

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 310 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof. I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, we are moving in on Christmas, but that doesn't stop the podcast, and today you're going to be so glad you tuned in. Today is brought to you by The Unstuck Group and by RightNow Media. We've got an Ask Carey at the end, and my guest is Jasmine Star.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I mean, social media has just absolutely blown up and Jasmine Star has a fascinating story. I think what you're going to get today in this episode is a masterclass in marketing. I didn't intend to go there. You'll hear during the interview, I'm like, "Okay, we're going to get to Instagram, we're going to get to Instagram," but we never really did. So there has to be a part two. She is an Instagram celebrity. She's been featured in Forbes, the Huffington Post, Entrepreneur, VaynerMedia, yeah, Gary Vee, Inc., MSNBC. And really, what we get into, I think the value in this is when she starts talking about her dream customer. It really challenged me. For anybody who really is trying to reach people, I think you're going to love this. Jasmine is a brilliant strategist, and we get a little bit of her story and also her strategy and how she has become so successful, and best yet, she makes it accessible to you.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I'm really glad you tuned in. Hey, I know the holidays are busy, so I'm going to keep it real short today because I know you've got a lot going on. But here's what's true. 2020 is right around the corner, so two things. Number one, I do a church trends post January of every year. That's coming up. I'm going to do two this year, but my friend, Tony Morgan, I value him so much because he has actual data. So a couple of years ago, Tony Morgan of The Unstuck Group started releasing quarterly report on church trends. It's called The Unstuck Church Report. His are very different than mine, much more detailed, much more specific. They've done an incredible job of helping churches determine if they have the right staff size, what a healthy percentage of volunteers looks like, how to improve engagement. And if you've ever wondered whether your church has a front door or back door problem, well, they have helped churches determine this too.

Carey Nieuwhof: So report is absolutely free. You can get it at [TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey](https://TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey). That's [TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey](https://TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey). It's more than 20 metrics. It's absolutely free. It can help you make informed decisions and plan for 2020. So make sure you head on over there and get it.

Carey Nieuwhof: And then digital libraries. Man, if you want to give your people, whether you run a business or whether you run a church, if you want to give your people access to incredible content, leaders are always looking for ways to develop and equip those around them. Well, RightNow Media does that for you. They've got the

world's, yes, the world's largest library of video-driven leadership training, Bible studies, personal care resources. More than 20,000 businesses, churches, schools, organizations already subscribed to RightNow Media's streaming platform, and that gives their people access to tens of thousands of videos anytime, anywhere. So you can hear from people like Henry Cloud, Patrick Lencioni, J.D. Greear, Francis Chan, Ann Voskamp, and lots of subjects are covered as well. So head on over to [RightNowMedia.org/Carey](http://RightNowMedia.org/Carey), you get a free trial of RightNow Media. So yeah, get it for free. Try it out, see if you like it, [RightNowMedia.org/Carey](http://RightNowMedia.org/Carey).

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I know some of you love to listen on 2x speed, 1.5 speed. I would suggest you not do that to this episode. I've made that recommendation one other time this year. Why? Because she is a fast talker and the ideas flow so freely. And good news is, we got show notes, guys. We got show notes, we've got transcripts, and everything she talks about including the free assessment that Jasmine talks about and how to create your dream customer, that's all available through the show notes. So you'll find that at [CareyNieuwhof.com/episode310](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/episode310). So without further ado, here is my conversation with Jasmine Star.

Carey Nieuwhof: Jasmine, welcome to the podcast.

Jasmine Star: I am so happy to be here.

Carey Nieuwhof: Are you at your house? It looks you have... For those watching on video, that's a really cool room.

Jasmine Star: Well, thank you very much. Yes, I am at home. I am at my very quaint home in Newport Beach, California.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's a great place to be living too. We are in the age of home-based businesses, aren't we?

Jasmine Star: Oh, completely and totally, and I love it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Well, I want to talk to you about your journey. We live in a really fascinating time. What were you doing before things took off on Instagram for you?

Jasmine Star: Well, I dropped out of law school in 2005 when my mom was diagnosed with brain cancer, and it was a really hard time in life. But I do believe that everything you go through is preparing you for the life and success that you are daring yourself to believe is capable for yourself. I'm happy to say that years later, I am still lucky and fortunate to be able to call my mom and text my mom, because against all odds, she is a walking miracle. She had battled valiantly for nine years and the doctors had said it was time for us to start planning her funeral.

Jasmine Star: So it was a really tough time. I quit school, I moved back home. I just needed to be with my mom and I really wanted to get married to my high school sweetheart. We've been dating nine years at this time, and I said, "My mom, I just want her to see one of her children get married." So we planned a wedding in less than three months, and against all odds, she walked me down the aisle. She was not walking, she wasn't talking, she was completely bedridden, and she walked me down the aisle with a bald head and palsy and my father helping her walk me down the aisle. Best day of my life.

Jasmine Star: That was the first day that I realized the fragility of life. Life is short, and my mom wasn't spending what we thought her last days as thinking about all the things she did, she was thinking about all the things she didn't do. That was the first time that I realized that we have the capability of pursuing a wild, crazy dream that nobody else could believe in. But at the end of your life, you think about the things that you didn't do, not the things that you did.

Jasmine Star: And so we got back from our honeymoon and my brand new husband, we hadn't... I think we'd been married maybe two weeks at this point in time, and I get a letter from UCLA law school saying, "It's time for you to come back and get your scholarships," because I had left school the year before to be with my mom. And I said, "I just..." I was so sad and miserable there, and my husband asked me the nicest question anybody could ever ask a partner, and he said, "If you could do one thing for the rest of your life and be happy, what would it be?" And I said, "I want to be a photographer." And he said, "Okay, but you don't even have a camera." And I was like, "Yeah, but if I had a camera, I really think I can make it work and I think that this is crazy." And he said, "I would rather see you fail at something you love than succeed at something you hate. So how about for one year you just try it, and if it doesn't work, go back to law school." And I gave it a try for a year and the business took off. By 2009, I was voted one of the top photographers in the world.

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Jasmine Star: Yeah, it's crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm a former attorney as well. What drew you to law school?

Jasmine Star: I am a first generation Latina. My parents are immigrants. My father is from Mexico, my mom's from Puerto Rico. And first generation Latina, first generation college student, and I wanted to make my family proud and I wanted to... I really felt like having a legal degree was going to empower me to give a voice to the voiceless, to go ahead of people who maybe were overlooked or underrepresented or lost in the legal system. I was very idealistic, and ain't God a thing that years later, the thing I wanted to do with a legal degree, I'm still able to do, I'm still able to help the lost or the underrepresented or help people find a voice. It might not be within the legal system, but within their businesses, and I'm like, "Ain't God a trip. Yes, I will take that." So now that I'm not stuck in

some corner office in downtown Los Angeles, but cozy sweat pants in my home in Newport Beach doing the same dang thing. So, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome. So it's interesting you say you were miserable in law school. I'm just curious about that because there's a lot of people who really endure. I actually loved law school. It was fun and got called out of it to do a variation of what I'm doing now, but what made law tough for you? Because there's a lot of people, a lot of leaders listening who are in a dead job and they hate it. They're making bank or they're doing something and they're like, "I feel like these are chains." Why did you hate law school?

Jasmine Star: I hated law school because... Well, there is the literal things of why I hated law school, and then there is the emotional. And the literal reasons I hated law school was because I completely felt so out of the scene. I was oftentimes one of the only females in the room. I was, way more than often, the only person with melanin in my skin. I came from a really underrepresented area. It's like, my parents met and started their family in East Los Angeles and I went to one of the top schools in the nation in West Los Angeles. And for people who are unfamiliar with the demographics of California, you are literally going from East Los Angeles, the brownest and blackest of neighborhoods, completely unsavory, to going to West Los Angeles where the cars and the people are so much more European looking.

Jasmine Star: So you are going to like the Beverly Hills and the Bel Air, and I felt completely out of the loop. When people were doing bar review... Did you have bar review at your school where every Thursday night...

Carey Nieuwhof: What was that?

Jasmine Star: Okay, so bar review at UCLA is every Thursday, everybody would meet at a bar and review the bar, but like tongue in cheek, bar review is how you study for the bar test.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh no, we weren't nearly that cool, but that sounds like fun. That sounds like fun.

Jasmine Star: Of course. And you know what? A lot of people had fun and I just was never really invited. And so I found myself eating lunch a lot by myself. I found myself just like really floating solo. It was partly me and it was partly the people there at school. So I feel like there was a lot of reasons why it was not a good fit for me. And so when the time came for us to make funeral arrangements, it was just so clear and easy and like, not only am I tired, stressed and overwhelmed and I always feel like I'm on the periphery and I'm never on the center and nobody is really talking to me, I just became really depressed, and that's when I knew I needed to take a step back.

Carey Nieuwhof: And photography, you knew nothing about it, four years later, you're one of the best in the world, voted?

Jasmine Star: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what was that? What did you start shooting? And then we're going to get to Instagram and social media, but I'm always interested in people's trajectory because very few... have you noticed this? Very few people, Jasmine, start out and say, "This is my plan. This is exactly what I'm going to do. Step one, step two." We always back into what we end up doing. Isn't it weird that way?

Jasmine Star: Yes. And I believe that as technology advances, is that we are going to continue iterating and like where your grandparents or my grandparents were able to pivot two or three times in their life, I believe that I still have 10 pivots left in me, 20 pivots left in me. So I do believe that as the world changes, that we are given gifts and tools, things like Instagram and Facebook and technology and new social platforms that are going to allow us to iterate within our lives and careers, and only the daring and only the crazy and only the wise will step up to the challenge.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I know that this could be a whole podcast in and of itself, but when you think about your photography trajectory, what were some launch points in that where you're like, "Okay, I looked at..." like two or three that you're like, "Okay, this was a turning point for me in my career in photography."

Jasmine Star: Oh, number one was getting paid to be a photographer, right? The barriers to entry to becoming a professional photographer are literally none, the same way the barriers to entry to becoming a cook or a chef are none. Do you have a knife? Do you have a spatula? Do you have a camera? You can go and do the thing, right? So everybody who has a camera believes they have the propensity to be a photographer. I too was one of the fold. A turning point for me was when somebody gave me \$1,000 to shoot their wedding, and then I was like, "Whoa, things just got real serious for me." A second turning point was understanding the power of not just clients, but friends and family of clients who will then become endorsers and evangelists of your business, because I was learning quickly the tools of the trade, number one, word of mouth, and then number two, this is like back in like 2008, 2009, word of mouse, the clicks that people were able to share my content really became an avalanche in how-

Carey Nieuwhof: So you built a website out and it became viral?

Jasmine Star: Oh, completely. Completely.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what happened, right? Because I mean in photography, and I know a lot of photographers, we all know a lot of photographers, because you're right, there's no barrier to entry. It's like, "I bought a camera, I'm using my phone," and there's always someone who will do it cheaper, right?

Jasmine Star: Always.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like you charge \$1,000 or \$10,000 to do a wedding. There's someone down the road who will do it for half that, a 10th of that. How did you differentiate yourself in photography?

Jasmine Star: I really like this conversation because I did start off shooting a wedding for \$1,000, and then towards a decade later, I was charging \$20,000, same person, most of the times, shooting with the same camera, not when I first started, but like in year three, I got a certain type of camera and I continued using that camera because I believe-

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, because there's diminishing returns, right? You don't need more gear.

Jasmine Star: Absolutely. And so what then became the defining factor wasn't necessarily the art I produce, but the artist. We don't choose cakes, we choose the baker. We don't choose a curriculum, we choose the teacher. And that is like the foundation of every strong business owner. If we're talking about a pastor, a course creator, a life coach, we're choosing the vehicle, we're not choosing the destination, because that then changes our experience with that, and that has become a game changer in every iteration of my business.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, I love this conversation too. So help us unpack that a little bit. I think you're onto something. How do you mean that, right? Okay, so what made you? Why do I need Jasmine to do my wedding? What are the factors in that? I don't know a whole lot of photographers, but I can think of a few people that's like, "I want this person to shoot this." So what is bound up in that when you can hire someone for a 10th of the price?

Jasmine Star: Oh, you can hire somebody for 100th of the price. It is real talk. We're in the digital age. This is like truth of it. And so I'm lucky to say that I could speak to this from derivatives of my photography career, and then that now as a business strategist.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah. Take it where you want to take it.

Jasmine Star: There were brides who were hiring me because of the perceived result. I and every good entrepreneur is in the business of transformation, not in the business of methodology, product or service. So I am talking to brides and the "transformation" I'm giving them is me documenting their day in a way that nobody else can. Why? Because I see it differently, I hear it differently. Not only am I turning over photos, I'm turning over a slideshow, I'm turning over a blog post, I'm curating a story about their day, and me as the "writer" by way of photos, then became the reason why I was the person that they had to work with.

Jasmine Star: Let me just break it to everybody. I am a proud averager. I'm average. I'm not special. There were other photographers who were more talented, who charged less and had better customer service, and people still went out of their way to pay top dollar. Why? Because I was in the business of creating an experience. I was and am and forever will be average at everything I do, but what is unparalleled is my ability to continue to get up day, after day, after day and produce work that people say, "She is the person that I want to work with." Then when we started working with magazine editors and doing shoots, the reason why an art director was choosing us, because they knew come hell or high water, we were going to show up 10 minutes early, we were going to stay 10 minutes longer, we were going to create an experience, we were going to under promise and over deliver. That is how we got into the top markets when it came to artistic work.

Jasmine Star: Now that we've transitioned into facilitating business owners and entrepreneurs how to build their business, I know I am one of one million other business strategists out there. And why do people continue to follow and invest? Is because I am average and I show that really average people can get remarkable results when they continue to: number one, show up, number two, remain consistent in the dark days, in the hard days, and number three, create experiences and show up who they are to connect with customers far differently than their competition.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, that's really good. We're going to pivot to Instagram in just a minute, but I want to ask one more question around photography.

Jasmine Star: I know people are listening right now, they're like, "You keep on saying we're pivoting," but I love all these branches of this conversation, because Instagram, I hate to break it to you, it's going to change in two months, and it's going to change in three months.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, exactly.

Jasmine Star: So we're setting the core foundation that doesn't change as Instagram changes. So you go along with your bad self. We're getting to the good stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you, thank you, thank you. That's great. No, you're right. The foundations are so critical on this one, and that's why I want to ask. So what were some of the distinctives in your photography? Obviously, it was you showing up early, staying late, getting it done, hustle, hustle, hustle, right? For this podcast, five years going, we've never missed a Tuesday. And in the early days, some of that was, okay, we were on the phone at three o'clock in the morning going, "Why won't this thing upload?" Or maybe it was 5:00 AM, but still, you know what I mean? Like you hustle, hustle, hustle, but you had to get national attention. You had to be doing a few things a little bit differently that made people go, "Wow, that was..." Like the finished product had to be an experience. So what was different?

Jasmine Star: I feel like I'd probably take a little bit of an issue with it. It wasn't the product that was differentiated. It was the way that the product was presented that was differentiated. So when we go back to 2007, 2008 when I started my business, I didn't have any money, I didn't have any resources, I didn't have the tools. I had just the body of the camera. I had no lenses, I had no memory cards. I was renting them because, hey, shout out to Dave Ramsey, I didn't want to go into debt. So I would get commissioned for a job and then use the money to rent out the gear that I had. I started the freest form of marketing at the time that was available, and that was a blog. A lot of photographers were just like, "Well, that's ridiculous. Why do you have a blog? You're a photographer." But I took the resources that I had that were for free and created conversations around that.

Jasmine Star: So was my photography different? No. Was the mechanism in the way that I shared it? Yes. I did the same thing again and again when it came down to also Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok. I am there to leverage whatever free marketing is available for me and put out content where my customers are. I am not emotionally tied to the vehicle. I am just saying, "Where are you? I'm going to put my content on where you dwell to make it easy and to make my work knowable." And that has become the linchpin to every iteration of my success.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, that's interesting. So Instagram comes along when for you? What year?

Jasmine Star: Oh, goodness. Late 2011, early 2012.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I think that's when I joined too. Do you remember - nobody remembers this - Hipstergram?

Jasmine Star: Oh, yeah, totally.

Carey Nieuwhof: Instagram had a rival.

Jasmine Star: Oh, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was Hipstergram, and I was on both for a while.

Jasmine Star: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. During that time, this is a platform that's made for people who are visual, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Jasmine Star: And so there is a lot of people just using it out, it gave freedom with your iPhone. And then what it turned into was what people were not expecting whatsoever, and it became a division of your online portfolio, a division of your online brand, and as a way to extend your message. So game changer.

Carey Nieuwhof: How did you... because Instagram is one of the main things you do now, right? You would say? Is that one of your main platforms?

Jasmine Star: You know, I feel like it has become easy for people to say like, "Oh, Jasmine's like an Instagram guru," but if people paid close attention, I do have a very similar following on Facebook, a very similar following on Twitter, growing on YouTube. I literally do spend time in all of these platforms because I go to where my dream customers are, not where I like to spend most of my time. But if I had to choose a platform that I'm spending the most of the time on right now, yes, it is Instagram.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. That's a new phrase to me, dream customer. Never ever heard it. People talk about avatars, people talk about target.

Jasmine Star: Oh, I can't stand the word avatar. It makes me think of like blue people running around in a fictional land. No, this is not superheroes. I hear your target demographic, which is fine, but who I'm largely speaking to, and in the church world, in the course creator world, maybe you might not use dream customer, but it could be like, who do you want sitting in your pews? Who do you want buying your program? It's very important because dream customer is just so easy and understandable. That's what I...

Carey Nieuwhof: That is. That's a really interesting... So who is your dream customer? Paint us a picture.

Jasmine Star: Oh, we can talk about this-

Carey Nieuwhof: Who are you speaking to?

Jasmine Star: Oh, I'm speaking to Elle. Elle lives in Newport Beach with her husband who is a lawyer, and they met while they were in college. They have two sons, five and seven. She drives a white Range Rover, lives in Manhattan Beach and is a full time mom starting her side hustle. But her side hustle has been carefully curated based on her childhood experiences growing up on her father's goat farm in Ohio, California, where she would collect dried flowers, and then later in college, moved into a downtown loft where she would create goat's milk soap and press flowers in the top of them and began selling them in Manhattan beach farmers' market. It was there at her Manhattan Beach farmers market where she ran into a buyer from Anthropologie who said that they were having a popup shop at the Beverly Center and asked if Elle would be willing to participate in the popup shop. Where Elle meets me is understanding she needs to elevate her brand and she needs to extend her marketing on social media, and she's looking for somebody to help her do just that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, my goodness. That's incredible, Jasmine. How long did it take you to focus in on Elle? Because the most classic marketer mistake is, "I want to reach everybody," right? And you don't. I just interviewed Jennie Allen and she's like,

"It's the mom in the front row who got babysitting for two days to be here at this event and she's not very happy in her marriage." I'm paraphrasing. Jennie, if I get it wrong, let me know. I'm just going off memory. And she's sitting there in the front row and she's hanging on for hope, and I'm like, "There's a woman who knows her audience." I'm talking to you. You know your audience. So how did you develop Elle?

Jasmine Star: Well, as a business strategist, this is what I tell every entrepreneur, is if you don't know who you're targeting, you're never going to reach the person that you want to work with. Now, one point of clarification is that when you become everything to all people, you become nothing to no one. I know that that's very hard to hear. Now, here's the thing. When Jennie talks about the woman sitting in the front row and when I speak Elle, I understand that my message to Elle resonates with a lot more people. I am not selling to one person, I am only speaking to one person. And when you speak with such specificity and clarity, it automatically opens doors to other people who may not resonate on the same level, but the way which I'm speaking to my dream customer, then that opens lots of doors. So how long does it take for this to happen? Well, I can also talk to you about Chloe. Chloe was my dream photography customer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Jasmine Star: Every iteration. I had Taylor. Taylor was my dream customer when I was creating an online course for Instagram, which no, I'm not pitching it because I'm no longer selling it, but at the time, with every product and service and offering, I'm creating a dream customer and what this person wants to feel, know and buy on the internet. So my iteration for Elle began for me in 2016 and 2017 as we created Social Curator. Social Curator is where my happy place is as an entrepreneur because I get to do online education, I get to speak about social media, I get to do coaching, and I get to create a community of wild hustlers who, even though I am speaking to Elle, 0.0001% of members on the inside of Social Curator are Elle. But somehow, over 7,000 people every month seem to be resonating with that same message.

Carey Nieuwhof: Isn't that interesting, right? And I think that's the great fear because people want to stick with everybody, because, well, Elle sounds really geographic, and specific, and like white Range Rover. If you actually look at the vehicle market, that probably is 0.001% of the vehicle market, right?

Jasmine Star: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: And she's doing what? Goat milk? Like whatever. I'm not into stuff.

Jasmine Star: Yes, goat's milk soap, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: So doing that. So you're like, "Whoa, that is so specific." And yet, I have an ideal listener in mind here. It's not quite that specific, but it is a leader of a midsize

organization that's really struggling with time management and burnout and married, kids, trying to be a good dad, trying to figure this out, and just suffering from a time famine and wishes he had access to some of the top leaders today but doesn't have that kind of access. So that's sort of like my little poorly defined avatar or dream customer.

Jasmine Star: It's not a poorly defined. I would encourage you to add a few things that most people think are nuanced and ridiculous, but watch this. If you were to... Does he have a name?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, not yet.

Jasmine Star: Oh, okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: But you need a name.

Jasmine Star: Number one, give him a name because he becomes like your friend, somebody you want to take care of and help.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Jasmine Star: Number two, if you have him placed in a specific geographic area, you could speak to the nuances of his or her life. Coastal city, small town, aspirational, middle America, what's that struggle like. And then when you give him a partner, how many children, the type of car he drives, because the type of car that a person drives indicates socioeconomically where they are, and you could speak to the types of shows that they watch, the stores that they shop in, and the struggles that they go through specifically for that demographic. Those nuances, wow, it really changes the way that you approach them and you speak to them on Instagram.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that really does. You're challenging me here in a really good way. So I'm going to just push back. I'm going to speak on behalf of the listeners and say, okay, that's great. So you're at West Coast. I mean, you could not create a more California avatar than the one that you've created. I mean, that does not play in Iowa, in Illinois, in Texas, probably doesn't really work in New England. It might work in Florida, but not really. And so yet, I assume you have a national audience. Fair enough?

Jasmine Star: International, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: International audience. So why does that translate?

Jasmine Star: When you speak to one person, it also speaks to a longing and a desire in somebody else.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. Okay.

Jasmine Star: And so what happens is when I make references to walking on the beach, I know that 1% of my audience will ever have that experience, but the desire for that does. And when I speak about Elle's frustration about knowing that this is the thing she's supposed to do, and even though her partner supports her, he's the one covering all of the bills. If you live in a zip code of 90210, or if you live in a zip code of 82611, or whatever, the emotional vacancy with having a partner who says you could do it but doesn't really believe in you is the same in Florida, Idaho, California or Zimbabwe. When I could speak to the emotional needs and desires of customers and I can sell the transformation living on the coast, middle America, or New Zealand, then we're playing a different game.

Carey Nieuwhof: So is the husband kind of dismissive of Elle, like half supportive or fully supportive, or?

Jasmine Star: No, he's totally supportive, but he's also the breadwinner. She's not profitable, and so he's only taking the kids on the weekends, which gives her about a full day a week to create her content, to plan her social media, to show up at the farmer's market. So he's all about it, but he also knows, right now, it's just an expensive hobby and she's just like, "Give me the time to make it a business." I could speak to that, and oh my goodness, the people that I speak to resonate with having somebody loves them and supports them, doesn't really get them, and they can't justify the time and the investment because they're not even on the upside of making money yet.

Carey Nieuwhof: Jasmine, this is so good because I've tried to have more and more women on my podcast and be a student of that. I think you get the emotional makeup. I'm not trying to make gender prognostications here, but I don't think men do as good a job as tapping into the emotional vein that I hear you doing. Can you talk about that a little bit? How significant is that? How meaningful is that? And what does that actually produce in terms of being able to reach an audience?

Jasmine Star: I have to tell you straight up, if you were to put me in a boardroom and you made me the chief marketing officer for all male brands selling athletic wear, cigars and like backscratching tools, I would kill the game because we are all emotional creatures and we want to be understood. And what's happened is that social media has only magnified the chasm of constantly feeling on the outside and misunderstood. My only objective as a business owner is to understand the emotional desire and then sell a solution and/or transformation to their people's darkest pain or wildest pleasures.

Jasmine Star: And so if we as business owners aren't taking the time to understand what our customer is wanting, desiring, or going through or has aspirations or desires for, we're totally missing the mark. So this is why I always go back to step number one, we must know who we're speaking to and we must know what they absolutely want on a literal perspective and on an emotional perspective. If I

was selling athletic shoes, what I am literally selling is running shoes. What am I selling emotionally? Lifestyle, hope, desire, aspiration, the feeling of feeling athletic even though you're sitting on the couch. I know what I'm selling from an emotional perspective. When you know how to sell from an emotional perspective, your competition remains in the dark ages. That is literally how it's been.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think this is a Seth Godin thing. I'm just finishing up *This is Marketing*, which is an incredible book, but Seth Godin talks about if you're trying to sell a hammer, all right? So imagine hanging pictures in your house and you're selling to a guy, it's like, are you really selling the hammer or the nail? And then some marketers would say, "No, I'm selling the whole. We're actually selling the whole." And Seth would take it further and say, "No, you're not selling that, you're selling the feeling that happens when the picture is hung, and it's straight, and you sit back and you look at that picture, and you know that you did it and you feel a sense of accomplishment." And as a guy, I get that because I have no gifts. I'm in ministry, so I have no actual talents or skills. If I manage to hang a picture straight, I feel pretty good about that. You're talking about that kind of thing? How do you mind... Yeah, go ahead.

Jasmine Star: Oh, hold on. I'm going to take it.... Because listen, you could take the girl out of the hood, you can't take the hood out of the girl. I'm not selling the picture being hung, I'm selling the mansion. I am telling, if you don't have the capacity, and I mean this in every business I have ever created, if I can't sell you the vision of the mansion, I can't sell you the hammer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh. So explain that. What do you mean by that?

Jasmine Star: Okay. So for instance, what happens is when you want to sell a hammer and your biggest competition really knows how to sell the emotion of selling the picture, my objective is to come out and say, "The picture is great, but what would it feel like to help build the house?" How you stick out in a saturated market is to look at what the best people are doing and saying, "How do I do the impossible? How do I look at what some people are not talking about and then reverse engineer how to sell the vision of creating a house, not just hanging a picture?" That is what really differentiates the people who do massive things, is taking like a Seth Godin idea and then making it even bigger. That's what you have to start doing specifically on social media because now everybody has a megaphone.

Jasmine Star: The megaphones back in the 1940s, '50s, '60s was like the digital marketing agencies had the megaphone, the radio had the megaphone, and the TV had the megaphone, movies had the megaphone. If you did not have any one of those four quadrants, you didn't stand a chance. And then all of a sudden, social media comes in and we all have our own megaphones, and all of a sudden, the same messaging that was coming from TV and radio, that's really powerful, and that's what people are using on their megaphone. So they were trying to

reinvent the message on a megaphone, and I'm like, "Yo, the only way your megaphone is going to be heard, is if you take what you have, do it entirely differently and sell an entirely bigger vision that has never been spoken about before."

Carey Nieuwhof: Isn't that fascinating? How did you get to know Elle? How did you frame her? Did you just talk to your clients long enough to figure out who she was? Did you create the dream client in your head? Can you walk us through that? Because I think there's a lot of people, and we have business leaders and preachers and all kinds of people going... And as a communicator, I need to get into the head of my audience. I speak a lot in principles, but principles don't do that. It's a life situation, it's the story connection, it's the, "Hey, you were thinking about walking out on her on Wednesday, weren't you?" That kind of direct talk that gets people going, "Oh, how did you know? Or you were going to put in your resignation last Monday, weren't you? When you were so frustrated because you felt awful about the weekend." How do you get into that head? How do you create that? Walk us through it, coach us.

Jasmine Star: So we can actually have... We might have to do like part two of this because this is like really going in-depth. However, I do have a quick solution and then give like the nutshell version of it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Jasmine Star: [JasmineStar.com/IdealClient](https://JasmineStar.com/IdealClient), what this includes is two videos, it's free. It's two videos and then a list of adjectives and a prompting to write a story about your dream customer. So it's literally, think about this as fill in the blanks MadLibs style just to get your wheels turning. And then what we do is we include a series of 25 questions for people to answer just to get it going, because I do know that it takes a little bit of time. So what we do on the inside of our team-

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, we'll link to that in the show notes, guys, by the way.

Jasmine Star: Okay. Thank you, thank you. So what we will do is we come up with a series of questions very similar to what I had asked you - name, where they live, the nuances. And then what we try to do is we try to take those things and we have given a templated story to kind of say like, "Oh, this is who this person is," because I promise you, it's like creating a pearl. If I just give you a piece of sand, can you build on it, and build on it, and build on it? And over time, you start adding pieces. So randomly, somebody stood up, 2,000 people, I'm speaking, and he says, "Jasmine, what kind of car does Elle's dad drive?" And I said, "Oh, 1954 Ford truck."

Carey Nieuwhof: Ah.

Jasmine Star: And it just came to me because she was in me, and the story of her going through her father's goat farm, he wouldn't be driving a Lexus. He'd have an old

tanker. That's how it goes. And all of a sudden, that became part of the story. And so the more that you talk about this person and the more that you know who this mid-level manager is and the struggles, and how he really wants to be a coach of his son's soccer team and his superior is asking him to finish the numbers, all of a sudden, you can speak so differently to him. And then you could also probably tell the kind of car he drives and the kind of car his wife wants to drive.

Carey Nieuwhof: Aah.

Jasmine Star: Oh, that becomes telling, right? So it's like there's these things that you just keep on adding. I know, right? I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is fun. This is really, really good because this is real life for everybody, right?

Jasmine Star: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is.

Jasmine Star: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Okay. So we will link to that in the show notes and I am definitely going to fill that out. That's great. Where-

Jasmine Star: But we're going to... If you don't mind, I want to stop here just for one second as we go into Instagram. But now, every time I post something on Instagram, I ask myself, "Does this resonate with Elle? Does Elle know me more? Does Elle like me more? And does Elle trust me more?" Because when you have an Instagram follower who knows you, likes you and trust you, that will then lead to conversations, and conversations on Instagram exist in your direct messages and in comments. And when people start creating conversations, conversations lead to trust, and trust leads to conversions. When people say, "I don't know how to get customers, I don't know how to get more followers, I don't know how to get people in the pews more," it's because they don't know, like and trust you. Your objective on Instagram shouldn't be for the sale, it should be for conversations that lead to trust, then that leads to conversions.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. Okay. And that's really important, high trust. I think trust is the new currency, particularly online - are you a trusted communicator? And trust is two things. It's confidence, and then it also gets down to that personal level, do I actually like you? Are you a good person? Are you worth following? You have hundreds of thousands of followers, right? Probably, I don't know, pushing a million when you add all the platforms together.

Jasmine Star: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you keep up with that level of conversation? How do you engage that many DMs or that many comments on your posts because you have to be getting thousands a week?

Jasmine Star: I want to make sure that before I answer this, people will self qualify or put themselves into certain buckets. Somebody once described that there are three types of CEOs. There's the marketing CEO, there's the culture CEO, and then there's the product CEO. Examples: Steve Jobs, product.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Jasmine Star: There's marketing CEO like Gary Vaynerchuk, and there's the culture CEO, which is the CEO of like Starbucks, Southwest, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, yeah.

Jasmine Star: Martha Stewart. We're going towards that direction. I squarely reside in the marketing CEO role.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I was going to guess.

Jasmine Star: So as a result of knowing what my strengths are, I double down on conveying a message that nobody is better at than me. There are some other CEOs that do not fall in that, and that's okay. Your objective then would be to cast the vision and then put the right person in the right seat or the right team to deploy on that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Jasmine Star: So I do not think that everybody should do it this way. I can only speak to that. So now that I've pre-qualified myself as being a marketing CEO, I know that I can convey a message better than anybody else on my team. I can't build a system if my life depended on it. So I hire for my weaknesses and I keep my strengths. So I make communication part of my job. Most of what I'm doing every day is creating content and responding to those relationships. And so I have designated times. It is very common for me. I'm an early riser. I wake up every morning at 4:30. That's just naturally what time I do, and I'm already responding to DMs between 5:00 and 5:30, and I'm responding to comments in the middle of the day. I check in to all of my social platforms three times a day, and I just time block and I say, "I'm going to do the best I can given this time, and the minute these 30 minutes are over, then I'm doing something else."

Jasmine Star: Can I respond to every single comment? Probably not, but I do my dang best. I do the same thing on LinkedIn, I'm checking in there. I'm checking in on YouTube, making sure that I'm responding because at the time of this recording, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are all based on an algorithm, an algorithm that responds well to your engagement when people leave

comments. So if you want more comments, you have to leave comments and then you have to respond to the comments that people are actually leaving in a timely manner, so that Instagram looks and says, "Oh hey, this person is responding. We want to keep this engagement," because Instagram's only objective isn't to be cool. Instagram's objective is to keep people on the platform. Period. And you're rewarded if your account keeps people on the platform.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's interesting. And that's more than just liking. That's actually like hitting reply and that kind of thing, right?

Jasmine Star: Oh, 1000%. And at the current time of this recording, the most valuable thing you could do algorithmically is for having somebody save your post. Saves are now weighted more than comments more than four words.

Carey Nieuwhof: So tell me what that... I don't think I've ever saved anybody's post and I'm on Instagram every day.

Jasmine Star: Ooh, okay. My gosh. So they created the save feature about two years ago when Pinterest was on the rise, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I see it, but I didn't know what to do with it.

Jasmine Star: Because when you create content that people want to revisit and don't want to lose, they didn't have a way to indicate how to do that. So now what Instagram has done, is in the lower right hand corner, just below the photo or the video, you will see almost like a flag. You press the flag and you could start creating files for like inspiration, sports, DIY. It's essentially Pinterest inside of Instagram. It's fascinating. And you can go to your analytics according to like a post, and you could see how many people saved your post. So your objective is to really push, at least right now, really start putting out content that people want to come back and revisit, which at this point in time would be helpful, inspirational or educational content.

Carey Nieuwhof: Is that the little... like it looks like a ribbon? Like you just got a ribbon at the fair?

Jasmine Star: Okay, yeah. I said a flag, but a ribbon, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, I get.

Jasmine Star: I actually... yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, hey, different perspectives, but that's awesome.

Jasmine Star: I like that. I like that. No, I'm so glad you said that. Yes.

- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, good. Well, and then how do you... I've never heard anyone say, "Save this post." Maybe that's because-
- Jasmine Star: Well, because Instagram, it just came out two months ago. Well, it's been two or three-
- Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, two months ago. Okay.
- Jasmine Star: No, no, no. The flag has been there... the ribbon, excuse me, has been there a while, but Instagram, when they started removing likes - they started removing likes in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and they're slowly rolling out here in the States - people were saying, "Yes, but how are we going to know what is actually valued?" And people can still like your posts, but Instagram said, "For people who are saving post, this means that when you save it, you will go back to it. If you're going back to it, you're spending more time on the platform," which is exactly what Instagram wants.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's cool. All right, that's neat. That's good to know. Wow. See, you learn something new every day. And that is a constantly changing game. So I know we're wrapping up. We're coming close to the end of the conversation today. So let me ask you this question, and it's a really important marketing question. As you already indicated, you don't own Instagram, you don't own Facebook, you don't own LinkedIn or even TikTok. I mean, it's all Twitter. It's all algorithmically driven now, which literally means somebody in Silicon Valley goes, "Ah, we're going to change the algorithm and you could lose 80% of your exposure overnight," which has actually happened with Facebook back at the beginning of 2018 when Zuckerberg made a massive change, and they're continually doing that.
- Carey Nieuwhof: So as an entrepreneur and as a business owner yourself, what are you doing to make sure that you can have direct contact with your dream customers, with your clients, that nobody can really take away? What is the hallmark of that for you? Because you're right, for a while it was photography, now it's Instagram, and coaching, and speaking, and so on and so forth, and you're podcasting and the whole deal. But how do you safeguard that? Because I think this is important for all of us who want to connect with people.
- Jasmine Star: Absolutely. I look at my marketing endeavors like an Easter egg basket. The more eggs I have in the basket, the less bummed I will feel if one of them breaks. And so I do not think that all social platforms will change all at the same time. The importance is to diversify your portfolio. So in addition to my social endeavors, I am blogging four times a week so that I am ensuring that my SEO is still robust and still ready to go. I also am actively growing a newsletter list, because the things that they own are my blog, my website and my newsletter list. And on August 18th, 2018, Facebook and Instagram went down for almost a full day and people lost their dang minds, they were like, "Oh, my gosh." And I'm like, "This is like a wake up call, y'all."

Jasmine Star: I am not building just on Instagram, I'm building on everything and on the next platform because I don't think that Instagram is going to be the thing in four or five years at all. So I am not trying to build a business on a single platform, I'm trying to diversify the portfolio, trying to put more eggs in the Easter basket. And when people hear this, their knee jerk reaction is to be like, "Oh, not another thing." And with that perspective, it's going to be a slow go. When you have another opportunity to market your business for free where people are spending their time, you should clap that up because our grandparents would've given the right arm to have the access and the exposure that we have, and far be it from us for ever to complain that we have the ability to build the business of our dreams for pennies. I would say, "Check your heart. Check your heart. We are too blessed to be stressed. Get busy."

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, this is fascinating to me because you've gone to three things or a couple of things that are not very sexy or current, blogging, and by newsletter, I take it you mean email lists. So I still blog. I had somebody say to me, "People still blog?" I'm like, "You have no idea how much traction blogs get."

Jasmine Star: Oh, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: And your email list, right? Your email list is really, really important. I think often in marketing, our eyes go to the latest and the trendiest and how do I grow followers, all of which is important. But I've learned if I want to directly connect with people, blogging, podcasting and emails, which so far are not algorithmically driven, that is what really connects with people. What's your experience been with that?

Jasmine Star: That has been 100% the case. And here's the thing. The reason why you can get such robust and deep connections by way of emails, blog posts and newsletters is because it's so hard to grow. People have complained for years it's so difficult to get your podcast noticed because there isn't like an algorithm. There isn't a way... I mean, lately it's been a little bit easier to share, but people have to go out of their way. They have to seek, and when they seek, they've already committed, they've already said, "I want to hear more from you in a very different way." And I am telling you, the most ardent supporters, the quickest buyers, the most staunch customers come by way, newsletter, blog, and podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh. Everybody who's got a message to get out there, pay attention. You just heard it again. And that hasn't changed in the last seven years. That has the backbone. Jasmine, this probably is part one. I'd love to get you back some time. This is fantastic. Just thank you so much.

Jasmine Star: You are fantastic, homie. I'm just like, my podcast is just two months old and I am just learning from you, I'm just watching you. I was like, "I get to sit with a pro today and see how it's done." Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm learning. This is kind of like free advice for me. So this has been really good.

Jasmine Star: Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: People are going to want... I'm sure you'll be new to a lot of the audience as well. You have your own tribe, but we're crossing the streams here. So if people want to follow you, tell us where they can find you on social and then home for everything.

Jasmine Star: Yeah. I try to make it as easy as possible. You'll find me at [jasminestar.com](http://jasminestar.com), Jasmine Star on all social platforms, and Jasmine Star Show on iTunes, Apple... iTunes, Apple. I can't even say it right.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I know what you mean.

Jasmine Star: iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, all the goods.

Carey Nieuwhof: The whole deal, Apple Podcasts. They keep changing the name, don't they? Anyway-

Jasmine Star: I know, I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: Jasmine, this has been awesome. Thank you so, so much.

Jasmine Star: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: I told you not to speed it up. Okay, so you probably want transcripts and links. You can find that all at [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode310](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode310). Jasmine, so appreciate this. I'm also going to be on her podcast, which I'm very excited about, and I will commit, at this point, to a part two because if you're like me, you found a lot of value in that episode. So Jasmine, thank you so much for that.

Carey Nieuwhof: We got an Ask Carey coming up in just a few minutes, but in the meantime, make sure you check out your free trial of RightNow Media by going to [RightNowMedia.org/Carey](http://RightNowMedia.org/Carey) and get your free church trends report from Tony Morgan and his team at [TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey](http://TheUnstuckGroup.com/Carey).

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks again to our partners. Hey, they make podcasts like this possible. We have staff. I fly into cities to interview people. And when you support them, we curate them very, very carefully, everybody wins. You win, our partner wins, and we get to keep doing this. So thank you so much. I'm so grateful for our partners for 2019. It's been the best podcast ever. We hit 10 million downloads and so much more.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, now on... Oh, yeah. Wow, we got another episode coming up, right? Believe it or not, it's Christmas Eve, yeah, but we're launching, because, you

know, sometimes you listen live, sometimes you listen later. John S. Dickerson, who's become a friend for a little while, an award-winning journalist, he talks all about the reasons that skeptics dismiss Christianity, and here's an excerpt.

John Dickerson: People assume, well, Christians are against women and women's rights, but the facts are the facts. And what I did is I looked at the World Health Organization's rankings of the 10 best nations in the world for women's right and the 10 worst nations, and then I co-correlated those with Pew Research findings of what's the percentage of Christians in these nations. And what I found is the 10 best nations for women's rights in the world today are 75% Christian in their population according to the Pew Research Center. The 10 worst are all less than 10% Christian. So where Christianity goes, women have better education, more equal pay, they're allowed to vote and drive cars, things they're not allowed to do in those lower 10 nations. And so that's where I reached to the conclusion as a journalist, whether or not you believe in God or the spiritual, if you love the women in your life, you want them to live in a city that has a bunch of big churches.

Carey Nieuwhof: So that's coming up December 24th. Then on the 31st, Jordan Raynor is joining me. And then can I give you a sneak peek of the 2020 lineup? It's pretty crazy. So who have we got coming in 2020? Kick it off with Francis Chan, then Louie Giglio, Liz Forkin Bohannon, John Mark Comer, Jefferson Bethke, Jennie Allen, Craig Groeschel, Lysa TerKeurst, Claire Diaz-Ortiz, and we've also got... let's see, John Maxwell coming up, Joel Marion coming up, Bobby Herrera coming up, and so many more. I'm so excited for next year.

Carey Nieuwhof: And hey, if this has helped you, make sure you share it. Thanks for sharing it on your social. I tried to see if you tag me. We will actually be on that and try to share that ourselves too. So I love connecting with you guys. And speaking of connecting, Ben from Chicago wants to know, here's his question, he says, "How can we utilize video platforms for discipleship? Is it possible?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, Ben, I'm going to genericize your question and it's a great episode to ask it on because I think Jasmine just gave us a masterclass in the answer to that question. So if you want to go onto YouTube, or you want to start using videos on Instagram, or IGTV or something like that, or TikTok, can you do that for discipleship? And I'm going to say, yeah, I think you can actually create an audience for anything online, but here's the goal. It has to not be about you. It has to be about the listener, it has to be about the person that you're trying to help.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think the number one filter that I try to run all of my content through, I don't get it right all the time, but I try hard to get it right every time, is I want this to be helpful. In other words, yeah, this podcast is free for you, but guess what you paid with? It cost you something. It cost you your time and your time is valuable, and your attention is valuable. And so, one of the things I try to do with this podcast is, it's like, is this going to be of interest to the leaders who are

listening? Is this going to help them? Are we going to build a relationship? And yeah, there's a little bit of benefit that comes back to me, but at the end of the day, as Zig Ziglar says, "If you help enough people get what they want, you will eventually get what you want."

Carey Nieuwhof: So I think your focus really has to be on your audience and you have to say, "Okay, what is going to help the person?" Because people ask me all the time, how do I build a following? I think that's the wrong question. You're not trying to build a following, you're trying to help people. You help enough people, eventually you may get a following. So ask yourself this question. If you don't know what's going to be helpful to your audience and you haven't created an Elle or my person, who I have to develop a lot more, trying to lead a midsize organization and struggling with x, y, z, ask yourself this. Here's a question, Ben. What would help me? Like what is your need?

Carey Nieuwhof: I just finished reading Craig Groeschel's Dangerous Prayers, which is a great book. Craig's going to be on early in 2020. And you can see even through Craig's book, which I'm thumbing through right now, he was trying to solve a problem in his own life, which was that his prayer life was "lame." And so he writes about that and how he reignited that. Well, guess what? A lot of people have that problem. So if you can't figure out exactly what your avatar is, and trust me, Craig knows his, but if you're starting there, it's like, well, what do I struggle with? And like 90% of the stuff on my blog, guess what that is? Those are problems I actually have faced or am facing, and it just so happens that couple million other people have the same challenges and the same issues. When we go and select subjects and guests for this, guess what? What Jasmine addressed today is a problem a lot of us have.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I would say where you start with utilizing video platforms for discipleship, it doesn't really matter what your... Well, it does matter what your message is, you get what I'm saying, but it doesn't really matter what platform you pick or whatever, just try to help people. Just try to help people. You help enough people, eventually I think you'll build a following.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys, I hope that helped. We are back Christmas Eve with a fresh episode. Thanks so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

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