh, I can give you advice for your buddy." Take that content that you just were about to spew out, advice for your buddy, go and write the post inside of LinkedIn, and immediately

you're going to see people who are like, "Oh, this is so helpful, this is good. Okay, how do I reach you? Because I need whatever it is you're offering." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a great thought, yup. And it's a totally different strategy that a lot of people are missing, owners of local businesses, church leaders, et cetera, et cetera. Best practices that you see as we head into 2020 on social? You've hinted at a few already, but what do you-

Chris Lema: Consistency is a big deal, but I would tell you that video is coming up in the same way that ... I mean, you got to write content, for sure, but it used to be that video was secondary because of who was going to look at it, and because of the fact that all you could get was certain tags and certain URLs. But the truth is, now machine learning is getting to a point where they can automatically create a transcript of a video, they can automatically tag it, they can automatically know what kind of content is in that video, and they can determine to surface it for certain kinds of people. So the fact that all of that is now possible mean you probably need to start looking at a video strategy too.

Carey Nieuwhof: What about content length? I mean, my perception, we talked about this before we started recording, is that the middle is disappearing, and that content is getting longer and shorter at the same time.

Chris Lema: Exactly right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Is that it?

Chris Lema: Exactly right. So do something in two minutes, do something in 20 minutes, and do something in two hours. But doing something in 40 minutes is never going to be helpful, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: So 40 minutes may work at church, but it's not going to work online.

Chris Lema: It might, but it's not working in the rest of the world. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: And I would tell you that it doesn't always work at church, too, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, you better be good.

Chris Lema: There are people who are pulling out cellphones in the middle of your talk, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Chris Lema: And you're like, "Oh, I guess it didn't work as well." But good 40 minutes could be awesome, right? But you look at the Joe Rogan podcast, right? And how many people are listening for more than an hour?

Carey Nieuwhof: Two and a half hours. And he posts like two or three times a week, and it's the number one podcast in the world.

Chris Lema: Yeah, so we know that people can go long. We also know that people have commutes, right? 13 minutes, 15 minutes. If you have a 20 minute podcast, they can hear it on their way to work, right? But nobody wants to go, "Oh, I have an ebook length," or, "I have a novel length podcast that I can almost get done, but not really get done." No, forget it, I didn't hear it. So getting it under 20 minutes. Also, creating the two minute version.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: Right? Get the two minute version on all the platforms, publishing wherever you want, and say, "Come get the rest right at ... " and bring them right back to wherever you-

Carey Nieuwhof: Almost like IGTV, right?

Chris Lema: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You can post a 60 second clip, 60 second clip, and then flip over to IGTV.

Chris Lema: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Okay, you and I have done some courses together, so we have a lot of alumni here for The High Impact Leader, Church Growth Master Class, or The Art of Better Preaching. We've launched a few things together, Chris has also been the generous architect behind my blog, if you're one of the people who access my content. I want to talk about minimum viable product.

Carey Nieuwhof: So many people who are listening are leaders who are like, "Oh, one day I hope to do my own online course, or launch my podcast. But Chris, it's got to be perfect. I need, first of all, thousands of dollars for production, I need a killer design, I need all that. That's going to make me successful." What is a minimum viable product when it comes to launching your own?

Chris Lema: You need a decent light, which could be a light bulb, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: A lamp, right.

Chris Lema: Because you can get a light bulb and put a little diffuser on it, and you can get a diffuser for next to nothing. So you need a light bulb, take the lampshade off,

and put a little bit of diffuser on it so that it's not a glaring spot on your face. You need a light bulb, you need a clip on mic that can run to your iPhone or to your computer. You need one, if not two cameras. But those cameras today can be iPhones, right? You don't need to go buy fancy Sony gear, although I love Sony's Alpha cameras and they do great video, but you can do it with your iPhone, especially if you have a newer one. Shoot the video. If you're like, "But I don't know how to sync two video streams together," right before you start, turn everything on, clap really loudly, that'll create a time signature that you can sync everything up to, but that's it. Right?

Chris Lema: You can shoot one video that is close to your face, and one that is getting most of your body. You have two, just because we get bored. So if you, once in video post-process, if you can just jump between the two regularly, you're also going to want to put probably some notes of what you just said on the wide angle shot where you have some open space next to you, but that's it. You're literally talking about two iPhones, a clip on mic, and a light bulb. That's not perfection, right?

Chris Lema: What you need to make sure is that your content is helpful. If you make sure your content is top notch, the rest of the production is not that big a deal. And then you're going to need a technologist who cuts it up, puts it together, and puts it into courseware of some sort. Right? Online.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, which you can outsource fairly economically.

Chris Lema: Which you can outsource, right? And you can outsource the post-production as well, right? Most of the time, people want to build the best course ever, and they want to build the course that they took from someone else, right? So they went to Pat Flynn's, or they went to Michael Hyatt's. Let's say you go to ... and Michael Hyatt's awesome, and you've interviewed him. You go to Platform University, and you log in, or Pat Flynn, you go in, and you log in, and you see these things. You're like, "I want that." And you're like, "Just to be clear, that was not Pat Flynn's V1."

Carey Nieuwhof: No.

Chris Lema: That was not Michael Hyatt's V1, so let's back up a second. Right? Let's get you a V1. Just validate.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you help 100 people with it, fantastic.

Chris Lema: Yeah. And those 100 people will give you enough confidence to do a V2 or a V3. When we were launching your course, we did three successive launches over the course of several weeks. We did a launch for a week, we waited a few weeks, we did a second launch, we waited a few more weeks, we did a third launch. In each of those launches, we added more features.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup.

Chris Lema: Right? But we didn't launch with all the features in the first one. Now, several years later, when we go to launch, it has even more features, and people are like, "Oh, look at all that." But that's not how we started. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh no, we started with a very minimum.

Chris Lema: We started with the most minimal. And we had things like, "Here's our onboarding." We routed people to an onboarding page after they bought, and it just said, "Here's what to do," and the bottom was, "Just call us." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: Because you're like, "Who knows if this is all going to work." And some things didn't work, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: And they called, and then we fixed it, and we kept moving. But the money that came in on that first launch made us very clear we were going to do a second, and between the first two, we were very clear we were going to add some more energy to the third. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Lema: That's what iterations do. They allow you to get market feedback. They allow you to make another iteration of it. And they allow you to invest where money is coming in versus investing all before any money comes in.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. You know, that's a really good point, because I think that's where people get into trouble. It's like, "I need \$50,000, so I'll never get \$50,000." Or you take your life savings, and you pour it into a product that didn't help anybody, and next thing you know, your marriage is in trouble because you just took your life savings and you threw it into something that ...

Carey Nieuwhof: And the internet, here's a theory I have, and I've never tested this with you. I always say the internet doesn't lie. Do you agree?

Chris Lema: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: What does that mean to you?

Chris Lema: Except Facebook.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, Facebook lies.

Chris Lema: Facebook clearly lied.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, okay.

Chris Lema: But I think what you mean, and what I agree with is-

Carey Nieuwhof: Feedback.

Chris Lema: ... market feedback is market feedback. There is no way to sugarcoat it.

Carey Nieuwhof: If there's nobody listening to your messages, you probably need to improve your preaching.

Chris Lema: Well, we say it, right? You're not a leader if there's no one following.

Carey Nieuwhof: Correct.

Chris Lema: Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah.

Chris Lema: You can be like, "Well, I'm a leader, and I'm a leader." No, you know what? I'm looking behind you. There's nobody there. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Chris Lema: The way in which we know who leaders are is because we see where the crowds hang out, and we just go look. Right there, there's a leader. And they're like, "Oh, they don't have a leader title." Yeah, I don't care what title they have. That's a leader because there's a crowd listening. That's a leader because people are being influenced. That's a leader.

Chris Lema: So how do you do it? You put it out there, and you see is there a market response? Is there feedback? Is there something that says, "I love this. I want more?" You and I have probably each read books that we love so much that we've said, without reading the jacket cover, if that guy or gal writes another book, I'm buying it sight unseen.

Carey Nieuwhof: Automatic.

Chris Lema: Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I got a handful of people.

Chris Lema: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's just whatever they do, I buy.

Chris Lema: Whatever they do, I'm going to buy it. Well, the truth is in today's world, you don't have to be a famous author to have that kind of audience. I have people who will say, "Whatever you're doing, whatever event, wherever you're speaking, whatever conference you're running, just let me know. I'm there. I don't care what the price is, I'm there." And you go, "Right, okay, that's feedback."

Chris Lema: I've also done things where like I wrote a post about a book I was going to write, and I said, "Hey, I'm thinking about writing this book." I've written several ebooks, and I was going to write this other ebook, and I said, "Who wants it? Just give me your email if you're interested, and I'll email you back." And I think at the time, I had 10,000 people who were on the email list, right? Six people were interested. I did not write that ebook. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, exactly.

Chris Lema: Clearly, out of this list of my audience, they were like, "Well, that's nice that you do that, but that's not interesting to me."

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I used to have two podcasts, and the other one had a lot of downloads. I think it's still up there on the internet. But it has over 100,000 downloads, which is amazing. But when I was trying to decide whether to keep doing it, I looked at it, and I thought, "Oh wait. That's two weeks on my other show."

Chris Lema: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: So it took me 18 months to get to 100,000, or two weeks on this show. I'm like, it makes more sense for me, rather than trying to manufacture energy, and there's no guarantee. Like everything, Michael Hyatt, and he's a friend, he's a super guy, he'd be the first to tell you, everything he tries doesn't work.

Chris Lema: That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you kill the stuff that doesn't work, and you throw more fuel behind the stuff that is connecting.

Chris Lema: I love having friends who are editors, or film producers, or anyone like that, because they have developed a capacity for chopping things up and throwing things away, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah, and it's so hard.

Chris Lema: And an editor is really great at it, a film producer, post production, any of those people. They have to make decisions all the time, and most of the effort they do

is they take things away, they throw things away, they cut it off. And all the rest of us are like, "This is so hard." And it's been a journey of more than 15 years of learning how to not get my emotions attached to what I produce, to just literally produce it.

Chris Lema: When I hand it to someone else, and I go, "Here's an ebook I just wrote," or, "Here's a white paper I just wrote," or, "Here's a video I just recorded," here's whatever, and I say, "Do whatever you want with it, I'm not attached." Right? Like I just turned in something at work, and they rewrote it completely. They wanted to go with a different audience, and I didn't care at all. Right? Because you have to develop that discipline that says, "Hey, once it's out, the harder job is not producing, the harder job is not creating. The harder job is editing. The harder job is taking things away." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: Sincere, the word sincere was a artist term for sin, S-I-N, meaning without, and cere meaning wax. And when they would make a bust, the difference between the bust that ... you know, the nose would break off, and then you'd put wax in, and then you'd stick the nose back on, or you'd break an ear off, and then you'd put wax and put the ear back on. Only the sincerest art, the art that had no wax, that's what it means.

Chris Lema: Well, the truth is, it's very, very hard to create a perfect bust without any wax. And often, we create these big monstrosities of things, and someone else has to come in and go, "Nope, chop, chop, cut, cut, chop, chop, put a little wax, fix this thing," and then go, "Here's what it is."

Carey Nieuwhof: And the internet does that for you.

Chris Lema: It does.

Carey Nieuwhof: It gives you market research, because-

Chris Lema: Real time feedback.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... you've spent 100 hours on this one thing, and like three people checked it out. And not all of that is SEO optimization. Like, at the end of the day, sometimes people just aren't interested.

Chris Lema: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, a couple more questions, Chris. One of them is, "A lot of the leaders listening wear two hats. They wear a personal hat, "I'm Chris Lema," but you're also the VP of Product Development or whatever at Liquid Web. Right?"

Chris Lema: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm the CEO of my company and the founding pastor of our church. When you talk about an online platform, talk about ... because I think the instinct is, "Oh, I want to make the church do well," or, "I want to make the company do well," or, "I want to get the company's names out there." Do people follow organizations or do people follow people? What is that tension? And how do you manage that between being the senior leader and also having your voice, and then an organizational voice?

Chris Lema: The reality is, what you want, as best as possible, is you want to have clear swim lanes that separate the two, but you also want to have really great alignment so that something that you do in one place benefits the other, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: But that alignment is not always perfect. For example, I work at a company called Liquid Web. I have designed several products for them. And one of the reasons they hired me was because I had a personal brand around certain things they wanted to do. So they said, "We'll pay you good money to come over and do it over here under our brand." Then you go, "Okay, I'll do that." But then you get to a point where, as a company, they decide they want to go right, and you personally think you want to go left. Right? Well, they don't own me, right? They rent me. So I may write on ChrisLema.com about going left, and I may write on their site about going right, and I may have to live in this challenge of the fact that there's not perfect alignment all the time. Right?

Chris Lema: But a lot of that comes down to having really important conversations with the people in the organization about the other swim lane. Like, I love that you love getting benefit from me. When I write a blog post, in the end, it sends traffic to Liquid Web.

Carey Nieuwhof: For sure.

Chris Lema: Or when I do something on Twitter, it's going to have benefit to Liquid Web. It's also going to have benefit to my own brand. When I go speak at a conference, I speak, and I get benefit for both. But every now and then, you're going to find that there's some place where there's a challenge, and it's having those honest conversations, right? That, "Look, Liquid Web is not tattooed on my body. At some point, I will no longer be an employee here." One of the things I say to all my teams in all my companies is, "There will be a last day. You or me, one of us, will leave here. We're not indentured servants to this business. One of us will leave, and we still need to be okay with that." Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Chris Lema: So Liquid Web doesn't have their logo plastered on my body, I'm still me, I carry my brand and my name, and so sometimes you just have to have a really healthy conversation that says, "Listen." And sometimes it's even financial in nature, right? So when I joined Liquid Web, one of the things that happens, there's a network out there called Clarity, it's at clarity.fm.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I've seen you consult for them.

Chris Lema: So clarity.fm is a network of people. It's just a big, big list, laundry list of marketplace of people. Any person who wants advice from entrepreneurs can go to clarity.fm, put in their credit card, find an entrepreneur, and ask them for some time. Right? Now, for the longest time, I think I've dropped to like number four, but for the longest time, I was the second or third most called person on that network.

Chris Lema: When I joined Liquid Web, I said, "Hey, just a heads up, I have this brand equity over here in this platform, where I answer other entrepreneurs, their questions. Leadership, team leadership, product development, pricing questions. I answer these questions over there, and I'm well-recognized over there. I'm not turning that off. So if you want exclusivity where I can't do that, we're going to have to negotiate a different price point. And if you don't want to pay that price point, then we need to be clear on where the boundary lies."

Chris Lema: So I do two to three calls a week. I try and do it off hours, so it's not part of the day. But we had to have the conversation. And sometimes you even have to have the financial part of it, right? Like what are you getting if you hire me? What is part of my role?

Carey Nieuwhof: You know, I'm glad you raised that, because I've got this new High Impact Workplace Course, and that is one of the issues that we navigate, is you are hiring an asset that brings extra value to you. And that's a very different conversation than 30 years ago, when it's like-

Chris Lema: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... I am just buying your 40 hours a week, Mr. Lema. You don't have a life outside the company. Or you're 60 hours a week, you're 90 hours a week. I'm so glad you raised that. I think that will become more and more the marketplace moving forward.

Chris Lema: And it's the conversation you have to have. When I hire someone, the first question they have is, "What about the things I do on the side?" And I go-

Carey Nieuwhof: Everyone's got a side hustle.

Chris Lema: ... "It's great. I love that you do things on the side. It's where you experiment. It's where you try things. It's where you learn. And I would love for you to bring

only the learning in, and none of the mistakes. So go ahead. I love side hustles. However, you have a job, we have objectives. Make sure the main thing stays the main thing. Right?" And they go, "Yeah, of course." And I go, "Great. Then we won't ever have a problem."

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Chris Lema: But they also, you know, I'm the same way. I have things I do on the side.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, do all the stuff for the WordPress community.

Chris Lema: Yup, and people just go, "Okay." And it turns out at my job at Liquid Web, it's all very WordPress and WooCommerce related, so they love it. If I even get invited to Mexico City to speak, which I did earlier this year, I'm invited because of Chris Lema, not because of Liquid Web. But I'm up on stage wearing a Liquid Web t-shirt, and talking about the product that I designed at Liquid Web. So of course they benefit, but I'm also there as Chris Lema.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's a beautiful synergy. What about the senior leader who says, "I don't want to be on social media?" Mistake?

Chris Lema: Here's ... it depends. If you are so unique in what you deliver of value, right? Red Adair was a guy who put out oil fires in some of the biggest oil fires in the world. He's the first guy who got a million dollar check just to put out an oil fire. Now, the things about an oil fire is that it's so hot that you can't even get the hoses with foam to the fire, right? It would burn up the hose on the way. And not big enough, the hose would have to be so big to get enough foam on the spot that it wouldn't work. So what he figured out was, "We're going to bring 20 guys, from all different 20 directions, and encircle it with smaller hoses that don't have to get as close and can carry less foam. Then we're going to turn them all on at the same time, and that's going to push into ... "

Chris Lema: I mean, there was a plume of oil fire, like shooting up in the sky a mile high, and he goes in, and he solves it. He goes, "If you think it's expensive to hire a professional, try hiring an amateur." Right? You're like, "No, no, no, you're going to pay me for doing this thing." If you are Red Adair, and the world knows that you're the only guy who can put out oil fires, and they don't mind paying an astronomical amount because they know your name and they you're doing, you don't have to be anywhere. You don't have to be on social media. You can be a hermit in your house, and people will call you and show up.

Carey Nieuwhof: They're going to find Red Adair.

Chris Lema: The rest of us are not Red Adair. And for those leaders, I think you got to be online. I think you can't get away from bring online. If you're the less than 1% of 1% of 1% in your field and industry, and people know your name, they rattle it off like, "Oh, you got that problem? Call this guy." Yeah, I think you can skip it.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think, also, being online, I'll test this out on you because we follow each other on Instagram, but one of my favorite parts about Instagram, which is where I'm most personally active these days, is Insta Stories. I do my back yard, I do the Big Green Egg, because that's kind of my life, right? At the end of the day, I mow my lawn, just like a lot of people do.

Chris Lema: Yup. Although you mow your lawn better than most people mow their lawn, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you, thank you, I appreciate that. You've been a good student, I can see. Your vision is clear. But you know, it's one of those things that humanizes you, and it's such an equalizer because every time I meet people, when I'm on the road like I am right now with you, it's like, "Dude, your backyard," or, "Dude, how was that brisket the other day?" It's the great humanizer.

Chris Lema: It is.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I think when you're trying to create a great workplace culture, your employees are asking, "Who are you really?"

Chris Lema: Yup.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I see ... and hopefully that shows through in the office, but people want to know, "Oh, you're just like me."

Chris Lema: I can't tell you the number of people that have become clients of mine, in one form or another, because of a post I wrote, either on my website or on Facebook, about my wife. You know, we all get to-

Carey Nieuwhof: You and Melissa, yeah.

Chris Lema: Yeah, we get to an anniversary, and I write thoughts about my wife. My wife is amazing, so it's easy to write. But they come out, and they go, "Look, you know, I know you know this, and I know you know this." It's all about competency, right? I know all these competencies. "But it was your character when I read what you wrote about your wife. I thought, 'Okay, that's someone I want to get into business with.'"

Carey Nieuwhof: Fascinating.

Chris Lema: Now, I never wrote those posts for anyone but my wife, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Of course, yeah.

Chris Lema: I'm just writing it so that when she wakes up in the morning and she opens up her Facebook or whatever and she reads it, she goes, "Oh, my husband loves

me." That's it. I'm not writing it for the rest of the world. But I write it in a public space because I think she's amazing. And then people will go, "That humanized you. You weren't just an expert in x, y, or z, you're also a real person, and a person that I would trust. And so now I want to do business with you."

Chris Lema: So yes, I think humanizing yourself on any of the social platforms. People know, I just went to my 30 year high school reunion.

Carey Nieuwhof: I saw that.

Chris Lema: I haven't gone to a reunion yet, right? This was the first one. I had just finished my conference in Cabo, I flew back home, and I went straight up to Orange County, and I went to my 30 year reunion. And people that I barely spoke to in high school would show up and be like, "Hey buddy, did you bring us all a cigar?" Right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Chris Lema: I'm like, "Hey, you know I smoke cigars." They're like, "I love your cigar picks. It's also, now I know which are good cigars, because I've been smoking some bad cigars. But I saw your stuff, I know good cigars now."

Carey Nieuwhof: Leave it to Chris, you know good cigars. I don't smoke cigars.

Chris Lema: Yeah. So it's great, it makes a connection where there were people I hadn't seen in 30 years, and they knew certain things about me. And I knew some about them, like, "Hey, you have a house here and in Alabama. And every time it's football season, you're going out to Alabama, right?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, right.

Chris Lema: I know what you care about. So it's a fantastic way, being online, you still have to decide how much you're sharing, but being online allows you to become a whole person, not just a portion of a person.

Carey Nieuwhof: Advice for people who are like, "Wow, I'm so far behind the eight ball I don't know where to start"? What would say to them?

Chris Lema: You just get started.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just get started.

Chris Lema: Start wherever you're most comfortable. I find that people who are speakers can shift over to writing faster than people who haven't spoken in front of audiences. You know?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's true.

Chris Lema: So I meet a pastor whose like, "I don't have a blog," and I'm like, "You speak professionally."

Carey Nieuwhof: You write every single week, yeah.

Chris Lema: You write all the time, just shift it over, and let's start writing a blog. Right? People who are communicators in some way, shape, or form in front of an audience also can get on video pretty comfortably. Right? But that may not be you at all. If you're not in front of an audience, if you're not standing in front of there talking, writing and video may be terrifying. But let's say you're a behind the scenes person, but suddenly you're like, "Okay, I like to grill on my Green Egg, I cycle," or any of these things that you do, and you go, "I'm just going to post some of this stuff." People start connecting, and they start following. And all of a sudden, you wake up one day and realize, "More people know me."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, or even if you run the sound board, it's like just start talking about your trade.

Chris Lema: Right, about what you're up to. I have a buddy of mine who runs the A/V system at a church in Houston, and when he takes a picture of that stuff, tons of other people are like, "Hey, you know how that Yamaha board works? That's the Yamaha board from the top tier." And he's like, "Oh yeah, I know the guys at Yamaha, and I was just out in Southern California working with the Yamaha guys on this new equipment." Then you start watching the communication. And what he's done is he has taken a little corner in the A/V for church world that now when someone else thinks about something else and says, "Oh, you need an A/V in church? You should talk to my buddy Deon." Right? It's amazing the little corners we can take just by showcasing some of what we're up to.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, Chris, it's never boring. Anything else you want to share?

Chris Lema: We have a new course that you're getting ready to launch.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's right, it's called The High Impact Workplace. It's about attracting and keeping top talent.

Chris Lema: One of the things I know for a fact is that companies who have high performers in their organization struggle to keep them. Everybody keeps the lowest performers because we all struggle to fire people. Everybody keep mediocre people because we don't spend enough time paying attention in the middle. Right? What we struggle to keep are the ones who vote with their feet. They don't like the organization, they don't have enough influence, we're bogging them down with all sorts of expense report rules, and vacation approval rules. This is what companies do, right? They create rules for the best people based on the problems of the worst people.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's true.

Chris Lema: Right? And it's horrible, because you could just fire the worst people and not create any new rules. But we don't, because we're scared to fire people. So what happens is we end up creating a burdensome organization and a burdensome culture for high performers. And they vote with their feet, and by the time they voted, it's too late.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, and freedom and autonomy. I mean, this has been the sub-current under everything we're talking about. Freedom and autonomy are the new currency, and 8:00 to 4:00 doesn't work anymore. You got to be flexible. And a lot of us are struggling to keep up, so that's what that course is about. Chris is the quiet architect behind a lot of the infrastructure behind that, and a lot of the strategy.

Chris Lema: I love that upcoming course. I think that's fantastic.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm pumped about it, man.

Chris Lema: I can't wait to share with folks.

Carey Nieuwhof: Pretty passionate about the content, so we're just going to open it, I haven't got the timeline right in front of me, but it'll be November. I don't know when this interview is coming out. It's only going to be open for seven days, then we're closing it. We're going to bring it back in 2020, but if you're hearing this and you get a chance, jump in.

Chris Lema: Get it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Pricing is good.

Chris Lema: Get it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then we're going to shut it down, and again, hey, guess what we're doing? We're experimenting.

Chris Lema: That's right. That's perfect.

Carey Nieuwhof: It never gets old, right?

Chris Lema: That's the way to do it.

Carey Nieuwhof: ChrisLema.com, L-E-M-A.com. And are you Chris Lema on all the profiles?

Chris Lema: I'm Chris Lema on Twitter. On LinkedIn, I think I'm Mr. Chris Lema. And on YouTube, I'm Mr. Chris Lema. Those were early, early renditions, and so those still have the Mr. But all the rest is just Chris Lema.

Carey Nieuwhof: All right, Mr. Chris Lema.

Chris Lema: Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks, my friend.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that was a great conversation with Chris. I love that we were able to have it in person on his turf in San Diego. And if you want more, you can go to the show notes. You can go to CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode304. And again, subscribers, thank you so much for subscribing. If you haven't yet, you're new to the show, just hit subscribe on whatever platform you're listening because, well, you'll get all the future episodes for free, and we've got some killer ones, like Carlos Whittaker, who's coming up next Tuesday. I'm so excited to bring you this conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you haven't yet checked out the offer from our partners, make sure you go to RightNowMedia.org/Carey, and you can get an entire library of just tens of thousands of professional videos, inspirational videos, personal growth videos from some amazing Bible teachers and leadership people. You can get that at RightNowMedia.org/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Then, what are you doing to build into families next year? Head on over to MarriedPeople.org/Carey, there's some special promotions on for you right now. I promise you, the families, and especially the kids of the parents who are struggling in their marriage or just need a better marriage, my goodness, they will thank you so much. MarriedPeople.org/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, here is an excerpt from my conversation next episode with Carlos Whittaker.

Carlos W.: This is after I've been on tour, I'm leading worship at Elevation, doing all these things, and I fill out applications, because I'm like, "I have to provide for my family."

Carey Nieuwhof: Barista?

Carlos W.: So I filled out ... Barista, I filled that out at Starbucks.

Carey Nieuwhof: The wood's in aisle two.

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's all I know.

Carlos W.: Yeah, exactly. So that's what I was thinking I had gone to. Then day 13-and-a-half, I get an email in my inbox, and it just said, "The White House would like to

... " and I hit delete because I thought, "Oh, it's just spam." I subscribe to all the political emails and stuff. So I didn't even read it. Then 30 minutes later, my publicist starts blowing my phone up. After about seven missed calls, I was like, "Yes, what do you need?" And she's like, "They know you deleted the email." I said, "Who knows I deleted the email?"

Carey Nieuwhof: So the White House knows everything.

Carlos W.: She goes, "Go check." So I checked, and it says, "The White House would like to invite you to be the keynote speaker and give one song at the Easter Prayer Breakfast in the East Room of the White House in four days."

Carey Nieuwhof: So that's coming up next time on the podcast. And now, to what is becoming one of my favorite moments, the Ask Carey questions. So if you've got a question, leave it for us on any social platform at #askCarey. Jay wants to know, "What are the most significant tensions that churches," or I would say even organizations, "must navigate moving forward?" He lists a couple of examples, status quo versus strategic change, traction versus innovation, and I think you're on to something there, Jay. I've got three things that I wrote down.

Carey Nieuwhof: One is status quo, two is the challenge of success, and third is the challenge of the horrible culture, and I will actually give you a free resource at the end of this that you can download on the horrible culture question. Okay, so status quo, that is one of the biggest problems you have, and that's true whether you're successful, whether you're stuck, whether you're in decline. The status quo is your enemy, and I really believe after two-and-a-half decades of senior leadership that my job is to disrupt the status quo. Because here's what happens, all right? You go through a period of innovation, maybe you're in startup, nothing's set. But we are such predictors of normalcy that we never really realize the potential of what we can do.

Carey Nieuwhof: So think about it, every time you get a new phone, maybe you get a new car and it's got all the latest technology or whatever, you know what you try to do? This is what I try to do, and I'm a tech guy, okay? I try to normalize my operation of that vehicle as quickly as possible, or that phone. So what you try to do is you're like, "Wow, this is all new. I don't really understand it, and therefore I'm going to try to learn all the hacks and tricks, and just get this to functioning so I don't have to think about it," within hours. I always think that's a mistake with technology, because here's what you do, you miss out on 98% of what the device can do, or 98% of what potentially your car could do. Or you know, you put some smart lights in your house, and you're just like, "No, I learned the basics, and I walked away." You left 90% on the table.

Carey Nieuwhof: We do that in our organizations too. So when I get a new device, I try to read the tutorials, and then I try not to settle into a pattern for 10 days because I want to make sure that I'm getting the most out of that device. Same is true with organizations, all right? You're launching a church, let's say, and you're like,

"How are we going to do services on Sunday? And so you say, "Well, we'll do some songs, we'll do a message," and soon, you're at your creative meeting, it's not creative, you're just doing three songs and a message, three songs and a message. You're not thinking because the pressure to get to Sunday is so much.

Carey Nieuwhof: Same with your model of ministry, same with any company. I mean, one of the favorite things I get to do in this is we're looking ahead to 2020, I've spent hours with the team and solo, thinking through, "What can we do differently next year?" Because otherwise, you know what I'm going to do? I'm just going to do the same thing over and over again. And my job, as a senior leader, is to disrupt the status quo. Why? Because in the church, there's more people to reach. In what I'm doing these days, there's more leaders to serve. I mean, there's so much more you can do. And if you only do what you've always done, you'll only get what you've always got. So you got to disrupt the status quo, that's number one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Second tension is the tension with success. Let's say you're wildly successful. Let's say you're growing double digits, triple digits. It's like great, great, great, great, great. Problem with success is success makes you conservative. The greatest enemy of your future success is your current success. Because what happens is you're like, "Wow, this is working so great I don't want to mess it up." That becomes your status quo. So success, on the one hand, people would say, "Don't touch a thing. I mean, don't even break it. You don't want to break it." And to some extent, that's true, you want to see what's working, you want to understand why it's working. But you have to realize that also has a shelf-life.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what you want to be doing, if you're succeeding in what you're doing, if you're growing, if you're reaching people, whatever your mission is, here's what you should do. You should start experimenting on the side. You should start to disrupt yourself before you get disrupted. Otherwise, you become Blockbuster, otherwise you become Toys"R"Us. Otherwise you become Sears, and you don't want to be Sears in the age of Amazon. So success, the greatest enemy of your future success is the current success.

Carey Nieuwhof: Third thing, shifting gears totally, so status quo, success, and then horrible culture. Horrible culture. You know what? So much of organizational culture these days is bad. And the Me Too movement has been a breath of fresh air because basically we've put abuse on the table and said, "No, it's not going to happen anymore. We can't do it." And that's one thing, to have a harassment free culture, and I think that is amazing. But harassment free does not mean engaging. Harassment free does not mean exciting.

Carey Nieuwhof: And what happens to a lot of people, 70% of employees are disengaged at work. They're not disengaged because they fear for their safety or anything like that. They're disengaged because it's boring, because it's dysfunctional, because it's not inspiring, because there's no vision, because people are passive aggressive, because nobody has direct conversations. And culture eats strategy for

breakfast, you've heard that over and over again. You've probably also heard that people don't quit jobs, they quit bosses. That's true, but I also think people don't quit jobs, they quit cultures. If your culture is really bad, then people aren't going to stick around, at least people who have options, which tend to be your most competent people aren't going to stick around.

Carey Nieuwhof: So how do you solve that? I've got a free download for you if you're interested. Head on over to TheHighImpactWorkplace.com, TheHighImpactWorkplace.com, enter your email, join the waiting list for a new course that we're releasing in a few weeks, and I've got five questions that every good manager asks. If you start to ask these questions, two things will happen. Number one, I think you're going to see employee engagement go through the roof. I think you're going to see it improve. Second thing, you will be well on your way to improving the culture in your company.

Carey Nieuwhof: So those are the three challenges, the tensions I see with organizations moving forward. Number one, the status quo. Number two, success. Number three, a horrible culture. If you head on over to TheHighImpactWorkplace.com, enter your email, you will actually get those questions, and I hope they help you. Thanks so much for listening, we are back next time with Carlos Whittaker. Subscribe, you get it for free, and we'll see you then. I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

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