

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 305 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I got some really exciting to share with you guys. Thank you so much. I run into you. I've been traveling a lot this fall. I've met so many of you who say, "Hey, I was there from episode 1," what a journey this has been and guess what guys? We're hitting a big milestone any day now, 10 million downloads. And what we're going to do is we are going to celebrate. We're going to celebrate in a couple of different ways.

Carey Nieuwhof: First, on the day we hit 10 million, it'll be sometime in the next three weeks. We're going to celebrate by giving away \$1,000 worth of Starbucks because we just do this and you guys love it. In a single day, we're going to post one \$500 gift card in the morning and another in the afternoon and to win that part of the 10 million download giveaway, just follow me on social. I'm on Instagram @CareyNieuwhof, Facebook and Twitter @cnieuwhof and turn on notifications so you see when we post.

Carey Nieuwhof: And you know what, you're not going to be in line and three minutes later the card is empty this time. Hey, when we got that much on a card, it may last for a few minutes. So we're going to celebrate by giving away free Starbucks. But then this is what I'm really pumped about. We are actually going to take five listeners and fly you to Nashville, Tennessee in 2020 and we're going to take you to a one day coaching session with me. We're going to treat you really, really well. Take you out for dinner, put you up in a really nice spot and it's just five listeners are going to win a day with me in Nashville, Tennessee an amazing city and we want to celebrate you, invest in you and your leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof: And so here's what you need to do. Just go to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million. That's the number 10 million, LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million and it's that simple. The criteria how you enter is there, that contest is open until December 13th. We don't know when we're going to hit 10 million so we're going to keep that open to December 13th. So just head on over to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million and five of you will be with me in Nashville in 2020 for a one day session together in person. It's going to be incredible. So really excited for that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, we got an Ask Carey at the end of this episode. I'm going to talk about moving from board based leadership to staff based leadership and want to thank our partners. Today's episode is brought to you by Married People and Pro WebFire. Our guest is Carlos Whittaker. It is so hard to give a bio on Carlos because what hasn't he'd done? He's a bestselling author, he is a musician, these days he is a speaker, we talk all about quitting his career, cold turkey, and

how that went. He's a former blogger, a podcaster, very active on social media. He's won a People's Choice Award.

Carey Nieuwhof: Actually when we recorded this, if you follow Carlos, his daughter was very healthy and at the time that I'm recording this, a few months after we did the interview, when we were together in, I think, Los Angeles where we did this, is Carlos daughter has fallen sick. And so a lot of us are praying for him. We're tracking with you Carlos on social media. I don't know if by the time this airs that will have turned around, we hope and pray it will. But Carlos is an open book and that's one of the things I love about him as a friend and as a leader. So I think you're going to love this episode.

Carey Nieuwhof: And you know what guys. I'll bet you think of your church as above average. 77% of people think they're above average. But anyway, you know what? We are looking for 20 churches who want to ignite their growth in 2020. Pro Media Fire and Pro WebFire are looking for 20 churches who want to really up their strategy on digital outreach, on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, custom graphics and videos, churches who want a new church website. Three criteria you have to apply. You have to be prepared for growth and have systems in place. You have to be willing to make a monthly financial investment throughout 2020, and be willing to talk about it in exchange for a 30% discount. If you're ready, only 20 churches will be accepted, but you can apply until December 1st, you only got a few more days at ProMediaFire.com/2020. So head on over there and get that done.

Carey Nieuwhof: And then what is your church doing with married people in 2020? My friend Ted Lowe started Married People about a decade ago and they are doing an incredible job on just changing the game in marriage ministry. Because there was a study done a few years ago that said, "A lot of people think marriage ministry in a church is like preaching, boring, outdated, and not very masculine." Well, what if he could flip that and do it an entirely different way, that is current, relevant, professional, helpful and honestly, really, really fun?

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, because you're a podcast listener, go to MarriedPeople.org/Carey. That's MarriedPeople.org/Carey and get 30% off the annual marriage ministry resource bundle. Everything you need to create an entire year of marriage ministry. It's marriage ministry re-engineered in the best way. So head on over to MarriedPeople.org/Carey and you will get some incredible savings today as you look to build into families. And that, as you know, is a great investment. Well guys, so excited to bring you this conversation with Carlos Whittaker. So without further ado, here we go.

Carey Nieuwhof: Carlos, welcome back to the podcast, dude.

Carlos W.: Hey man, thanks for having me, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: We are in Orange County. Like can anything be wrong when you're in Orange County?

Carlos W.: Nothing. I walked out of the hotel this morning and I just thought, "Why, oh why can my morning walk out of my home not feel exactly like this?" Because-

Carey Nieuwhof: You're in Nashville, right?

Carlos W.: I'm in Nashville, Tennessee, where right now basically you can cut the air with a butter knife.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's that humid.

Carlos W.: It is. It's 100% humidity every day just, "Huh," so, yeah, it's bad. So I'm enjoying my 20 hours in Orange County.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly. You and I are in and out.

Carlos W.: People think a lot, Carey like, "Oh, you travel and you speak and oh, you're going to Orange County," and stuff like that. I'm like, "Let me tell you, I see the inside of an airplane, the inside of an airport, the inside of an Uber, the inside of a hotel room, the inside of a church, and then just reverse that and I'm back home." I don't really necessarily-

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I get the same stuff. People are like, "Wow, what was California like?" I'm like, "Well, the hotel was okay." I got a convertible. They just threw me a convertible.

Carlos W.: No, you didn't. Did you drop the top?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, but I will.

Carlos W.: No, okay. Okay, you will.

Carey Nieuwhof: I will when I return it, the six minutes I run to the airport before I return it, I will drop the top. Anyway we go.

Carlos W.: Yes, oh my God.

Carey Nieuwhof: But it's good to see you. Hey, before dive in today, you've done a lot of reinvention and I know leaders are always reinventing themselves, right?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So 10 years ago, when we met or whenever that was, you were worship leader?

- Carlos W.: Assigned worship artists with Integrity Music. That was the life, yeah.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. So you're a musician, an artist, and you pivoted to become like what are you ... And you were always blogging on the side?
- Carlos W.: Yeah. And it's crazy. I was full time music. I was on tour on Winter Jam and all the things and Mike Foster, of all people ... You know Mike?
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.
- Carlos W.: Yeah. He told me, one day we're having lunch about six years ago out here. And he said, "Carlos, I know that you're a good worship leader, but you're a great thought leader. And the reason why most people follow you isn't because you're a great worship leader." And he kind of hurt my feelings. But he kind of told me the truth. He said, "It's because of what you say, not what you sing." And that was a pivotal point for me where I started having more and more people speak that over me.
- Carlos W.: Andy Stanley, same thing when I was at North Point, he said, "The reason why you're a great worship leader at our church isn't because how you sing, is what you say between the songs." And the more and more I thought about it, the more and more I thought, "Maybe they're right." And so I did a huge pivot, pretty drastic. I felt like God was telling me, "You need to stop singing, you need to start speaking, you need to stop singing and you need to start speaking." And it was scary. And I did what probably most people shouldn't do. I just went to my inbox and I canceled all my worship leading gigs for the rest of the year. And I said, "The Lord is going to give me speaking gigs, I believe in for it." And 87 dates I canceled.
- Carey Nieuwhof: No way.
- Carlos W.: Yeah. Carey and I waited ... This is actually all in the next book, so you guys are getting a little sneak peek.
- Carey Nieuwhof: So cold turkey?
- Carlos W.: Cold turkey, but not cold turkey because I felt like God told me to and then all my friends told me to.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, yeah.
- Carlos W.: And so I canceled them all and fully expecting to wake up the next morning and everyone be like ... Because my email was like, "Hey, the Lord's told me I need to be an author and a speaker, not a worship leader. So I know I'm not going to sing any more but if you need me to come speak at your event, instead of sing,

I'd love to come do that." So this was me in full faith thinking everyone's going to be like, "Well, of course."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes. We've been waiting for this moment.

Carlos W.: Yes, we've been waiting for this moment. I woke up the next morning, I checked my inbox and of course I just kept getting email after email saying, "That is amazing, we're so proud of you, great work. But no, we have Bob Goff already. We don't need another speaker." And Carey, day after day my bank account and all the deposits started going down, down, down, and I'm freaking out. And I'm like, "God, you made a mistake." Seven days in, 13 days in ... Have I told you this story before?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, we haven't done this.

Carlos W.: Okay. 13 days in, I'm mad now at God. I'm like, "God, you told me to change careers, take a drastic," and I'm angry, shaking my fist to God. And I go to Home Depot and I go to Starbucks. This is after I've been like 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 regardless. I filled out a-

Carey Nieuwhof: The ones in aisle two?

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's all I know.

Carlos W.: And then, yeah, exactly. So that's what I was thinking and I've gone to. And then day 13 and a half, I get an email in my inbox and it's from my ... actually, I get an email in my inbox and it just said, "The White House would like to," and that's all it said. And I hit delete. You may remember this. And I hit delete because I thought, "Oh, it's just spam." Like I subscribe to all the political emails and stuff. So I didn't even read it. And then 30 minutes later my publicist like starts blowing my phone up and 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 said, "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, like in four days." So I'm

freaking out. And of course my first question is a, how do they know I deleted the email? Are there drones outside my window? How did they? And then number two, my very first speaking gig ever was at the East Room of the White House and I gave a 10 minute devotional and I sing, Nothing But the Blood of Jesus and it's been downhill since then. I got like my speaking career. So that was my very first speaking gig ever.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's pretty good when you get the White House.

Carlos W.: Yeah, I got the White House. My wife recorded it while I was up there and President was sitting right there and-

Carey Nieuwhof: Who was President at the time?

Carlos W.: President Obama at the time. It's 2014, Easter Prayer Breakfast. And maybe I'll give you a link so people can actually click in and see a little clip of it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, totally.

Carlos W.: It was crazy. I actually sat at his table, had breakfast with him, had a private meeting in the Red Room in the White House. I called my dad. I said, "My dad's a first generation immigrant into this country. He can't believe that his son is in the White House." And he said, "Let's call your father."

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you and Obama call your dad?

Carlos W.: And I called my dad and my dad said, "Carlitos?" And then the president just took the phone and said, "Dr. Whittaker, I just want to tell you how proud you'd be of your son." And my dad is weeping on the other end. It was a magical moment.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want to cry.

Carlos W.: It was pretty amazing. So all that to say like the growth in my life as a believer didn't happen when I got the email. The growth happened in the in between, right. The growth happened in the 13 days. Nobody ever matures in their faith on vacation. We're maturing in those tough seasons. And so that's when I had a lot of growth in that and I've been speaking ever since. So I've been writing books and talking about them.

Carey Nieuwhof: How did you get on the radar screen of the White House or do you know?

Carlos W.: I know. So everything always goes back to social media for me just because I blast my life on it. But I had shot a music video in downtown Atlanta for my first record with Integrity Music and a homeless man walked into the video while we were shooting it. We was outside in the park like in early, six in the morning. And so I thought he screwed the shot up. And so I'm like, "Ugh." But then the man walks up to me and says, "You singing gospel man." And I said, "Yeah, I'm singing gospel." He goes, "Can I sing with you man?" And we kept the cameras rolling and this video went viral of this Jamaican homeless man in Atlanta singing a duet with me to my song, Got a Second Chance as Well.

Carlos W.: All that to say, President Obama saw that video on Facebook, went to his Secretary of Faith and Family at the time, Joshua DuBois, and said, "I want that guy."

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Carlos W.: I want that guy to come.

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Carlos W.: Yes, that's how it happened.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is the amazing flatness of the internet, isn't it?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: You had how many videos truly even on what, Good Morning America?

Carlos W.: Yeah, we are all the on show, Jimmy Kimmel Show, all the shows because of one big viral video and my son started crying it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, with your son. And that was like years ago?

Carlos W.: That was a decade ago, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But you've had a bunch, even that bird thing where you were trying to save the bird?

Carlos W.: Yeah. LaLa Lives. I'm actually talking about that in my breakout today. And I'm telling people all of these things with social media, like the reason why people and my Instagram stories and things go viral isn't necessarily because ... There's not a strategy in place.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, like I'm going to make a viral video.

Carlos W.: Yeah. The only strategy I have in place is, "I am going to make a story that moves people once a week." That's my goal. And so we had a bird. A bird had had baby robins, and then I put a camera on him and an owl attack and murdered all the robins in the middle of the night. So all my followers are feeling devastated. But then later that day, I go outside and I find one of the baby birds underneath the nest on the floor. But I'm just recording things that most people aren't recording and that's all I'm telling people is like, "Just document, document, document and things will start happening." So I have a whole bunch of videos here that have gone viral because I'm just intentional about being a storyteller.

Carey Nieuwhof: What moves people?

Carlos W.: What moves people is everybody wants to hope for somebody else, for something else. And what I've found is people don't necessarily just want to hope for themselves. They want to hope for something else. And it just makes people come alive. And so the bird, like listen, I'm sure I didn't do a survey, but I'm sure I had 50% Trump lovers, 50% Obama lovers all rooting for the same thing because I'm not trying to divide people. I'm trying to unite people and people want to be united and hope for something else. And so the bird ...

Carlos W.: And then a couple of weeks ago I found a butterfly in my front yard and I named the butterfly, Barb and I had a whole story go viral about rescuing this butterfly. You got to give people things to cheer for, to root for and to hope for. And I think that's what makes people really come alive.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's fantastic.

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Let's go back a little bit to that pivot you did a few years ago. So must've been a lot of fear. Why didn't you just hedge your bets? One of the pieces of career advice you would get is, "Don't quit your day job. You got a lot of gigs, so do a blend where you're going to do 87 worship events, but maybe you'll have two speaking events the first year." Why did you not follow that process?

Carlos W.: I've just never followed that process.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's not you, dude.

Carlos W.: That's just not me. And so like I tell people all the time, "Don't do this." But also I tell people this all the time. Even Jon Acuff, we'd had this conversation before he said, "You know Carlos, sometimes I'll follow you on Instagram and I'll think to myself, 'Man, I wish that could happen for me or that would happen. Or how does Carlos have a bird go viral? And you have all these incredible moments in your life.'" And I tell him, "Well, Jon also, I've also had my car repossessed because I forget to pay the bills. I've also had to 13 days of misery because I am

applying at Home Depot," and all of these things happen. For me like it's one way or the other. Like Jon plays a lot safer bets and so when you play safer bets, you may not have louder moments, but you'll still have moments that you can show people.

Carlos W.: But what I've done and what I've realize is, when I play ... And I'm playing crops now at life. I'm not saying the gamble life, but saying I'm taking big bets and these big bets that I'm taking pay off in big moments. So yeah, this is how I've been my DNA. It's how we do things, how my family does things. And it's provided for a lot of moments, big ones.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you ever worry that it's not going to work and it's just all gonna fall apart?

Carlos W.: Um, no, only because...Okay, yeah, sure. Sure, but not a lot. Only because Carey, I've been at this now. I quit my day job at North Point Community Church, it was 2010 and I haven't had a boss since then. And I remember freaking out at that moment, nobody was coaching, nobody was doing stuff like that back then. And I started this little creative coaching thing and God has just provided nonstop ever since. We've never missed a paycheck. We've always had food on the table and there's been moments and seasons where it's been really ... We haven't had a lot.

Carlos W.: Even like this summer, if people followed us on Instagram, people look at my Instagram and they think we went to Africa, we went to Uganda, we went to London, we went to Paris, we went to all these places and they're probably thinking, "Oh, Carlos is living this bougie lifestyle." We're just risking a lot to do this. And so, let me tell you, August, I had to actually call my parents like, "Dad, I don't know if I'm going to be able to pay the mortgage this month." We had an epic summer, of course the Lord provided. But I got scared. I did get scared, "Babe, I think this was the summer that we pushed it too far."

Carlos W.: This is not leadership principles you're going to find in any book anywhere. But what it is, it is moment making principles that is going to help people have these incredible moments in their lives that, if you risk a little, you may end up with a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof: What have been some of your greatest risks?

Carlos W.: Yeah, my greatest risks? Well, I would say leaving my job at North Point was a big risk for me. I would say obviously changing, pivoting in a career that was really doing well. I was on the up and up.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, if you've got 87 gigs, you were doing okay.

Carlos W.: Yeah, things were good. I had retainers with Elevation at the time, with a couple other churches at the time where I was leading worship every month. Things were stable and they were good. That was a big risk. I think another big risk is,

people can want to rewind back to our last podcast was sharing my story of utter devastation in my life and wondering, do people even want to read this kind of train wreck?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. That was Kill the Spider?

Carlos W.: Yeah, Kill the Spider. And where the books sold so many copies and people's lives have been so affected by it. That was a big risk as well. And I think I'm taking a risk on this next book as well. I'm talking about-

Carey Nieuwhof: You want to give us a snapshot, that's not until 2020, but people listen whenever they listen.

Carlos W.: Yeah, it's up to 2020. But yeah, absolutely. The book is really, John 10:10, "A thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. I've come so you have a life and have it to the full." I think most people have been ... They don't know what that means. What is life to the full mean? Does it mean it's going to be raining dollar bills and I'm going to be driving a Tesla. And so I'm trying to reframe that. And what the book is doing is, I've been raised in a very conservative church and I had a great conservative roots and I've loved it. But in the last four years, my family has pivoted into more of a charismatic world, in a world, in a space I've never been a part of. And suddenly I'm realizing there is more on this side of the veil of heaven than I ever thought was available.

Carlos W.: So what the book is doing, it's taking my friends' hands, walking them through the wardrobe, picture Narnia, Lucy's walking up to the wardrobe. She kind of pushes the coats off and she picks her head across and she sees Narnia. And I'm taking my friends through the wardrobe saying, "Hey, look, all of this miracle, signs, and wonders the Holy Spirit, this is actually available on this side of heaven. So you can come with me and step across into Narnia or you can stay in the house if you want."

Carlos W.: And I think I do it in a really respectful way, and I think I do it in a way that I would want to somebody four years ago for me to say, "Carlos, there's actually more than you believe is available." So that's a little snapshot of what the book's going to be.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's fascinating. And for any business leaders that might be listening in going, "What?" It's like you look at Hollywood, so there's two planes of existence. One says, "Everything's in the natural." If you say you were miraculously healed and it's only because they just haven't figured out yet what happened, everything operates in the natural, everything according to physical laws, et cetera, et cetera. And yet people are fascinated with the supernatural, particularly the occult, right?

Carlos W.: Absolutely, yeah.

- Carey Nieuwhof: Which is great. And so in popular culture, you only really see the negative side of the supernatural. And then you see what many people would say, "The Charlatans, the Hucksters, faith healers," crazy side of the card. You're not talking about that?
- Carlos W.: I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about, this is like normal people are going to have their ... Hopefully when they read the book they're going to come to a realization. Because I honestly at the end of day believe that even my agnostic and atheist friends, they know that there's something bigger. There is something more. We are spiritual beings in some way, shape or form. You can't watch a sunrise without believing that. And so I think it's not weird at all. Honestly, it's what Kill the Spider did like it took what was a very supernatural thing in her healing and it made it palpable for people that maybe aren't there yet. Breaking agreements with the enemy, no, let's kill the spider. And so-
- Carey Nieuwhof: And it was about a pattern just so people ... Give us the thumbnail of Kill the Spider.
- Carlos W.: Yeah, a spider is an agreement you've made with a lie and a cobweb is a medicating behavior that brings comfort to the lie. Instead of cleaning the cobwebs, which is what 99% of people do, "How to stop drinking, how to stop looking at porn, how to stop doing all those things." You've got to find the root of that behavior, which is a lie you believe and you've got to break in agreement with the lie.
- Carlos W.: But also that's an actual supernatural concept if you look biblically. And so all I've done is the next book is divided into three sections and the first section is hearing from God. The second section is once you hear from God, how do you deal with what you've heard? How do you go into war with whatever it is that you need to? And then the third step after you've done that, and after you've, "killed the spider," what does life look like stepping into abundance and life to the full? And yeah, I'm excited because I think it's going to challenge some people, but I hope by the end of it, people are going to be risking enough to go, "All right, well maybe I'm going to give this a shot." And I think it's going to blow people's minds because that's what it did for me.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I know you spent a lot of time over the last couple of years to just talking to people about anxiety, depression, mental health. It's funny, I was saying to my wife, Toni, when we flew in last night to Orange County. I remember being here a year ago for this event that you and I are speaking at today. And Andrew Stoecklein had just committed suicide. And I met the student guy from his church and then, of course, last week when you were recording this, Jarrid Wilson took his own life too.
- Carey Nieuwhof: This made like Fox News, CNN, the whole deal, but just two young, charismatic, everything kind of in front of them. Leaders who ended up taking their own life. And it's a very real thing. And I talk to CEOs, business leaders, church leaders all

the time who struggle with anxiety, who struggle with depression. And Kill the Spider is a great read. The whole idea there is if you're medicating yourself through alcohol, drugs, porn, sex, all that stuff, it's a much better possibility to, instead of just dealing with your cobwebs every day, kill the spider.

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think you got that from your dad, did you?

Carlos W.: I did, yeah, my dad told that story. And I have been dealing a lot with anxiety and are helping people with it. Carey, one thing that I've been very vocal about the last decade on the internet, even before social media when I was just blogging, I had a blog. You guys remember what a blog was?

Carey Nieuwhof: I still do it.

Carlos W.: Oh, there you go.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's four of us.

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Kidding.

Carlos W.: I was very vocal about my struggle with anxiety. I had the d-day moment for myself was, let's see, my daughter's 17 now. So this was 16 years ago. I had my first full-fledged panic attack on stage at my church while I was leading worship. And it knocked me out for seven months. I wasn't able to get back up on stage. I could barely leave my home. I went from zero, like everything's fine in my life to I literally thought I was having a heart attack and then everything broke inside of me mentally. And listen, this was 16 years ago. So this was before it was even remotely cool in church to talk about mental illness.

Carlos W.: I had people telling me all the myths like, "My faith isn't big enough. My prayers aren't strong enough. I just need to believe in God more." All the things that at the time I was like, "Okay, well I need to pray harder." And man, Carrie, it was a rough, rough ... I mean, I rough is like the nicest term I could say. I was in some very dark, dark, dark times back then, very alone. Especially as a worship pastor that this had happened to.

Carlos W.: Again, I tried to lead worship maybe three months later, got up on stage and had another panic attack. The second I got on stage, I had to get back off. And so I thought, "I'm ruined." Like, "God, the one gift you've given me, I feel like you've taken it away." And I was as depressed as I've ever been, as dark as I've ever been. And I, praise the Lord, have fully been healed of it, now.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Carlos W.: But what I used to tell people, Carey. And I think I meant well when I was saying this a decade ago, but I used to tell people, "God has given me enough strength to deal with my anxiety." And I guess that's halfway true because he had, and he did. But the other part, I guess the miracle signs and wonders, supernatural part that I wasn't stepping into at that point is well, "Yeah, sure God has given me enough strength to deal with my anxiety, but maybe God wants me to actually completely be healed of it." But in the moment, anyone's struggling with this, it seems impossible. And now, on the flip side of it where I have been healed of. I used to have a panic attack when I would walk on stage. Now, I speak on stages around the world weekly and it's gone. The panic is gone, the anxiety is gone, the depression is gone.

Carlos W.: And yes, it took work. It took work, a lot of work in therapy, a lot of medicine, a lot of exercise, diet, nutrition. But then it also took a lot of inner healing and a lot of prayer work and a lot of spiritual work on the other side. And so I think the combination of the two got me to this space. And that's what I'm being really vocal about with people is helping people on this journey right now. This isn't my main gig. This isn't all I talk about, but right now in this season, especially this last week with what happened to Jarrid, it's more and more pastors and leaders are struggling with this. And I don't think they know what to do.

Carlos W.: And so all I can say is, listen, I'm not a psychologist, I'm not a counselor, I'm not a clinical therapist, but I'm healed. And so I can tell you what worked for me. And that's what I'm doing. I'm just being really vocal about what's worked for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I don't know whether you've read Dan Harris's book, 10% Happier?

Carlos W.: I have not.

Carey Nieuwhof: Fantastic book, ABC News anchor. He didn't land in the Christian camp, actually ended up using meditation, et cetera, et cetera. But I think it's a New York Times bestseller. Anyway, he's on the air, in 2004, exactly what happened to you. And this-

Carlos W.: Oh, wait, I know that guy.

Carey Nieuwhof: You know Dan Harris?

Carlos W.: Well, I've seen the clip.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've seen the clip?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Where it has this panic attack. And so he breaks it down in his book. It's a fascinating read and this is happening to more and more high functioning leaders where life's going along perfectly well. I've had it happen to friends too. Next thing you know, they think they're having a heart attack. They end up in the hospital or in bed for three days and all of a sudden this anxiety. I want to unpack what you just said in a little more detail, but go back to when you first had that panic attack, 16 years ago. Looking back on it now, because you said it came from out of the blue, right? Oh, right?

Carlos W.: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would you say were the factors leading up to that moment?

Carlos W.: Man, I would say, well, we had a newborn baby, so massive life shift right there. I was at a church plant and we were working our tails off. I just grinding. It's all I thought about breakfast, lunch and dinner, before I went to bed and when I woke up in the morning. It just was nonstop. Like the pace of my life at the time was nonstop. And I feel like those two things were pretty integral.

Carlos W.: I knew I had a predisposition to worry. I was a worrier as a little boy. I worried over silly things that people would say were silly. Worried, I would cry in bed at night because I thought my parents would die. And they weren't sick. I just would worry. So I had a predisposition nowadays that would be like diagnosed is like general anxiety disorder. But when I was a kid, they're just like, "Oh, he's just a worrier? He's okay," And so I had a predisposition to it as well.

Carlos W.: But if I look back, I would definitely say that the stress of my life and my work life combined with how unhealthy I was. At that time, I think I weighed 240 pounds. Like I was physically-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and you're not 6'5".

Carlos W.: Yeah, I'm not 6'5". I'm and five foot nine and a half. Yeah, I think all those things really contributed to it. And then I think what contributed again, to not healing as rapidly as I could, was first of all the thought that I'm never going to be healed. That this is just something I'll have forever. And then also I think just the words that were being spoken over me at the time, like just uneducated things. But we didn't know back then. People just didn't know back then. And so yeah, going back, looking back, I think those were the contributing factors.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I think that's a real thing. Like for me, it wasn't so much panic attacks, it was burnout, but it hit me, it just came from out of the blue. It's the title of the book, Didn't See It Coming, but looking back on it, I'm like, " Oh man, there were clues all over the place," right?

Carlos W.: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I think Greg McKeown writes about this in Essentialism as well. I think eventually, you're just going, going, going, and then your body and mind rebel and say, "That's enough. We're calling a time out. You are done." And it's bizarre. So you say now you're healed. Do you want to take us through ... Like what was the-

Carlos W.: Yeah, I know that's a big statement too, that people are like, "Ah, really?"

Carey Nieuwhof: No, no, I'm okay with that. But do you want to take us through some of the physical, like as far as it depends on you changes that you made in your life and that journey. Because the generalized anxiety ... I'm in a small group at our church home. People just struggle with this all the time.

Carlos W.: Yeah. So when it was as bad as it was, my heart would pound out of my chest if I tried to leave my house. I told people all the time, "You know the feeling when a cop car pulls," especially there are people that don't understand this. When a cop car pulls up behind you with this lights on, that initial rush of adrenaline that you feel, like multiply that times 50 and then that's when I was living in that constant state. I had that feeling in me all the time. It is just no way to live. And life was good. I had a baby, I had a job, I had a healthy family. So that's where I was living. And tell me the question one more time.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, how did that break down? How did you begin to overcome that? Because I think what would have happened to a lot of people, Carlos, is they would've said, "Look, I just can't go out of my house. I quit my job or I lost my job. I never left." So how did you begin to ... What steps did you take to push through that?

Carlos W.: So I'd say 16 years ago I took the only steps I knew how to take and a, I just knew, my wife doesn't work. I have to pay the bills. So, I've gotta roll up my sleeves. And this is actually the opposite of what the advice I'd give you people now. But what I did was I rolled up my sleeves and I just muscled my way through it. Like I muscled my way through it. Now, I did go to the doctor that week and he said, "Oh, you didn't have a heart attack. You had a panic attack. Here's a pill and I want you to take this every day." And I was like, "Okay." I had no idea it was Paxil and it was 20 milligrams grams a day. And I started taking that and I took 20 milligrams of Paxil a day for 13 years of my life.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Carlos W.: And it helped.

Carey Nieuwhof: It really got that, that panic?

Carlos W.: Yeah, the panic thing went away. The anxiety was still there, but it definitely helped. And it was a good help. I changed my diet, I started exercising, I started

doing all the things that I thought to do in this, I'm Googling trying to figure out what to do. I did that. I started going to counseling. I went to a therapist. Started working my way through a lot of fears. I had a lot of health anxiety and I did that. And I'd say Carey that I got to where I was like 60% better for 13 years of my life. I was like, "Hey, this is good. This stuff it helps medicine, clinical psychology, therapy, exercise, diet, nutrition. This is awesome."

Carlos W.: But honestly, I think four years ago, was when I said, "Does John 10:10 really mean, does life to the full really mean 60% to the full? Or is there more that's available to me in this healing?" And that's when I started realizing, "Well, I placed all of my hope in the natural." All of it. And I don't know. This is just you may not be a Christian, but if you're a Christian, if you've ended up putting all your hope in the natural, that's not what I found my faith was about. So I said, "You know what, if I'm going to get 100%, I wonder if I need to shift that and I need to start looking at my help is the natural and my hope is the supernatural." My help is the natural, my hope is a supernatural.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's good.

Carlos W.: And I flipped this script. And Carey, when I did that, I found all of these resources supernaturally, Inner Healing, HeartSync, Restoring the Foundations. These are just different programs that I started doing. I went to Onsite, I talk about that in my book, Kill the Spider.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's Miles.

Carlos W.: With Miles Adcox. And it was an amazing program. But even after Onsite, I was still only 60% better. I wasn't all the way and I just thought, "How can I get there?" So suddenly, I flipped this script and I said, "Okay, I'm going to go for 100%." And then I started doing a program called HeartSync, a program called Restoring the Foundations. And these are blatantly Christian inner healing ministries. And that's when it all went away.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just because I know, obviously, this is months and months and years and years of work, because that's new to me, HeartSync, and what was the other one?

Carlos W.: Restoring the Foundations.

Carey Nieuwhof: Restoring the Foundations. Can you give us just a thumbnail of what those are about?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I've done inner healing prayer and it's pretty amazing.

Carlos W.: Yeah, what I love about HeartSync is, it's like 50% psychology and like clinical research stuff and then 50% like Holy Spirit, inner healing. So the people that are practitioners of this are actually like clinical therapists that also believe in the supernatural. And so they're able to connect the two. Because again, I believe in both. I believe that therapy is important, but so is Holy Spirit, HeartSync work. And so yeah, it's a lot of ... If you've done any inner healing prayer, where you're searching for agreements you've made with lies, and then you're breaking those agreements in the places, you're asking the Holy Spirit to lead you to these places.

Carlos W.: There were things that in three weeks of HeartSync and Restoring the Foundations that healed in me that ... I don't know, 10 years of therapy, I never even got to.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you give an example?

Carlos W.: Yeah. So I would say ... Okay, specifically like my health anxiety. Web MD was like my worst enemy and my best friend. If my pinky got numb, I'll be dead in two days, in my head. And therapy wasn't fixing it for me. So I went to, John Elan was my practitioner's name in Nashville. And it was so funny. Again, little clue into the next book. I go through this whole thing of my inner healing work in my next book that's coming out. And John, I walked into this man's room, he's an older gentlemen, super wise, looks like he just leaks Jesus out of him. He sits me down and we go through, Carey, the whole thing is three hour sessions. My eyes are closed the entire time. And actually, he's like, "I'm not going to do anything. We're just going to ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to where you need to go, Carlos. Where do you need to go today that feels safe?"

Carlos W.: And the first time I did this, it was so weird. I'm just like, "What is happening?" I'm halfway opening my right eye, I looked at this guy going like, "What? This is so weird."

Carey Nieuwhof: My first experience with that kind of this, I just wanted to get in the car and go home.

Carlos W.: Yeah, I just want to get-

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm like, get out of here.

Carlos W.: Get out of here. So then he's like, "Just what do you see?" And I'm like, "I don't know." And so it was so hard, Carey. But let me tell you, three hours later, I'm in a puddle of tears because I've gotten to spaces ... There's a lot of the trauma in my life, so a lot of self-inflicted stuff and then a lot of stuff that I didn't even

remember happening to me that I was able to. What HeartSync does is that it brings Jesus back into the spaces of your life that you felt he wasn't there.

Carlos W.: So what we're doing is we're going back to the spaces where I felt completely alone. Say it was a decision I made to completely destroy my family. You can read that in my last book, Kill the Spider. And what happened here at HeartSync, was that I was able to invite Jesus back there. What happens in trauma is, God has made our minds so amazing that we can literally split like our mind. So when trauma happens ... It's why like a five-year-old can be like sexually molested one night and play on the playground with their friends the next night, because God has created our minds in a way that we can be safe from the pain. And so what we do is we split off.

Carlos W.: And what I was doing was I was like, I'd split off all the pain. I wasn't thinking about it anymore. I didn't want to go there. And in these sessions I went back to the place of the pain, but I invited Jesus into those spaces. And that's where the healing ... That's why they call it HeartSync because you're syncing your heart back together the broken spaces.

Carey Nieuwhof: And there's evidence, I mean in psychology, but also in faith that you never really forget.

Carlos W.: Oh yeah, absolutely. You can suppress these things, but a lot of the heart sinks practitioners, they're showing like brain scans. Like we're talking about Dr. Caroline Leaf is a great person. I don't know if you've ever had her on your podcast?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I will though.

Carlos W.: You should, yeah. She's a clinical psychologist, like a doctor medical that has done all sorts of brain research showing the power of inner healing and what happens in our brain and how your brain literally heals because of this stuff. And so my brain did, like it healed.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you take back into like one of those experiences, just to give us an example of the thing that you invited Christ into the center of.

Carlos W.: Yeah. So let's do this. Let's go back into the cracks. If you have any listeners, I know a lot of your listeners have read my book, Kill the Spider, because they tell me everywhere I go, "Oh my gosh, I heard you on Carey's podcasts and I bought your book." So let's go back to the season where I'm deceptively having this emotional affair.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, and porn is still a big part of you?

Carlos W.: Porn is still a big part of my life, like huge part. I'm just living this double life, secret life. When the kids go to bed, 1:00 a.m., I'm on the sofa, my laptops open,

and I'm living my other life. And so when I'm in this HeartSync sessions, suddenly he's like, "Okay, well let's go back to an area of your life that you just feel the shame." And I don't know why it was this moment, but I remember in the exact condo we were in Bellevue, Nashville, Tennessee. I'm on the sofa and I'm seeing myself as if I'm floating up in the corner. That's how I picture it, maybe there's a camera there and I'm laying on the sofa with my back towards the fireplace. And we lived in a condo where was this one long hallway. So my eyes are down towards the hallway so I can see anyone coming from ... I had the right angle-

Carey Nieuwhof: So you keep the watch?

Carlos W.: Like I had my secret angle, right? And so I'm on that. I'm in deep conversation with someone I shouldn't be in deep conversation with. I am actively destroying my family in this moment. And there was such shame in that moment. And so he's like, "So how do you feel looking at this?" I just break down. I'm actually like, "I don't want to even see that guy. I don't want to be here. I hate him. I hate that guy." And what John said to me was, so this was the beginning of my healing, true healing. He said, "Carlos, that guy Christ was like here for that part of you too. And you've been bringing such shame to that part of you. He was just as hurt. He's so hurt and you're shaming him. So you know what we have to do. We have to invite you back into reconciliation with yourself."

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow.

Carlos W.: And I was like, "What?" He said, "You've got to forgive that part of you and you've got to invite that part of you because that part of you actually, it's still part of you." And so now, we're getting like weird. We're getting like okay. But it's all making sense in the moment as he's talking to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: I get it.

Carlos W.: So he's like, "Carlos, we've got to invite Jesus into this moment." So I invite Jesus in the moment and then he's like, "In your brain, I need you to like sit next to him. I need you to look at him." And so we kind of had this me and that part of me. He said, "You're not going to get rid of that part of you because it always will be a part of you. You need to bring healing to that part of you and bring that part of you back to where you are now." And Carey, it was the most mind blowing experience of my life when this happened, when we got done with this moment and this conversational intimacy with Jesus and myself and myself, which just sounds weird.

Carlos W.: And then I'm telling you, when I got done with that, all of the shame that I had and all of the hate I had for that version of myself, it was gone. And when that left, I'm not kidding you, my health anxiety somehow was tied to that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Carlos W.: Yes, and it just like dissipated. It went away. And so this is where I know that the clinical psychology part is so important, but so is the supernatural part, the Jesus part, the Holy Spirit part. And I don't know how it happened, but it did and that was four years ago and it just went away. All of that fear.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and I think we've all got moments like that where we look back on our life in a moment what we said, what we did, who we were in that moment, and we're like, "Oh wow. I hate that guy."

Carlos W.: Yeah, I hate that guy.

Carey Nieuwhof: I hate that guy.

Carlos W.: And that is what is keeping so many people away from their true healing is forgiveness is the key. It is the ticket for so many of us.

Carey Nieuwhof: So how do you look back on that Carlos now?

Carlos W.: Yeah. I'm actually friends with that Carlos.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really? But that doesn't mean you're going to be come him anymore?

Carlos W.: No, no, no.

Carey Nieuwhof: So how does that work?

Carlos W.: Because that version of Carlos was just, he was in such pain. He was in such pain that he was using pornography, flirting with people outside of the marriage. He was using these things to help him with his pain. So once I made good with that guy, all of the things that I hated about him, the fact that he was the life of the party, he was always bragging about himself. He was taking selfies in the mirror and posting them on Instagram so that people could tell them how beautiful. All those things that I hated about him actually, like it's okay to think well of yourself. And what I did was I shut that part of myself down and it was always from that point on was like, "Okay, I'm never going to take a selfie anymore. I'm never going to," so I went the opposite direction. I'm never going to even remotely be okay with the fact that, "Oh, I think I look attractive today."

Carlos W.: So like I butted up against that. Well what happened is I brought the healthy part of that back into my life now. And so just the self confidence in me, that that guy I shamed away, and so I shamed that self confidence away, it's so healthy and it's actually like a beautiful thing now that I'm bringing healthy parts of him, even though I never would have said in the moment there were healthy parts of it. Well, there were healthy parts of him, but ... It can get really confusing. But you know what I'm saying?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I know it can.

Carlos W.: I made peace with that part of me and so the healthy parts are reconciled to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: And how is Heather with all this? Your wife.

Carlos W.: Yeah, my wife Heather, she's the practitioner of inner healing at our church. So this is her wheelhouse now. It took me a long time to get to where she's at. And so she is on cloud nine, like this next season of ministry for us we're doing it together because she is-

Carey Nieuwhof: Isn't that the best feeling in the world?

Carlos W.: It is the best feeling because she is like, she sees that the anxiety and the person has gone because I finally took the step into the supernatural. And so she's just so proud. I mean she's just so proud.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome. I'm so glad to hear it. And doing stuff together too. Toni, my wife, is here today. You guys already met today. She's writing a book about the tougher parts in our marriage. Some of the other things she's seen in other marriages as an attorney, as a divorce attorney that'll be out in 2021, I think, something like that. Anyway, but being able to do this season of ministry together, like truly together, is incredible. And just because this is a deep well that we're drawing from in this podcast-

Carlos W.: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... And it's not like, I don't think this is something you can just do and say, "Okay, I'm going to pray about that time I was really ashamed," right? And then it'll all be fixed in eight minutes. This is deeper. But I went through, around my burnout, when I was in my 30s, there are parts of me, the drivenness all of that got twisted, it just got twisted. It was like, no, the motive wasn't pure. It wasn't. And God was using it in powerful ways. But when I went through some inner healing prayer and through lots of counseling and came out on the other side of my burnout, it's almost like God redeems those parts.

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: And he said, "You know what? Okay, that intimacy that you were misdirecting has to be redeemed in your marriage." In my case it was that ambition, that drive you've got, that is pretty much destroying you and some of the people around you. Actually, why don't you just give that to me-

Carlos W.: And let me completely revolutionize that part of you that actually isn't bad.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly. And how about we use that for good. And where I am today, I look at what God has done and it would have been unthinkable, all those years ago. So this is good. And you're convinced that this has a lot to do with the anxiety, depression and even to some extent ... We're not casting aspersions on anyone who still struggles, but this is all tied up in that.

Carlos W.: Yes, it really is. And also Carey, I think that anybody can look at how we're living now and the pace of life that we're living now and realize that the rise of anxiety and depression, especially in America and or in Canada, I don't know in North America or this, where I'm hanging out, can be absolutely linked to what I like to call ... What I call it is story stress. This is just what I think I've slowly figured out through research and honestly through my addictions, through social media and things. Because I did have a wry, a peak backup of my anxiety in the last year or so. And I tied it back and I immediately realized that it's the story stress. And let me explain that.

Carlos W.: When our great grandparents put any story on their shoulders or on their soul, it would have to be done through face to face communication or a letter. Someone write them a letter and tell them, "Hey," and I'm saying good stories of bad stories. "I'm getting married." That's great news. And they put it on their soul. "Oh, there's a death in the family," that's bad news. They'd put it on their soul. Up until my great grandparents generation that was the pace of stories stress. That's how we put other people's stories on our shoulders.

Carlos W.: Well, then comes my grandparents now they have television and they have news and they have newspapers and they have more ways to put more stress, this is only in the last hundred years, on their shoulders. Then my parents' generation, now we've got CNN, 24 hour news cycles. They had the answering machine, remember those things. We'd have an answering machine with a little tape and then more people could leave more stories for my parents to place on their shoulders and on their souls. And it's suddenly my generation, Gen X, we got the internet and we got email and suddenly we have more stories we're putting.

Carlos W.: And then suddenly now, we wake up in the morning and the research has proven that the first thing we do is we pick up these things and we swipe open to our stories stress manuals, which is it, Twitter, Instagram, news apps, whatever it may be, and we put more stress of stories on our shoulders in 15 minutes than my grandparents did in an entire month. And so it's just, there's no way we were created to carry this much. And I'm not talking about just bad news. I'm talking about good news, all news-

Carey Nieuwhof: All news.

Carlos W.: Good news and bad news. Like I just don't think that our souls have evolved past when they were created in the garden of Eden, yet technology has accelerated in a way that our souls were never meant to carry what we're carrying now. And

I'm convinced that that's why we're seeing this rapid spike in anxiety and depression and mental health because we weren't created to carry what we're carrying.

Carey Nieuwhof: Carlos, I couldn't agree more. Actually, you and I both spent the summer writing and I've got a whole chapter in my next book that'll come out a year from now, in 2020, on that and just the crazy amount of information. And I don't know about you, like I am muting more and more channels all the time.

Carlos W.: Yes, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's just like, "I don't need to hear that. It's irrelevant. The world is really going to blow up. I'm going to find out one way or the other." And I did some research, a month or two outside of the manuscript, but there's a number, the name just ... But it's actually, I want to say Rorschach, but that's it. That's a different test, that's seeing test. But it's a Dunbar's number. Dunbar's number that actually clinical psychology has shown most people are only capable of carrying a certain amount of friendships, reasonably.

Carlos W.: Absolutely, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: And what's happened with social media is it's just blown up. I've given up on friend requests on Facebook, my personal account. I actually started over again a few years ago with a new account thinking, "This is going to be the people I know." There's thousands now and people who want to be my friend. And I'm like, "Well, I know what's going to happen. I'm gonna hit the 5,000 friend level and I'm going to have to create a new account." I've just basically, ignored them. And it's the weirdest thing because I can only cope with so much information. So can we talk about social media and how that has fueled your anxiety spiral, but you still use it. So how have you learned to cope with it?

Carlos W.: Yeah, I definitely have mechanisms in place now to where I use it in a healthy way, because I do. My livelihood is based on my social media account Instagram.

Carey Nieuwhof: Me too, yeah.

Carlos W.: It's what it is.

Carey Nieuwhof: And we're doing a podcast.

Carlos W.: We're doing a podcast, I listen a lot. We're producing more information for people to consume.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly.

Carlos W.: But let's get practical for a second for the listeners. I've got some things in place, in my life that have drastically eliminated this social anxiety. So it's not social anxiety, social media kind of forced anxiety. First thing I've done is I bought an alarm clock. You guys remember those things. It's a clock that you plug in and all it does is tell you the time and it wakes you up. And that's next to my bed now and no longer is my phone next to my bed. Because what we've done is we've turned our now our phones are our alarm clock, and it's everything else.

Carlos W.: And, of course, the last thing we do in bed is we're scrolling, scrolling, scrolling. The first thing we do in the morning as we scroll, we scroll, we scroll. Well, that doesn't happen anymore. Now, when I wake up, guess what? All I've done is woken up. I get up, I have breakfast, I read the paper. That's another thing I've done. I ordered a subscription to a newspaper-

Carey Nieuwhof: That comes with actual paper.

Carlos W.: ... That comes with actual paper to my door. And like there's a guy that throws it in my yard, I feel like it's 1980 sit-com every morning. I'll walk out with my coffee and that's where I'm getting my news everyday, is from a newspaper. And guess what? I can't just endlessly scroll. When I'm done, I'm done. When it's over, it's over.

Carlos W.: And the other major thing that I've done, and this could be transformative for a lot of your listeners, if they do this and it's hard to do, but every single night, I delete Instagram and Twitter off my phone, every single night. And at noon, the next day, I re-install it for an hour. And I consume the content and then I delete it again when I'm done and then I re-install it at 8:00 p.m. and then I consume and I upload my stories. People are like, "Well, how do you upload stories?" Well, I'm still taking videos during the day. Like if I'm doing an Instagram story, I'm creating my content, but I'm not uploading it until ... for two hours a day do I have those apps on my phone.

Carlos W.: And Carey, it has been the most freeing thing because now from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., I have it. And then, it depends, like probably 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I have it again then I deleted again. It has become like the pattern and the rhythm of my life. It has become so healthy because of that. It's just not on every single day. When I'm on an airplane, I don't have Twitter on my phone. I'm not on Instagram, I'm not just scrolling unless I'm on from 12:00 to 1:00 or 8:00 to 9:00.

Carlos W.: And so those two things, just those two things, the alarm clock and the story stress removal of Instagram and Twitter on a daily basis has really helped a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's powerful. I read one of my reads this year was Digital Minimalism by Cal Newport. A similar thing. And so I think that's really helpful. I want to talk a little bit about ... You're so open. You're such an open book. I was having a conversation with another well known author earlier this week after actually Jarrid Wilson's suicide. And she is somebody who's pretty open, pretty

transparent. And yet there are some people who say, "Well, if you're in leadership, you can't really struggle with mental health." And I'm sure there's a line at which you're not helping anybody, right?

Carlos W.: Absolutely, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I remember there was a post that came out, and I won't name who, after Jarrid Wilson's suicide that basically said, "Anybody who struggles with mental health can't be in a leadership."

Carlos W.: Can't be in a leadership, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I know you responded. I'd love to get your-

Carlos W.: I did. I never, Carey, do that on the internet. I never bring up beef. My whole thing online is I'm a hope dealer. I just want people to-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, that's what I feel.

Carlos W.: But it was such a dangerous post that I had to say something. And I replied back and actually all I replied ... I didn't even like put rebuttals to his points. I just said, "This is gross. This is gross that you would use Jarrid Wilson's suicide to try to make your point about leadership. First of all just the timing is gross. Everything about it is just makes me nauseous. That's all I'm going to say." So then I got like a thousand likes on that comment on his thing and then ... And I knew by commenting in his world that I was going to get destroyed by his people, which is fine. But then more and more my friends started ... And it's just bull crap. It just is bull crap.

Carlos W.: I look at David and I look at the Psalms and he was the most bipolar human being on the planet, from Psalm 49 to Psalm 51, woe is me. God, I hate you. My life is miserable. To God, you're the greatest. You're the devil. And talk about mental illness. Talk about somebody that struggled. I look at that and the rebuttals are, "Well, we have qualifications for leadership in the church. When you go to the new Testament, things are different." Well, here's the thing, nobody is perfect. We're all going to struggle with mental illness in some way, shape, or form. There's a stat that says, "Look at your friends. One out of every four people is going to have a diagnosable mental illness in their life."

Carlos W.: And so I just can't imagine getting to the space where you would believe that if you struggle with mental illness, you can't have a capacity to serve in leadership in one way, shape, or form. It's just a lie and it's not true. And I've seen so many pastors, do so much good that have struggled and been authentic with their depression or anxiety. Now, here's the deal. I'm not saying that there isn't a line, like you said, where it's time to step out and to recover and to find healing, absolutely. But you cannot throw a blanket statement out there like that. And

what it does is it brings shame and it makes leaders hide their mental illness is what it does.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, which only makes it worse.

Carlos W.: And that is exactly which only makes it worse.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I know neither of us are doctors, psychologists. But if you have any thoughts around where that line might be, like you said with your panic attacks, you kind of soldiered on. I did that after my burnout. I refused to sabbatical that was offered to me. And I think I'm relatively healthy, these days, that's what people say. Do you have any thoughts on how you know like, "Okay, I got to take a break or no, I can push through this?"

Carlos W.: Yeah. Gosh, I feel like everybody, if you even have to ask yourself that question, "Gosh, do I need to take a break?" The answer's yes. Because here's the thing, mental illness, there is still not ... When it comes to medicine and serotonin levels, there is no test when you go to the doctor that they can measure your serotonin levels, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Carlos W.: But everyone's like, "Well, my doctor said my serotonin level is low." Well, how does the doctor know? Because they don't. So I can take a blood pressure test and you can see if my blood pressure is high or low. So it's still all guessing. So here's why I'm saying that is because there is no way to measure it besides what you feel. If you feel like things are starting to come off the rails, it's time to take a break. If you have suicidal thoughts, not only is it time to take a break, it's time to get help. It's time to maybe we can put the suicide help helpline, crisis line on this, in the notes-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, we will. We'll put it in the notes.

Carlos W.: Reach out, reach out. You're not created to soldier through this and like fight through this. Take a break. And honestly, sabbaticals need to be more, not just for high level leadership in the church. I think that your children's worker, that there needs to be a way that the church realizes that we were not created to grind like this and everybody needs rest. Everybody needs more rest. And so I don't know what the line is, but I know everybody feels it and you can figure it out on yourself. If you feel like you've got to wake up and muscle through something, then it may be time to take a break.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and I think the other thing too is wherever that line is, definitely try to get help.

Carlos W.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you're like a few lights are going on, you got two lights on your dashboard after hearing this, it's like, okay, you better go talk to a doctor. You'd better go talk to your best friend, somebody. I heard this expressed recently, you could tell anybody and they'd go like, "Well, I don't know what to do with that," right?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But tell somebody who cares about you enough to make sure you get help.

Carlos W.: Yeah, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: Who's got your best interest in mind.

Carlos W.: Absolutely, you've got to have that person.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Well this has been so life-giving, Carlos, anything else you want to share?

Carlos W.: Well, one thing that I've done and I've seen about four months ago, I shared about a day or two struggle that I was having with ... I don't know if I would even label it depression, but I was feeling it. And overnight I said, "Hey, if anybody would like to know what I've done," again, I'm not a therapist, I'm not a counselor, but I am somebody that's gone through this season and I've come out on the other side. "Give me your email, just let me know." And, Carey, listen to the percentage. I've got 40,000 Instagram followers up put on my Instagram thing. I thought I'd get 40 emails. I got 10,000 emails.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's crazy.

Carlos W.: 25% of my audience gave me their email and said, "I'm struggling with this and I need help." And so I basically created like a 30 day, just, "This is what Carlos has done and maybe hopefully it'll help you," kind of thing in all 10,000 people went through it. And people can find it at SerotoninSpark.com.

Carey Nieuwhof: SerotoninSpark.com?

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'll link to it in the show notes.

Carlos W.: Yeah, link it to show notes and go there and it's a free little video series that just where I'm giving you what I've done and what I've seen work on both sides, the natural and the supernatural and it's helped a lot of people. So people want to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's cool. Carlos, you're always so life-giving to talk with. It's never ever boring.

Carlos W.: Thanks buddy.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you so much. And people, what's a home base for you these days on the internet?

Carlos W.: Yeah. Still really home base is Instagram for me. It's L-O-S-W-H-I-T, loswhit. And then from my profile there you can get to anywhere you need to get to. So I'm on Facebook barely, but I'm on Twitter a lot if I want to argue and then-

Carey Nieuwhof: If you want to argue, that's all it's good for these days.

Carlos W.: Yeah, it's all good for these days. But yeah, you can hang out with me on there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Carlos. Thanks man.

Carlos W.: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that was real. It always is and never boring. I never know where Carlos is going to or where he's coming from and yeah, you know what, I still blog. I still do. You can find that LeadLikeNeverBefore.com or CareyNieuwhof.com, takes you to the same place. And guys, 10 million downloads right around the corner. I am so pumped for that. On the day that we hit it. I don't know when that's going to be. We're going to be watching. We'll give away \$1,000 worth of Starbucks in 24 hours, so turn on notifications on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. I'm CareyNieuwhof on Instagram, cnieuwhof on Twitter and Facebook. We're going to share the love and we are so excited to bless you guys as the leaders on that.

Carey Nieuwhof: And then, five of you, five listeners, we're going to spend a day together in 2020 in beautiful Nashville, Tennessee, one of my favorite cities. We're going to fly you in all expenses paid. I'm going to do a day of coaching with you. We really want to celebrate you, invest in your leadership. So if you want to hang out, go to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million. That's our 10 million download giveaway. It's a day with me, all expenses paid and man we are so excited to do that. You have until December 13th to sign up so it's just a couple of weeks. So head on over to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million.

Carey Nieuwhof: Make sure also that you check out MarriedPeople.org/Carey and you only got a few more days to check out ProMediaFire.com/2020, thank you to our partners. They've been with us through all these downloads and make sure that you get the very best for free. There are costs associated with it, but guess what? You guys don't pay them. And we try to bring you partners that we think you will love.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, next week on the podcast we have a really exciting episode. We have a couple of people that I work with. We've got Sarah Piercy, my long time assistant and Dillon Smith, who are both on my team. They are great,

sensational people. Fantastic. I think high capacity young leaders. I hired Sarah when she was 22, Dillon when he was 19 and we talk all about working together and how to develop young leaders and so much more. And that is actually next week on the show. Here's an excerpt from that pretty honest conversation.

Sarah Piercy: For a while, I didn't realize you actually wanted to know how I was doing. I don't know how long it actually took me to realize that, but you just kept asking, "So how are you doing? No, really, how are you doing?" And you did a thoughtful job of asking followup questions when I would answer, that showed me that you're really curious about how I'm doing, not just at work. And I think once I realized that, then I felt like I could tell you that I went Speed Dating and how it went. And it was a good laugh.

Carey Nieuwhof: And it was a whole lot of fun too. So guys, I'm so excited for that. So that's coming up next week. Again, if you subscribe, you get it absolutely free. And now on to Ask Carey. I know a lot of you are really enjoying this segment of the show, so, so am I. And the question comes from Chris. And he wants to know, "What are the best ways to move a growing church off of a board based governance system to a more efficient system of governance, especially in today's hyper-connected world?" Great question, Chris. Comes up with a lot of people. Board led organizations, I think the toughest form of government for any organization. And actually this is true, I've talked to people who lead publicly traded companies. You know what they live under, the tyranny of the 90 day results. The phone call to investors, it's like, "Not good enough," share price down.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's like congregational ministry. And congregational ministry you are just always under a microscope. And how do you get 50 people, 100 people, 500 people, 1,000 people to agree on anything? You kind of don't. So it's a really challenging governance system. But what a lot of churches have, especially mid-sized churches, is board based governance system. And I went through that. We went through congregational government at the churches I started out at, to board based government. And I thought board based was going to take us there for a long time. But you know what? You hit a limit. And you hit a limit ... I teach us in the church growth masterclass, you can learn more at ChurchGrowthMasterclass.com.

Carey Nieuwhof: But I know at 400 to 600, we ran into the limit of what board based governance can do. And here's the problem you're going to run into. If you're wondering why this is an issue. When you're a really small church, you can go to your board and say, "Okay, here are the five things I've been working on for the last month, blah, blah, blah. What do you think? What do you think? What do you think?" By the time you get to 400 to 600 people, there's not five things you've been working on. There's like 50. And you just think about it, you probably have a handful of staff, probably have half a dozen staff at that point. So half a dozen staff working 40 hours a week is 240 hours of staff productivity. In a typical week times a month is you're pushing 1,000 hours.

Carey Nieuwhof: And here's where I ran into the wall. I'm trying to explain in a two hour board meeting what happened in 1,000 hours of ministry in the course of a month, I was writing like eight page reports to these poor elders going, "Okay, you need to know this. You need to know that. You need to know this, you need to know that," you're just going to hit a wall. Well, now we're like 1500 people on the weekend. You can't possibly summarize what's happening in the church in a detailed way.

Carey Nieuwhof: And so the transition you have to make if you want to grow is to move from board based to staff led. And so part of that, honestly is just sharing the vision I just shared. You asked, "How do you do it?" Talk about the why, not just the what. So explain that really board based governance doesn't scale. And if you want to figure out why it doesn't scale 10X your problem. So right now, I don't know how big your church is Chris, but let's say it's a church of 400. Well, what if you're a church of 4,000, then what happens? It's like, "Yeah, we can't possibly summarize all that and have intelligent board members." Our board meetings were going way too late and still we weren't getting to all the issues. It's just impossible to do that. So you have to become staff led.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if people are looking for analogies, imagine being on the board of a local hospital. Let's say it's a \$100 million hospital healthcare institution, and you're a board of directors. So you're accountant, you're a lawyer and you're sitting on the board of directors and you hear from the CEO of that hospital, what are you looking for? You're looking for high level decisions. You're not looking for, "You know what? We ran out of supplies in the stock room for surgical gowns and we think we found a person who can supply surgical gowns for 3% less." You're like, this is not a board level thing, but a lot of churches operate at that level with their boards.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what you need to do is you need to say, so what are you looking for? If you're running \$100 million healthcare institution, you're looking for high level decisions, "Hey, we're thinking of opening a cancer clinic. What do you guys think? Hey, we're looking at this, Hey we are going to be 10% under budget this year. These are my recommended strategies for the board." That's how a board operates. And that is what has to happen in a larger church. So it has to become staff led.

Carey Nieuwhof: Couple of guidelines for staff led. Number one, trust has to be high and you have to be accountable to that board. So if things are not going well, the board can speak into that. And that of course also means the power to hire and fire. That they should have the power to hire and fire the senior pastor. So that is something that you have to be willing to be accountable to. You have to be willing to be accountable to the board. Another key component would be a single person accountability. You don't want the board going around to other people on staff trying to manage them. No, you manage the staff, you are accountable to the board.

Carey Nieuwhof: So those are some clean lines. I say a lot more at ChurchGrowthMasterclass.com, if you're interested in more. I actually have a whole unit on governance where I not only walk you through it, but I walk your board through it and why it's so important. So the more efficient system of governance, I would say is staff led, has to be high trust, high accountability, but then you get to give the executive level summaries to the board and really tap into their expertise at the level that they can provide it.

Carey Nieuwhof: So hope that helps Chris, man. Keep the questions coming on any social platform. Just use the #askCarey. We are searching for those on a regular basis. Thanks for the questions guys. Thanks so much for listening. And the 10 million download is right around the corner. Go to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com/10million. That's, one zero million and man, it's going to be exciting. Can't wait to hang out with five of you next year in Nashville. We'll pick up the bill for that. Does that sound good? And we'll see you next time 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.