

**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 309 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. This episode is brought to you by Financial Peace University and RightNow Media. My guest is Terry Wardle. Man, this one's special. So I get the privilege of taking you into a very pivotal season of my life where about 15 years ago as a leader in my 30s, I met a guy named Terry Wardle, my guest today, and Terry at that time was a professor at Ashland Theological Seminary. He's an university professor, and was leading really a program called Pastors of Excellence, that I got attracted to because of the word excellence, but it was really about your heart as a leader. And honestly, this was providential timing. As I say to Terry, I'm not sure I'd be in ministry today and I'm not even sure I'd be married today if it wasn't for the work that God started doing my life in the early 2000s under Terry Wardle's leadership.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** And there were lots of other people involved, but Terry and I talk about that season of my life. A lot of you have heard me talk about emotional health and the the heart health of the leader and yeah, that all started with this program and Terry Wardle. And it's an incredible privilege to bring you this conversation. If you're watching it on YouTube, you may notice that I'm smiling and trying to fight back tears the entire interview. It was that meaningful to me. Terry's got a brand new book out which tells his story. It's called Some Kind of Crazy, and it's just about the personal, the interior life of the leader. Man, this one's real special. So thanks so much for tuning in to this episode. We have an Ask Carey coming at the end. Taylor from San Diego wants to hear my advice on marriage with The High Impact Leader lifestyle. It's a course I do, so we'll talk about that.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** But hey guys, you know what? Christmas holidays are right around the corner and that means a lot of people are going to have more debt, and that's not great. Well, what if you were part of the solution and what if you perhaps even got your own life in gear financially next year? Now, this going to sound strange, but one of the ways you can best help them is to lead people through a program called Financial Peace University. You may have heard Dave Ramsey and his teachings. Well, Financial Peace University has now helped nearly 6 million people take control of their money, pay off debt and build wealth, and they're looking for leaders like you to help lead a class. Here's the thing, you don't have to be a financial expert, you do not have to be debt free.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** In fact, you can use this as a springboard to get out of debt yourself. You don't even have to take a class before leading it. 40% of the group leaders for Financial Peace University lead a class while taking it for the first time. Plus a dedicated advisor will walk you through. If you're a little bit nervous, they'll walk you through everything on how to lead a class. Plus you get everything you need. How much does it cost? Nothing. So if you're looking for a way to serve

others, simply text, givehope to 33789, that's givehope, all one word, to 33789. And I am so excited to see the stories that get written in 2020 as people climb out of debt. I'll tell you, we've never really been in financial trouble, but there were times where money was always a tension in our family, and it's not these days. I have to tell you. That is such a gift. Financial freedom. So if you want to be part of that, text givehope to 33789, and help some people get out of debt next year, maybe even yourself.

Carey Nieuwhof: And also if you're looking for a way to develop people and equip those around you, whether you're a business leader or a church leader, there's a powerful tool for you to leverage in your church or your company. The team at RightNow Media creates the world's largest video-driven leadership training, Bible studies and personal care resources. More than 20,000 churches, schools and businesses already subscribed to RightNow Media's streaming platform, and that gives their people, like people in your organization, access to tens of thousands of inspirational videos anytime, anywhere. So they have content from people like, well, some of my former guests, Patrick Lencioni, Henry Cloud, Ann Voskamp, Francis Chan, J.D. Greear, and they cover topics like marriage, personal finance, mental health, and so much more.

Carey Nieuwhof: So when your organization subscribes to RightNow Media, everyone gets access to these videos free. So to access that, go to [RightNowMedia.org/Carey](https://RightNowMedia.org/Carey). That's [RightNowMedia.org/Carey](https://RightNowMedia.org/Carey), to get a free trial of RightNow Media today. Well, without further ado, let's jump into my conversation with professor, author and my friend, Terry Wardle. Well, this is a real thrill to have Terry Wardle on the podcast. Terry, welcome.

Terry Wardle: It's such a joy. I feel a very personal connection. It's almost like I'm just talking to an old friend.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we are. We're having a conversation because I know I teed it up in the intro to the show, but not very often do I have guests who I go back 15 years with personally. And it was actually, we'll probably start there, it was around I think maybe 2003 that we met for the first time at that time. Tell us a little bit about what you were doing at the Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio.

Terry Wardle: I had been on the faculty for a few years by that time, and I was increasingly concerned about the wellbeing of leaders. And I had an opportunity to start a program, we called it Renewing Pastor in People, and Christian leaders would come and we would spend time with them and I would talk about the essentials. I would always say, "You have to pay attention to the essentials." Well, the Lilly Foundation found out about that and we had some conversations and they were willing to fund a program called Pastors of Excellence, in which we would bring pastors in and they would spend about a year with us in different venues, and we would be trying to focus in on what would be the essentials. There are just so many leaders out there working hard to be effective

and not paying a whole lot of attention to their interior lives. And what was interesting, Carey, was a lot of people got thrown off by the title.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, that was me.

Terry Wardle: Programs called Pastors of Excellence and they think they're going to come and get more skills, more competencies, and they're there a little while and find that, "Oh, this is about me," and not all of them were happy about it, but they mostly stayed and most of them experienced something very deep.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and that was 100% my story. So I think you know this actually. I'm quite sure you know this, but Chuck Congram, our mutual friend, was one of my mentors. Still is, but back then, very active in my life. And he said, "You got to come to Ohio with me and do this Pastors of Excellence thing." And I remember there was an application, right?

Terry Wardle: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: I still remember being in my office filling that out, and 100%, you got me hook, line, and sinker. I think God used that Terry because I just saw excellence and I'm like, "I'm in. I'm just going to do this." And then I get down to PoE, and you tell your story on the opening night. I remember being in a lecture hall with a hundred people I didn't know and you're talking about growing a church rapidly. I'm very interested, and then you had a complete breakdown that lands you in a psychiatric institution and you start talking about your heart. And I'm like, "How do I get out of here? How do I get out of here now?" And I'm not sure, if it wasn't for my friend Chuck, I might've left that night because I was so uncomfortable. I was like, "Ah." I would have been 37, 38. I was so uncomfortable with that whole interior dialogue, but I think my friend Chuck knew, I think this is where Carey needs to be.

Carey Nieuwhof: And absolutely, I stuck around. And Toni and I were talking about this last night at dinner. I'm not trying to be in ministry today or in leadership today, and I'm not even 100% sure we would be married today if it wasn't for the work that God started to do in my life, a huge part of which has been PoE. That kick-started the whole thing, so I owe you an incredible amount of gratitude and a huge debt. But, yeah, that was quite the journey, Terry. You say you remember those years quite well and you met me as a young, aggressive, ambitious pastor with the growing church who needed to pay attention to his heart a little more. Fair enough?

Terry Wardle: Oh, yeah, it's humorous to me because we had spent a year before you got there working with 18 people that would serve as the cohort leaders. And about the second retreat in, Chuck Congram said to me, "I didn't sign up for this, where you're taking us." And I laughed and he was serious. And then I said, "Well, I'm going to take you to the paperwork and show you that you did sign up for this." And pretty soon he started laughing. He said, "I may not have signed

up for this, but this is the path God wants me on." And you know that over the years, we ended up having hundreds of leaders go through the Pastors of Excellence, and we would actually measure going in and coming out of how they were feeling about themselves, their stress levels, their understanding of identity and calling, and we saw a major movement. One of my favorite books on leadership is Edwin Friedman's book called A Failure of Nerve. And one of the things... It's fantastic book.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I've read it.

Terry Wardle: Yeah, one of the things Friedman says is that the problem in leadership is not a failure of competency, but a failure of identity. Meaning many people and leaders are not stable in their identity, and as a result, they use performance and achievement as a way of advancing themselves. And he says, no matter how much you move them towards competency, if they don't know who they are and if they're not a differentiated leader, it's going to lead to serious problems. And that's what happened in my life.

Terry Wardle: And that's one of the reasons that I began to invest in writing the material for Pastors of Excellence to be able to say to these excellent men and women, you have got to be attentive to your interior life because your unresolved past will catch up with you. And as you know, for many of the men and women that were there, they were living on the brink right then as to whether they were going to continue in ministry. Many of them were sacrificing their personal wellbeing. And I remember well saying once workaholism in ministry is not a matter of theology, it's a matter of pathology. And until we deal with that pathology, we're not going to be the men and women that we are supposed to be.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've talked pretty openly on this platform, on the podcast, also in some of my writings about my performance addiction. And I think it was actually through PoE that I first put my finger on that and went, "Wait a minute." Because you're big in your ministry, in your teachings and in your writing about the lies that we tell ourselves, and these are things our parents didn't lie to us necessarily or teacher didn't lie to us, but I know in my childhood it came apart. And I don't know 100% how this happened, but I just thought, "Oh, if I perform well, people seem to be more pleased with me." And so, okay, get good grades, hustle hard, get entrepreneurial and all of a sudden everybody is... Your stock goes up personally.

Carey Nieuwhof: And that almost hit a crisis point when I was in my 30s because I really felt like it didn't matter how big the church got, it didn't matter how successful I was as a leader or how much affirmation I got. There was a sinkhole at the bottom of me that just, I remember Toni saying to me, "How much is enough?" And I realized, "Oh, the answer is nothing's enough." And that's the kind of stuff you're talking about, right?

Terry Wardle: Oh, absolutely. Someone asked Rockefeller once how much money is enough and he said, "A little bit more." Now at that time, he was the wealthiest man in the world, but he needed a little more. I think this is fundamentally the issue. I think we live in a world that communicates this to people, "As you are, you're not enough. But if you will achieve and if you will perform, you will then be able to have your deepest core longings met. So if you want love, if you want significance, if you want purpose, if you want to belong, perform." And because we want those things, off we go.

Terry Wardle: I was a performer and I became a seminary professor, then a writer, then a speaker, then I start a fast growing church, then I become a seminary president. And all that time, my unresolved past was chasing after me and I was trying to outdistance through achievement and performance. And then when you get those kudos from others you think, "Well, surely am on the right track." But then the barrenness of that busyness and emptiness comes in and you realize you sacrificed heart and this cacophony of voices are keeping you away from your true self.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's not unique to ministry either. Do you think this is a common life/leadership journey for most people?

Terry Wardle: I think many of us, whether we're in Christian leadership or corporate leadership, struggle with this basic message. How do we get our deepest longings met if we're not achieving and we're not performing? I do work with people that are not necessarily in the Christian family, and the corporate world, it suffers the same way. And as a matter of fact, I'll give it another. I over the last two years, have been working with the American military. I've been brought to do training at Fort Bragg, Fort Monroe, Fort Knox. Here are soldiers. And they live in an environment where there's the soldiers that please and the soldiers that don't and you want to please and you work hard and you try to measure up, and I think there's nothing that beats a person down more than trying to measure up.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's interesting because I'm imagining the room that we were in in the cohorts that we were in and we were all assigned small groups. So there might be, I don't know, 50 or 70 in your particular year, and then we all had small groups that we are part of. You said something earlier, which is really interesting to me that the majority of the people who got there had massive issues that could potentially take them out of leadership, things that they didn't see coming. When you look back over all of those cohorts, what percentage would you say of leaders in the room were close to burnout or close to... And it's not like they're hiding affairs or that kind of thing, it's just like, "Man, this grind has gotten to me and I'm not sure I'm going to make it." Was that a pretty common condition?

Terry Wardle: It's a very common condition. It was for Pastors of Excellence. And what happened, as you know, once you get past that first day or two, you've been

given permission to be open about your own journey. And all of a sudden you find, wow, at least these five people around my table are struggling like I am. If you went to every table, you would find to some degree, people are burnt out. They're trying to measure up. They can't figure out what's it going to be that actually gets me to the top of the mountain I'm trying to climb, and at the same time they're wondering about their families. And you know this, many people both in corporate leadership and in church leadership begin to suffer in their relationships with the people they love the most. They're out there trying to achieve and all of a sudden you see their relationship with their children's at risk, their relationship with their spouse at risk, their relationship with God is at risk. And it's all because they're being driven by unresolved issues of the past that keep them pushing toward this issue of performance.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, let's dig in a little bit to your story. So do you want to walk us through... It's a fabulous book too. It reminded me, I don't know whether you read the book, it came out a couple of years ago, Hillbilly Elegy, but it reminded me a little bit for readers who might have read that, it was quite the upbringing, Terry, and there were some stories in there. Like I just, having spent years with you at different points, I just didn't know. But everybody's got a story, and you tell that story in your book. So walk us through it a little bit.

Terry Wardle: Well, first, I wrote this book at the encouragement of a few people in order that people could see that God wants to meet us in our story and that he wants access to all parts of our story. I used to think that God wanted all the good parts of my story or he wanted me to somehow become better at sin management so that I could ascend to the mount of transfiguration, and then in the midst of my story, I met the Lord in the ditch. So let me talk a little bit about the ditch. I grew up in the coal mining fields of Western Pennsylvania. My grandfather had been in England. He had been born in England, my great grandfather rather. He was in prison and he escaped and came to the US, left his wife and daughters there.

Terry Wardle: Then when he comes here, he gets his cousin pregnant and starts a family here without ever divorcing that family there. He ends up having eight children. They all came into this little area where I grew up. They all had big families, and one of the people that was part of that family was my grandfather, and then my grandfather, of course, through very dysfunctional means, ends up having my father. So I grew up in the coal fields among a people that had a disdain for education, a distrust of religion. They believed in one another and hard work. I would say that my family crest would have been blue collars and rednecks. I said to somebody, "If our family men were cologne, it was the scent of diesel fuel and dirt." And that's where I grew up. And it was rough. And our family, I just have to be honest, they believed in the law if it was to their advantage. If it wasn't to their advantage, they would get outside of the law.

Terry Wardle: And so there was adultery, crime, there was addiction of various levels, and that's the environment where I was growing up. And there were very specific

issues that occurred to me, events that were highly traumatic. Being abused, being abandoned in certain times, and I ended up through a bunch of these events, having a serious battle with anxiety even as a small boy. I had seen death five feet away from me by the time I was five. My uncle shot my aunt by the time I was seven, eight years old right next door, and those had a lasting impact on my life and trauma. And what I didn't realize at the time was even though when I came to Christ, it was wonderful, I carried all that unresolved baggage with me and it became part of the motivation to achieve, part of the motivation to perform, part of the motivation to prove that I'm better than I think I am. And those wounds were serious issues in my life.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, can we talk about that a little bit more because everybody's got a childhood story and some seem to be pretty normal, like middle class-ish backgrounds, but your story is not uncommon. To have that kind of background, to have that kind of trauma, to have abuse. Can you walk us through some specific things that you saw or that happened to you or around you as a child and then the impact? Like how you remember as a... Because that's part of your ministry too. You take people back to when they were three or four and you invite Jesus into the presence of that memory and so on and so forth. So can you talk about what some of those experiences were and how that impacted you as a child?

Terry Wardle: Well, let me give you two or three quickly. One, I was probably five years old. My grandfather was a notorious adulterer and he would run around with women all through our town. One night he came to the house, I was there with grandma and he said, "Terry, let's go for a ride." I was shocked by that, grandma was shocked, but off we went, we got in the car. I thought it was just him wanting to be with me. We go up the country road Carey, and all of a sudden, we turned down a two track that goes out through the woods and it's getting darker and darker. The sun goes down, you can hear the the tree limb scratching on the side of the car, which sounded like witches screaming. All of a sudden, he reaches into the glove box, he pulls out a revolver and tells me to lay on the back seat of the car in the floor, and he gets out. And he's gone for over an hour.

Terry Wardle: I'm a five year old kid, in the woods, away from the road, hiding on a floor remembering a gun. He comes back an hour later, all perspiring, gets in the car, backs out and on the way back to grandma's house, he said, "Don't tell anybody. This will be our secret." Well, eventually, I did tell because I was scared to death, and my parents just didn't want to talk about it. It was years later that I learned that he was off, went to the woods, came down over the hill and had an adulterous relationship with a woman whose husband was on afternoon shift in the coal mines, and here I was as a kid dealing with that.

Terry Wardle: It wasn't but a year later, I was at grandma's house and I heard him scream a blood curdling scream. He comes out around the dining room and falls at my feet and screaming and writhing and he goes into a coma and dies there. And

again, in my family, there was no talking. So let me give you one other. So maybe six months later, we're at grandma's house, I'm sleeping in a bed, my great grandmother's in the bed next to me, and all of a sudden, grandma comes in and shouts, "Oh my God, mom is dead."

Terry Wardle: And so here I am, five years old, and next to me is a dead woman. And then all that, them coming and taking her. Now I could give you more examples, but here's the point. My family didn't talk about issues. They didn't talk through issues. You just pressed on. And I began to develop this extreme fear of the dark, extreme fear of death, extreme fear of harm, and the only thing my family did was shame me. They gave me the name of a nervous child. My dad called me a weenie, and so all through that childhood, I'm trying to pretend to be something I'm not when I'm afraid. And then when I get to my teenage years, I learned that anger can at least silence fear. And I just became an angry, aggressive kid. An angry, aggressive teenager, carrying that baggage with me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, do you have any idea of your mother dying next to you, your grandfather doing that? Do you have any idea to this day why your grandfather took you on that ride?

Terry Wardle: It was a ruse. He was wanting to pretend like he was just out to take me so that-

Carey Nieuwhof: So he was deeking out your grandmother?

Terry Wardle: Right, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, and your mom, what did she die of? Did she...

Terry Wardle: No, no, like grandmother. It was like grandmother.

Carey Nieuwhof: Sorry, your grandmother died.

Terry Wardle: That's-

Carey Nieuwhof: Sorry, yeah.

Terry Wardle: And she passed right beside me. And when you're five years old, none of this makes sense. And if people don't empathically connect, you start carrying these wounds with you off into your adulthood and that's what happened to me. And so my teenage years were pretty much marked by anger, aggression, performance, trying to out distance myself from this guy inside I don't like anymore, who's that scared kid.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, then how did you become a Christian? What was that story for you?



Terry Wardle: Well, it's about a three stage process. First, my mother, when I was about 13 or 14 years old, went off to a revival service Carey. We weren't church people, but she went off to a revival service. But honestly, it was half revival, half Vaudeville show, because what happened is this revivalist came to town, he had a song leader and the song leader would be out there first and he'd be singing these great gospel songs and the church would be packed, and the revivalist would dress up like Jesus. And then he might peek in the window and everybody sees him. Or he might go into the balcony and suddenly they point to the balcony and he would peer over, or he'd hide behind a pillar and he'd look out from the pillar. And of course, people would yell and they would swoon. And then he'd go and he'd put his street clothes on and he'd preach with the idea of, "Well, it wasn't me, it was Jesus."

Terry Wardle: Well, my mother went to this and I remember too she made me go once, 13, 14 year old kid, and I can remember sitting there and all of a sudden to my left, the doorknob started turning slowly. And the door opens and he peeks his head out and there's Jesus staring right at me and he didn't look happy to see me. People were yelling and swooning and pointing toward him. Well, Carey, here's the issue. Something happened there that my mother did come to a form of faith. She had a relationship with Jesus, so she began to drag us to a country church that was rather legalistic and a little Pentecostal, but they had a great youth group with girls there and I started to attend this youth group in order to meet with the girls as a teenager.

Terry Wardle: And David Wilkerson was coming to Pittsburgh with all of his drug addicts and they got a bus and they took us in and I wanted to go because I could sit in the bus with girls. I get to this event and David Wilkerson preached a sermon on the sword of the Lord is coming through the land. It was hell fire. Scared me so much. Carey, I got out of my seat and walked outside the Syria Mosque and then realized I won't know how to get home. I went back in and eventually he said, "If you don't want to go to hell, come forward." I went up forward. I was scared out of my mind, but do you know what happened? Kneeling on the floor up there, I had the sweetest moment of the presence of God and his love, and it planted a homing device in my heart.

Terry Wardle: Now for the next seven, eight years, I didn't know whether I wanted to be a disciple or a devil, and I spent more time investing in being a devil. But one night when I was ending college, I was out doing things I shouldn't be doing, a lot of things that were unethical, immoral, unkind, I came home alone to my apartment and this darkness came over me. And I started to walk the streets at 2:00 in the morning. And down in our little, this town where my college was, there was a pizza shop called Sparky's Pizza.

Terry Wardle: And on the upper floor was an apartment and I knew there were young men there that loved Jesus. And I went up and beat on that door until they answered and I told them, "I need to give my whole life for Christ." I went to a chair and bawled my eyes out, and Carey, that was the turning point right there. I had

tasted the darkness and that's where the light began to turn for me that I wanted a life following Jesus. And from there then I went on to seminary, had a call to ministry and move forward.

Carey Nieuwhof: Isn't that fascinating? And I'm glad you raised the mixed nature of those experiences because that's even still the debate today. You see a lot that happens in the church, you roll your eyes, you wince, you shutter, you're like, "Really, can't we do better than this?" And I'm not using it as an excuse, but like, I don't know, it's like people actually come to faith in like Vaudeville type environments or you look at that. Any thoughts on why God keeps using the mess that we seem to create?

Terry Wardle: Well, I think God is very gracious. And I think the gospel is more scandalous than most of us understand, that the apostle Paul made a statement, even those that preach Christ out of impure motives, God moves forward the message of Jesus. And yet my mother comes home from this revival. God did something in her heart. There is a bit of legalism and performance in it, but something genuine happened. And that first step led to another step and another step, and the next thing you know, I'm crying my eyes out on a chair saying, "I can't live this way anymore. I need all of Jesus."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, so pick up the story there. You're now a young man, you're in your 20s, you're graduating seminary and things start to go really well.

Terry Wardle: They went very well for me. Pastored a church, the church grew a little bit, really fun. I then went on and got an advanced degree. I got a doctorate. I ended up getting invited to be on the faculty of a seminary up in Nyack, New York, which is a wonderful experience. Two years into that, for whatever reason, they decided they want me to be the president of this, the leader of this seminary, which was crazy. I'm 34 years old, but I want you to hear this for later, I was too wounded to say no. Once they invited me, bigger job, bigger salary, two secretaries, car, status. I was just too wounded to say no. And after two years of that, the opposition that came because me being new to the denomination, I didn't have the internal fortitude to handle it and I just went out West. And I left New York, went all across the country to be a part of developing a graduate program for Simpson University.

Terry Wardle: But I'll be honest with you, the wounding and my performance were showing two different things. See, my performance said, "God's all over me. He can advance. People are coming to Christ. He's writing books, he's a good speaker." My wounding was leaving me with increasing levels of anxiety. I was beginning to battle depression, and the only thing I knew is, "Well, try harder, do more." And then when I'm in California, started this little church with seven people on my back porch. 18 months later, we got 800, 900 people come into the church. Again, all the appearance of success. Carey, I went into deep agoraphobia and depression. And my past, the unresolved past, the unhealed past, caught up with me. And while my gifting and anointing were such that there was

advancement in my ministry, I was actually just crushed inside by not dealing with the brokenness of my past.

Carey Nieuwhof: Boy, there's so much in that Terry, and I do want to come back to it. You said your wounding. You were too wounded to say no or your wounding caused you to say yes, can you talk about that a little bit? I think there's a lot of insight in that.

Terry Wardle: So here I was 34 years old, a coal miner's kid from coal dust USA. I had moved to the place of being a seminary professor. The next thing I know I'm being invited to lead this seminary. I had a lot of insecurity. I still didn't know who I was. I still was wondering if I measured up. All these wounds of the past, there were still that weeny, that nervous message that would be given to me, that was that going in my head. And all of a sudden these very, very successful board members and community leaders and church leaders are saying, "We want you. And here's the money we'll pay you, and here's the car you'll get and here's the secretaries you'll have, and here's the status." And to be honest with you, I didn't even consider saying no because I thought, "I've made it. This is it. I'm finally a somebody."

Terry Wardle: And so I was too wounded to say no. No would have been the right answer for three reasons. One, I was too new to the denomination. Two, I didn't hold all the same beliefs they held, and number three, I hadn't dealt with all my issues. I should have said no. I couldn't say no because there were too many strokes coming. I had finally reached the performance pinnacle. But unfortunately, shortly after I said yes, all the old guard began to bring up the fact that I was new to this denomination, that I had beliefs different than theirs. And they'd got a little bit nasty and I didn't have the internal fortitude to be able to withstand that. And so after two years, I just said no and tried to run away. Unfortunately, when I moved across country, I took all my baggage with me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, so there, you start this church with seven people. Next thing you know it's 900 people, which is the part of the story I thought I was signing up for. It's like how to grow your church. And then what happened Terry?

Terry Wardle: Well, there's a lot of pressure as you would know, that when you are basing your ministry on performance, your last performance isn't good enough. It has to be the next performance. How do you outdistance this? I have people coming wanting to write magazine articles on how did we grow the church, and the whole time that's happening, I'm aware that I'm dealing with anxiety and insecurity, but I wouldn't look at it. And I ended up going away to teach at a seminary for a week, and at the end of that week, I was so spent emotionally that when I turned the light off on that classroom, it's as if I turned depression and agoraphobia on and I became afraid of everything. All the unresolved fear of my past was right in my face. And then I went into a deep depression.

Terry Wardle: I made it back to California. I started spending long days in bed crying. My wife and children had no idea what was going on with me. Of course, they tried "Christian solutions, let's go pray for him, let's try to get all the evil out of him," but finally I recognize nothing's happening and I'm on the edge of putting my face through that thin veil between sanity and insanity and I need help. And I had heard about a program about 1,300 miles away in Colorado Springs and I just traveled there with my wife and our youngest daughter. She stayed with friends and I admitted myself.

Terry Wardle: And I got to tell you, it was a lock down psychiatric hospital, that once you signed the papers, you don't get out til they say you're getting out. And that alone, I remember standing on the sidewalk out front. My past was just a mess and all I saw in the future were locked down doors in front of me. And I didn't know what to do, but I had no choice and I went in, and that began a very, very difficult 30 days of facing into some of the deep psychological issues that I hadn't really dealt with in my past.

Carey Nieuwhof: Had you not gone there, what do you think would have happened? Let's say you didn't have the wisdom, the foresight, the grace to drive 1,300 miles and check yourself in. If you could play that story out a little bit further, you stayed in your church, stayed in leadership, where does that go? Because I'm thinking Terry, and I want to get to the psychiatric institution and so on, but I'm thinking about all of the moral failures that we see in the church, but also in business and politics and sports. Every single day, there's a new headline that just breaks way too many hearts and so many stories that come forward. I got to believe at some level that the stuff we're talking about today is behind at least some of that. Where do you think that would... First of all, I guess there's multiple questions here, but where do you think you would have gone? And then to what extent do you think that is feeding into the cycle that we continue to see today in so many lives?

Terry Wardle: Carey, I am convinced that aberrant behavior is driven by deep wounds and false beliefs and ungrieved loss. So I was in a lot of emotional pain from what? Deep wounds, false beliefs and ungrieved loss. I would've had to go in one of two directions. I either go get help or I'm going to have to up the painkillers. And that the pain killers might mean different addictions. Possibly I would have turned back to some of the things I did as a young man with addictive chemical behaviors. It could have been immoral behaviors. It could have been aggression. And I think a mistake many people make is that they think that when they see somebody is dealing with an aberrant behavior, whether it's a dysfunction or a dependency or an addiction, that that's the problem. It isn't the problem, that's the symptom of a deeper problem.

Terry Wardle: So you look at this issue of people with moral failures or they're leaving ministry or they steal money from the church, or you find out they're addicted to drugs and have a dependency, I know this. Somewhere beneath that is a wound that's not been healed, false beliefs that have never been confronted, loss that's never

been grieved. And I don't think the church is good at that. Many times when a guy comes to a pastor and says, "I got to tell you I have an addiction to internet pornography," the pastor is going to say things like, "Well, you know it's wrong. Do you feel bad about it? If you don't feel badly about it, let me tell you some things to make you feel worse and now we're going to make some commitments. You're going to buy covenant eyes and you're not going to go to 7/11 and you're going to confess," and then they send you off.

Terry Wardle: Well, what they don't realize is that behavior is simply a symptom. It's a symptom of something deep inside. I would argue performance orientation and workaholicism is a symptom of unresolved wounding or false beliefs that had been the result of losses or loss that they've never touched. And you know this, in leadership, who gets time to grieve a loss? You experience a loss, off you go.

Carey Nieuwhof: Terry, I've written about that before and every time I talk to leaders about it, and I'm remembering right now, that's probably the first time I heard the phrase was from you. That ministry is a series of ungrieved losses and life is a series of ungrieved losses. Can you unpack that a little bit? Because that was like news to me. And when I thought about it, I'd led through eight years of change and people left and people got mad and all that stuff, and you're like, "Carey, grieve your losses." And man, when I uncorked that bottle, they came out like whew. Can you talk about that because I think that's what leadership and life is?

Terry Wardle: I remember a moment in PoE, whether you were in this cohort or not, when I gave the lead sentence, "Every loss in life, the man's inappropriate season of grieving, whether you've lost your favorite person or your favorite end." And I remembered someone stopping me and said, "Say that again. Just say it again." And I did, and this person started to cry because they realized these pastors and leaders, when you experience a loss, move on, rationalize it, get onto the business of work. But loss is meant to be grieved. And when we fail to grieve losses, that loss internalizes. We feel that pain. And then what do we do? We find some way to kill the pain. You can kill it through performance, you can kill it through addiction, but people want to kill the pain of loss.

Terry Wardle: I say this to this day, Carey, if I go into a room of pastors, I can feel the ungrieved loss in that room. They had hopes, they had dreams. There were people they thought they could count on. They did their best. They started a program, they preached a good sermon, and guess what? Somebody hit him right in the chops over the whole thing and they're supposed to act like it's okay. And they move on to the next weekend, the next and it's very hard. God gave us the Psalms. A third of the Psalms are songs of loss. And what God basically says to us is, "Bring me the loss." Say it the way you need to say it. And Carey, I've been in settings where pastor who've uncorked, and just you give them permission and all of a sudden, they just come out in that brutal, honest language one, and they say what they've always wanted to say, but instead of saying it to the person or failing to say it and keeping it inside, they've learned how to come up and out before God and talk to God about loss.

Terry Wardle: So let me start this back around. You wonder why. Why are good people leaving ministry? Why does someone that knows about mental health take their lives? Why do great people get involved in immorality? It's because we treat those things as causes. They're not. They're symptoms of deeper issues. And I believe this with all my heart, if you have the fruit of dysfunction, you have the root of wounding.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, no, you know what? Terry, that was all so new to me and even saying it, I'm getting emotional hearing you say that again. I remember, because we met in '03 and it was August of 2006, I think I spent most of that month crying. And it was just stuff from not being the popular kid at school to not being very good at sports to people leaving the church to all that stuff. You're like, "I'm okay." There was an old Pepsi ad, I don't know how long ago it was. I don't know whether you can still find it on YouTube, but it's a bunch of guys. And I'm not saying this is a gender specific, but there were a bunch of guys and they're all getting hit. One guy got a nail in the face or whatever, fell off a roof and it's like, "No, I'm good, I'm good, I'm good." And I thought, that's basically leadership, isn't it? It's like, "No, I'm good, I'm good, I'm fine." Back in there. How do you grieve a loss? How do you do that, Terry?

Terry Wardle: Well, let's begin with this. If we're not in a safe environment, we're never going to grieve that loss. And there are a lot of people that they don't feel safe in themselves, they don't feel safe with God and they surely don't feel safe in the church, because for many people, the church is a place of judgment and condemnation. And how does a pastor grieve what the people are doing that are hurting him? And so I think grieving loss begins with finding a safe environment with people that are non condemning, empathic, who are confidential and who finally give you the permission to say what's inside and say it like it is.

Carey Nieuwhof: No veneer over it. It's just like, "Nope, this is what I feel."

Terry Wardle: Yeah, if I may, we had a pastor in one of our seminars and I usually do a demonstration. And so this pastor had agreed to come forward to do a demonstration of how do you grieve a loss? And he was about 30 seconds into it to where he landed the F bomb in front of 150 people. And he looked at me and I said, "It's okay to say," and I said the word right back. For the next 20 minutes, he used that as a noun, a verb, and adverb, the direct object of a sentence. The point was it was in there. See, he wasn't making up. That's the way he felt.

Terry Wardle: And the problem is when you have it in there and there's not a safe place to take it out, it comes out dysfunctionally. You kick the dog, you're getting an argument with your spouse, you get angry about people, you begin to get arthritis and backaches and colitis and diverticulitis, all because you're not willing to grieve that loss, and it gets in the way of you being effective as a leader. Every wound in life, every loss in life, every false belief, needs confronted in the presence of Christ so we can be freed from those.

Carey Nieuwhof: I remember, I think that was the first time I realized you can have actual honest prayers. Like you can just say, "I'm really mad about this. I'm really frustrated." I've had a couple of moments even in the book writing journey. There was one last year where, because this is doing a little bit of preaching here, but see if the student got it right Terry. Okay? You tell me. But I was hoping somebody would write a forward to the book and I had two rejections from really good people. They were just a busy season and I don't think it was personal. And I found myself frustrated and angry. I was here in my office and I'm like, "What is that?" And I'm like, "Oh, you're upset." Like I'm not very good at.

Carey Nieuwhof: And then I was reading the book actually this week, I was reading it and it reminded me of some stuff I'm writing for my next book, and I got really frustrated. I don't do this very often, but I picked up the book and I threw it across the bedroom. It's always like, what is going on? And it's a great book. The guy did a great job. I'm like, "I'm really upset." And she came over and just gave me a hug. And I thought about it more sanely this morning and dealt with it in an appropriate way, but I was not good with releasing my emotions like that. And again, once it got out it was like, "Oh, okay, you can solve this. This is a problem." But we just stuff that stuff, don't we? Is that what you're talking about?

Terry Wardle: We do. And unfortunately, I think the church encourages that, particularly among leaders. We even get to the point where we forgive too quickly. Let me remind you, there are some Psalms in which the Psalmist burnt the house down, Psalm 109. You read that thing, it's like hit him in the head with a rock, make his wife cheat on, let his children never know who he is, burn his house down. And what the Psalm is trying to show us is you've got to take what's in here and bring it up here. And God's the one that can hold it. And some grew and the great writer said, "Rage before God at the offense of another is the only way to take that offense off of you." So you have to be able to say, "This just infuriates me." But when we try to act like it doesn't and we don't grieve our loss, then it goes dysfunctional and we can end up trying to get involved in different kinds of painkilling.

Carey Nieuwhof: Or you end up taking it out on the people that you're supposed to love the most and you take it out on your spouse, you take it out on your kids, you take it out on your board or the people who didn't offend you end up paying for someone else's offense. Okay.

Terry Wardle: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: And grieve losses. Thank you for unpacking that. That is such a gift to leaders. And that's true in business, that's true in life. It's just the way it goes. It makes a lot of your social media feed too if you really read it and you say, "Oh, that's what he's doing." So Terry, you check yourself in 30 days, what happened?

Terry Wardle: Well, first it was frightening. And the first thing I remember that was of a positive note was I was... You go in, you sign in, they strip search you, which is really great for somebody that's really having a tough time. They take you into a room and I was sitting on my bed and I started crying and crying and all of a sudden, a phrase from Corrie ten Boom came back to my mind. I didn't even know I knew it. She said, "The object of your pain can become the source of blessing if you give it to God." I didn't even know if God existed in that moment, but I remember saying, "God, if you're there, feel free to use this." And then I went right back to the agoraphobia, the depression, asking if there's any hope. Let me give you the positive side of the psychiatric hospital.

Terry Wardle: Loving people, caring people, and they gave me great understanding of what was wrong with me. But it was conceptual. See, I now knew what was wrong, but I really didn't have many occasions to be touched in such a way that it would correct what's wrong. So I understood conceptually about performance, about achievement, about trauma, but they were trying to get me to now just do better thinking. And I came out of the hospital and was making small strides. And I remember this day I had taken at a little notebook, and I had many scriptures on it and I would put it in my back pocket. And it often looked like you see somebody with skull and they have this little ring in their back pocket, I had a ring in my back pocket from the scriptures. But this was my frustration, Carey, memorizing the scriptures wasn't touching the depression or the anxiety. And I believe in the power of God's word, but it wasn't touching it.

Terry Wardle: And one night, I was frustrated and I was saying to God, "I can't take this anymore." And finally, what am I going to do? I'll read the Bible and I turn to the story of Jesus in Gethsemane. And look what I saw. One, he goes to a safe place. Number two, he has people with him that he thinks they love him and will trust him. He grieves to the point of sweating drops of blood. God sends angels to care for him. And here's what I realized. When Jesus was at his worst, God didn't give him a scripture. He gave him an experience of his presence. And I started crying and said, "God, in these wounds of the past, I need more than a scripture. I need an experience of your presence." And that's where change began to occur.

Terry Wardle: Now, interestingly, today, 25 years later, neuroscientists say this, concepts will not rewire the brain. When someone's had a toxic trauma, that brain wiring happened through an emotion laden event, and if you're going to have your brain rewired, you need an emotion laden event that's positive. So all of a sudden, I realized God was saying to me, I need to meet Jesus in positive ways, in the brokenness of my past. And that's step-by-step where healing started to occur, and of course, where the whole framework of what I've been doing for the last years has grown out of. Right there, Garden of Gethsemane.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, can you... Because that was, again, so everything we're talking about was new to me at the time under your leadership and in your mentorship, but this idea that an experience really trumps information because you're right. We're



great at that. And I guess cognitive behavioral therapy is the same thing. Oh, here's some ideas that blah, blah, blah, blah, but if someone is feeling like, okay, so take your agoraphobia or pick one of the things that you were struggling with because they're saying, "Oh, you don't have to be afraid. Get out of the house. It's okay, people are safe." What is it that eventually gave you the confidence to emerge and become who you are today? What experience changed that for you or set of experiences?

Terry Wardle: Let me take a run up on that by backing up into what's this thing you said. The scripture I came to hate was the scripture in 1 John 4, "Perfect love casts out fear." And the reason I hated that is anytime I would say to somebody, "Man, I'm really dealing with anxiety," they'd say, "Well, don't you know this scripture, perfect love casts out fear?" And I'd want to just flick them in the throat because what they didn't understand is that scripture wasn't saying the scripture perfect love casts out fear will cast out fear, but an experience of perfect love will cast out fear. So what began to cast out my fear, positioning myself for experiences of God's presence and experiences of God's love in the very memories that had been weighing me down, from being brutalized by my mom, being beaten down steps with a broom, from statements that were very caustic to the incidents that I told you, those were emotion laden experiences.

Terry Wardle: And then I tried to memorize fear not. Well, I'm going to tell you when the wind is howling and the night is dark, the scripture fear not does not cause you to fear not because you are still living by those old experiences. And so I began to have these moments that involved a creative imagination where the Holy Spirit would take a truth and he'd help me imagine it, and experiences with other loving people, which you would have had at PoE, but we connect you with people to love you with an unconditional love. Those experiences started to be my Gethsemane. By the way, I believe it was, yeah, Eugene Peterson said, "The church has lost Gethsemane prayer." We know many forms of prayer that we don't seem to be patient with Gethsemane prayer. And what he means by that is giving people the permission to get there and say their fears and cry and hurt and wait for an experience of God's love to come and touch us.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't know whether you remember this story or not, but I'm sure this was told in one of our cohorts by one of the mentors who said he adopted, I might get some details wrong, but the point has still stuck with me all these years later that he had adopted a child. And the child was adopted, I'm going to pick an age six, seven, eight years old, and he was like, "I'm going to pick you up at 3:30 today at school." And the child did... Do you remember this story?

Terry Wardle: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, the adopted child was like, "Are you sure you're going to be there? Are you sure? Are you sure? Are you sure?" And he's like, "Well, of course I'm going to be there." But I guess his background, this child's background was his parents never kept a promise. So he was just terrified. And he said it was only the

experience of me being there every single day at 3:30 without fail that finally after... I forget, you might remember the story better than me where he went, "He finally understood, oh, you're not going to fail me." But it was all those experiences. All the assurances weren't going to do it, he just had to show up consistently in this child's life.

Terry Wardle: Absolutely, I remember I was in there when that story was told. And it was a powerful illustration of the fact that you have to make a bifurcation between what is true and what is real. For that little boy what was real is everybody fails me and doesn't fulfill a promise. That was that, it would be true that I'm there. But until true became real, real was true. And so for many broken people, that's exactly what they're facing. They are in these situations where they've been wounded in the past. Like for me, the word fear not, it might've been true, but it wasn't real. Why? Because I had real reasons to be afraid.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Terry Wardle: You live in a home like I did and in an environment with violence and crime and abuse, I had reasons to be afraid. It was real. Someone says, fear not. It might've been true it wasn't real. What was true for me was what was real. And then the love of God starts coming in and he makes the true real. And I believe this is what people need out of churches. They need a way to be positioned to experience the truth of God's word, and instead of giving someone that's afraid the text, give them perfect love.

Carey Nieuwhof: What does that look like?

Terry Wardle: Yeah, well, I think perfect love is, "I accept you. I will not judge you. Let me come near to you. Would you allow me to hold you? There is no condemnation here. You are precious. You are respected." And not happen once, but over and over again. I heard a story in Toronto three days ago. I'm teaching there on identity and this pastor raises his hand and he said, "When I was a young pastor, I had so many wounds from people. I kept everybody at an arm's length." And he said, "But there were two elderly women in that church that made up their mind that every time they saw me, they were hugging me." And he said, "I didn't like it, but I put up with it." And he said, "I put up with it until I started liking it and then it changed me."

Terry Wardle: You see, something that was true, became real. And when you've been abandoned by a parent and then the Bible says, "I will never leave you or forsake you," you want to believe it. But you've got to remember that's just a concept. You are shaped by an emotion laden experience. So we want to position people for emotion laden positive experiences that come bit by bit, seed by seed, step-by-step, that begins to transform people's lives.

Carey Nieuwhof: Terry, I've been fortunate to have people like that in my life, but I'm sure there are a lot of leaders. And it's interesting because the bullseye of the audience for

this podcast is people in their early 30s who are leading something exactly where you were when you ended up with that break. And checking yourself in there like, I don't even know where to begin. I don't feel like there's not even an older lady who gives me a hug on a regular basis. How do they begin? How do people begin to discover that radical acceptance? Because I agree, the church and the world are filled with judgment and rejection and conditional love.

Terry Wardle: Carey, you may remember me saying this, but I think that until we're about 40, our coping mechanisms work okay. So what happens is we have a lot of wounds, we have false beliefs, we have laws, but we've learned how to perform around it. We've learned how to kill the pain, we've learned how to achieve, but somewhere around 40 years old, 37 to 43 years old, it starts caving in and we begin to deal with emotions that are out of control. We begin to have conflicts in relationships. So one of the things I say to people is this, "Change doesn't happen because someone told you you need to change, change happens when you're desperate enough to say, I must change." And that often happens like it did for you. When you're in a setting and all of a sudden God speaks a word and it hits you right in the face and you realize, "I might want to run, but I can't run away from me. I need to allow God to do something."

Terry Wardle: And that's what happened to me. I would've never gone this direction if it wasn't that now I'm in the bed all the time, I'm crying all the time, I'm dealing with deep emotional pain. I had to have change. There are some of the people that listen to your podcast. I'll be honest with you. They're good people. They're working hard and they don't want to hear this s\*\*\* because what they're doing is working. So what I'm going to do is plant a seed that says this, when it starts not to work and you're really willing to look at this, there are ways in which you can start to let God deal with the internal wounds and loss and false beliefs of your life so you don't end up where I did.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, prayer has been an important part of this journey and I know that not everybody who listens podcasts will pray. Probably a good chunk are not Christians, but prayer has been really transformative in my life. It's been very transformative in your life. And I realize this is a whole other podcast for a whole other day, but can you talk a little bit about how prayer is different in the way that you approach prayer and the way people experience prayer in the way that you share it?

Terry Wardle: I think before my own breakdown, prayer was an obligation that was matched by certain liturgies of prayer, ways I learned to pray. And I did it because it was an obligation. I don't know if you have a read Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've not, no.

Terry Wardle: Yeah, she's one of my favorite writers. She's very radical and she's become a Christian in her writing. And you get to see that journey. And she just says, "The most important first prayer is the word help." You just finally cry out and you

say, "Help." And I think that's what Jesus was doing in Gethsemane. Is there any other way here? Help, I'm in a mess. And so I have found that my prayer life has radically shifted from liturgical prayer to a relational prayer in which I'd say it like it is. God knows what's inside of me. I might as well get it up and out, and I think the two greatest prayers Anne Lamott says these are help, thanks. That's it. Everything in between is the rest the issue. Greg Boyd said in one of his writings, "God has promised to bind himself to us through prayer." And prayer is more open, honest dialogue before God.

Terry Wardle: And Carey, for some of your listeners, I think their greatest anger is toward God, and my encouragement is tell him. Just be honest. Say it the way you need to say it. That's a prayer. "Oh God, you've let me down. Oh God, I'm disappointed in you. Oh God, how could you do this to your child?" And what you find that the Psalmist does is he starts honestly, and somewhere in the Psalm, he touches the presence of God and it moves toward a doxology of, "God, thank you." And that's what happened in my own life. I'm going to add one other element about Gethsemane prayer. Many Christians are taught to forgive, and I argue people forgive too quickly.

Terry Wardle: And I'm not saying you should be unforgiving, but look what Jesus did. He grieves his loss in Gethsemane and it's the next day that he says, "Father, forgive them." And I think many of us try to forgive before we grieve, and that messes the whole thing up also. You got to grieve the losses that have come your way. And then if there's someone to forgive after you've grieved it, you'll have the strength to go ahead and forgive. But you've got to let these losses off. Open out losses from relationships, from dreams that you had. We got to have a venue to be able to say what's in our heart.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you know you've forgiven?

Terry Wardle: That's a great question. And I will turn you to a book by Miroslav Volf. And in his book called *The End of Memory*, he said, "You'll know when forgiveness is complete when the issue no longer comes to mind." What often happens with unforgiveness is we play that tape over and over and over and over again, and we say we forgive, but then here we go again with the emotion. When you've truly forgiven, it's no longer the first thing you see when you get up in the morning. And pretty soon, you go a season of time and you can say, "Wow, that memory no longer comes to mind." Why? Because it's been released. It's forgiven.

Carey Nieuwhof: And that's one of the amazing things about the journey. 15, 16, 17 years later, there are things I was struggling with in that moment that just, oh yeah, I have to be reminded of and things that, oh yeah, that was part of my story. It's not really what I'm struggling with right now. How has that journey continued for you? It's been 25 years since that transformative moment, and you're back teaching, writing books in many ways, you could say as a more successful than you were 25 years ago, but it's different, isn't it Terry? How's it different?

Terry Wardle: Well, it's different on many levels. First, I would say, I don't know if I'm as successful, but I know I'm more effective. And there's been a difference between those two for me. I think when I was young, 30, 35, 38, I wanted to be well known. I think after my breakdown, I want to be known well. And I think now I am known well, but I'm known well by a smaller group of people and this book will help people know me well. So I'm not driven by the, "How many followers do I have and how many people are coming to events and how many people know my name." No, that just, it's not on my thinking anymore. I am thrilled with the relationships I have and that God knows me well, that my wife knows me well, my family knows me well. I have a cadre of friends that know me well. When I go to speak, I want to be open and vulnerable so they know me as well as they can. That's been very, very freedom dream for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's really well said. I've never heard anyone quite say I don't want to be well known, I want to be known well. That is. Are there any other ways, I'm sure it's been different in many other ways, but anything else come to mind, Terry?

Terry Wardle: Well, I think another thing is that I really live more by John 5:19. John 5:19, the Pharisees come and say to Jesus, "Why do you do the things you do?" And Jesus says, "I only do the things I see the Father doing." When I was young, I didn't know how to say no. I was too wounded to say no. Yes was the answer to most every invitation and the bigger and the brighter and the bolder, the more quickly I'm going to say yes. Now I want to spend more time in prayer, more time in fellowship with my Lord and with a small group of people, and when an invitation comes, I want to weigh it and see if that's what the father's doing. And when it is, then I want to say yes to it. And if it's not, then there's no reason for me to say yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you know? How do you know?

Terry Wardle: Well, I have a deep... I think first, I have, Saint Ignatius would say, you have to have a group of people around you that are asking the right questions. And I have that group. The other one is, does it fit within the framework of what I already know God calling me to do? Recently, by the way, I had two invitations. One was a big church wanted to know if I would come and be their Valentine Day's speaker this year, and I looked and I said, "No, I won't be doing that." Well, we pray about it. Nope, I'm not praying about it. Well, we just thought you could say something nice and happy about couples. Yeah, that's not me. I don't go around saying nice and happy about couples. I have other things to do.

Terry Wardle: Also, I got an invitation, would you consider being Dean of this institution? No. Would you pray about it? No, I don't have to. Why? Because I have a sense of where is it that God wants me to serve? What is the vein of gold that he's opened up that I'm to be mining? And that's why I'm mining mine. You're mining your vein of gold. Others will mind theirs and there's a lot of peace in that for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: There's a lot of peace, but there's also a lot of security in that too. You look at Terry at 34 and you look at Terry today, I've gotten somewhat better at saying no. You still struggle with it a little bit, but it makes it so easy. I've walked away for some huge opportunities over the last three years. That people would say from a career perspective were smart moves or whatever, but it's not that hard if you know what you're called to. But that's interesting because if you're insecure, you feel like you're called to everything, is that true?

Terry Wardle: Oh, absolutely. I think identity insecurity is Satan's happy meal. When he sees somebody that is insecure, he knows he can get them. And he's going to throw some lure, some temptation, some attractive offer right at them in the area of their insecurity. So here I was years ago, a young guy, insecure from coal dust USA, and they throw at me the lure of being the head of a seminary. Man, I bit down on it, but what I realized is I thought I could control it. It started controlling me. And I think that security is something that we really want to work through. Howard Thurman, a great African-American statesman who passed away in the early 80s, wrote a book called *Jesus and the Disinherited*.

Terry Wardle: It's for people that are beaten up and battered. And you know what he said, "Awareness of being a child of God gives courage." He didn't say being a child of God gives courage, he said awareness of being a child of God gives courage. I spend a lot of my time talking to people about how they can become more aware of the wonder of who they already are in Christ and then using that as the basis of making the decisions they need to make for their lives.

Carey Nieuwhof: Terry, this is so rich. What would you say to the young leaders listening, going back to what you said a few minutes ago, who are like, "Yeah, I'm not ready. This freaks me out. I can't believe I listened to the end. Makes me really uncomfortable." Because that was me like at 36, 37. Is there anything you can say? Because I took that journey involuntarily, thanks to Chuck and being 500 miles away from home, that helps. I can't really turn the car around, but what would you say to leaders who are just afraid right now and going, "Oh, really, really?" Any word?

Terry Wardle: Well, first, let me say this. God's love is amazing and I think my life bends toward wholeness because Jesus has been leaning on it all along even when I didn't see it. And so I want to at least say to people, God is not a capricious God who's looking for somebody to crack in the back of the head, he's generous in love, generous in kindness, generous in grace, scandalous grace. And that just to me is thrilling. But here's what I think is true of your listeners. Some of you today are listening, and you're already tweaked and know this is your issue. You've got to start dealing. You already have enough struggle in your life that you're willing to say yes and you need to find a way to get on a journey with someone. I think other people are running. And here's my confidence.

Terry Wardle: They're not going to listen, but unfortunately they had enough of the seed go in, but somewhere down the road, the Lord is going to bring this back to mind and

they'll remember and they'll come back around. And some have just closed their minds and they want to learn the principles of leadership and there's nothing we can do about that. But I know this, God is love. He loves to touch the broken. And here's, I think the kingdom of God works best for the beat up and the battered and the bruised. It works best for people that have taken it in the chops, people that are having a hard time and all of a sudden, they find the flow of the kingdom of God will carry them.

Terry Wardle: I don't think the kingdom of God works real well for rule keepers and scorekeepers and fame seekers, but for the rest of us, blessed are the broken because God wants to bring them close and hold them and love them. I remember in a song, Blessed, by Simon and Garfunkel, boy, is that dating me? Years ago, the line went, "Blessed are the sat upon, the spat upon and the ratted on." And I have found the kingdom of God is good for that type. And that's my type and that's who I've been and that's my story. And I guess I'm sticking to it. That God loves the broken and the bruised and he loves to bring us into his family.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow, thank you. So PoE was for a season. Pastors of Excellence was for a season. It is no more, but your ministry continues in different forms. What are you doing these days? And then I want to encourage people to get the books. So tell us about that. And you also do a podcast, website, can you just give us the download on Terry Wardle today because I would encourage people to get as much as they could of what God is doing through you?

Terry Wardle: Well, I do have a podcast once a week. It's called Sling Stones. It comes out of a text in Zachariah that we can defeat darkness with a mere sling stone. So you can find that on Podbean or iTunes, but I have spent the last years building an organization called Healing Care Ministries. Out of that, we have three types of help. We have an encounter ministry where if someone's broken, they can come to the healing care center, they can come to a come away with me retreat, they can get professional care to help them walk through their own brokenness. I also equip pastors, psychiatrists, psychologists, physicians, and lay people on how to position broken people.

Terry Wardle: They go to the website, they're going to see all the different events where I'm speaking, what it's on. And then we just do events to help people get more of the Lord, be more empowered in the Christian journey. And if you go to Healing Care Ministries, you'll see all kinds of headers that you can tap on that they're going to let you know what we do. There's also free videos there, there's free resources. I'd love to have somebody look at that and if you're hurting, you want somebody to help you come to the Healing Care Center. If you want to go to an eight day retreat, come to Come Away. Whatever it is, we want to help you.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's great. And that's at [healingcareministries.com](http://healingcareministries.com)?

Terry Wardle: That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Terry Wardle: They can also go to [terrywardle.com](http://terrywardle.com). And if they happen to buy the book, on the last page, there is a list of all the different social media that they can go to that's going to give them information.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, tell us a bit more about the book. It's been out for a couple of months now, so it's available everywhere.

Terry Wardle: It's available everywhere. It came out in first week of October. I was encouraged to write it actually by my agent who was at a seminar, and she said, "Most of your books are you tell a story and do a didactic. I think people just need to hear the story so that it connects with their story." So I wrote it for that purpose. It's a little raw, it's very honest and vulnerable, but it has a story of redemption on the backside of it. And it was a challenge to write, to be that honest, but I believe God meets us in our whole story. And I told my story, hopefully to connect other people with their story. I had an Army chaplain write me and say, "I was halfway through the book when I realized I was no longer reading this book because of Terry's story, I was reading it because it was getting me in touch with my story." And when he said that, I thought, "Aha, that's what I was after."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, and it's a great book. It's actually... Actually, there are a lot of like really that actually happened moments in the book. It's called Some Kind of Crazy, an Unforgettable Story of Profound Brokenness and Breathtaking Grace. So Terry Wardle, thank you. Thank you for the huge impact you have had and continue to have on my life, on my marriage, on my family, on our ministry. You're just a blessing to me. And I know you've blessed thousands, countless thousands of others, but thank you so much.

Terry Wardle: Carey, you are precious to me. We are yoked and often yoked at the place of our brokenness because that's where we've met Jesus the most. And give blessings to Toni and you're just... I'm a big fan. So if you ever wonder if anybody's applauding, just listen, you'll hear me out in the hithers applauding for what God's doing in your life.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks Terry. Well, friends, you can watch that episode if you want to. You want to share it with your team, obviously, you can do that by audio. We have a growing listenership on Spotify and of course Apple Podcasts and all the other platforms, but we're also on YouTube. So just search my name and you'll find it there. And Terry Wardle is our guest. His new book is called Some Kind of Crazy. You can get it anywhere books are sold. I hope that really helped you. And I just want to say something. If you found yourself where I've found myself in the past really going, "Oh my gosh, I need some help here. Who do I talk to?" I want you to reach out to somebody right now. Just somebody that cares, somebody that



can help you. Maybe go book an appointment with a trained Christian counselor.

Carey Nieuwhof: I would strongly suggest that. And yeah, don't go it alone. The way I feel today is so different than 15, 16, 17 years ago when Terry and I first met, and I got to tell you, I'm so grateful I made that journey. Hard journey, but totally worth it. And if that's the only thing you do as a result of listening to this podcast over the years, well, it will have been worth it, I'll tell you that. So thank you Terry. And we're back next time with a fresh episode, actually in two days. Jasmine Star is on, then a couple of great episodes to close out the year, including Jordan Raynor, and then a killer lineup for 2020. Francis Chan, Louie Giglio, Liz Forkin Bohannon, who just wrote a great book called Beginner's Pluck. She's a fun follower. John Mark Comer, Jefferson, Bethke, Jennie Allen, Craig Groeschel, Lysa TerKeurst. So Mark Driscoll is going to be on the show next year. Joseph Sojourner and so many more.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys, I'm so pumped to bring you this and thank you to Financial Peace University and to RightNow Media who sponsored this episode. If you want to help people get out of debt, they are looking for leaders like you to help others. You can go and simply text, givehope, that's givehope, all one word, to 33789, and make sure you check out RightNowMedia.org/carey to get a free trial of RightNow Media today. So next time on the podcast, Jasmine Star from Instagram, we're going to talk all about social media and so many other things. So make sure you subscribe for free and you won't miss a thing. And now onto today's Ask Carey question. Taylor from San Diego who says, "I'd love to hear Carey's advice on having a high impact marriage within The High Impact Leader lifestyle. I would love to hear his perspective."

Carey Nieuwhof: So Taylor, my guess is that you did The High Impact Leader course, which is always available at TheHighImpactLeader.com, and that's about getting time, energy and priorities working in your favor. So how do you have a high impact marriage? Well actually, that's the idea behind the high impact lifestyle is the problem that I'm trying to address and that I had to address in my life is sometimes those of us who are leaders take our leadership at work more seriously than we take our leadership at home. And I did that all through this great episode to talk about this with because in my 30s, I was winning at work and losing at home. But I thought, well, you know what, like winning at work, particularly in ministry because you're doing it for God, it's like, well, that makes up for all that stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof: And the answer is it does not. It does not. Winning at work and losing at home means you're losing. Period. And it took me a while to figure that out. So here's the problem. A lot of us, we spend all of our best energy on work or on something outside of the house. You get home, you're tired, you're exhausted, you expect to be served, not to serve. That is the problem. And that was something I struggled with throughout my 30s. The other thing that happens sometimes too is if you've got a few challenges at home, whether that's putting

the kids to bed or cleaning up the dishes or you're arguing or not having a good time with your spouse, it's just easier to bury yourself in work. And we live in the age where you don't go to work, work goes to you. It's in your pocket all the time.

Carey Nieuwhof: So it's easier to be on your phone, on your laptop and doing anything but being the person you need to be at home. So a couple of things, and this is at the heart of The High Impact Leader idea, is that you take your best energy and your best attention and you also focus that at home. You don't leave work with an empty tank. And you can do that by managing your time and energy. So the shift that I made, and this is now quite a while ago, is I tried to make sure when I pulled in that driveway and I walked into the house, that I was as fully present for my wife and for my kids as I was at work. And I also wanted to make sure that I left them my best energy. The kind of energy I would give writing project or sermon or a book or that kind of thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: And do you hit that every day? No, I don't hit it every day. You get tired, but that mindset makes a big difference. Another important discipline that Toni and I, my wife and I have kept for many, many years is don't forfeit your date night. Even when our kids were young, even when money was tighter, we always made time for babysitter or you do some kind of swap out where it's like, "Okay, we're going to look after your kids Thursday, you look after our kids Friday," and we would go out on a date. And sometimes those dates were really simple. They don't have to cost a lot of money, but date night is really important. We would get away at least once a year without the kids, and as our kids got older, you know what we heard more and more often? It's like our friends would say, "I haven't done that in seven years. I haven't done that in 10 years. I haven't done that in 12 years."

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, do it. Just get away with your spouse. That's going to be really important because here's a surprise. My kids are in their 20s. They're 28 and 24 this year. And I thought by the time we became empty nesters we'd be like comatose or dead. No, you have a lot of gas left in the tank, a lot of life ahead of you and you're going to find out pretty quickly when the house gets quiet whether you actually like each other or not. We are blessed to like each other, love each other. We were saying literally last night, I didn't know this question was coming up today, that we are having the best time ever in our marriage. You know where those seeds started? It started years ago when the kids were still at home and we looked ahead and said, "You know what? We really got to work on these issues. We got to go to counseling. We got to build a friendship and a life that isn't a 100% dependent on our children."

Carey Nieuwhof: So we did all those things, and that was me and Toni did this as well. Just taking our best energy, our best attention and focusing it on each other, on our marriage, on our relationship getting healthy, and a big part of that for me is expecting to serve my family, not to be served by my family. So I hope that helps Taylor. I love your question. Thank you so much for asking. If you've got a

question, just ask it at #AskCarey on any social platform, and keep them coming guys. Thanks so much for listening and being part of this really special episode. We're back in a couple of days with Jasmine Star. Subscribers, you get that one for free. There is so much good stuff ahead and well, 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.