

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 324 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Today's episode is brought to you by Planning Center and also TheAscentLeader.org. And we've got a new segment called What I'm thinking About, and I want to talk to you about what unites almost every business, church, organization in terms of the strategy that we're using these days. Had a clarifying moment recently with the CEO of a national company that really made me think, "We're really all doing the same thing." So that's at the very end of the podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

My guest today is Claire Diaz-Ortiz, and you are going to be I think grateful that you tuned in. She is an author, speaker, innovation advisor, an angel investor who was an early employee at Twitter. Fast Company named her one of the 100 most creative people in business. And she's also called "The Woman Who Got the Pope on Twitter" by Wired. She holds an MBA, other degrees from Stanford and Oxford, has been featured widely in places like the New York Times, Forbes, Wall Street Journal, BBC, Fast Company, and she's the award winning author of eight books. And she's @Claire on Twitter. So she's somebody I've been following for a long, long time, and really glad to have her on the show.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And we talk about, well, all things social media and strategy. And I do think that's the business we're all in, so I'm going to add my two cents at the very end of the podcast. And I'm so glad you tuned in today. Thank you so much for listening. This has been a phenomenal year so far on the podcast, so welcome to all of you who are brand new to it. The fun part is we have an archive now for like 300 and somewhat episodes, so really excited to welcome you on board. If this episode means something to you, share it, let us know and leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts. And of course, subscribing is free.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, if you get around most organizations that do some kind of event planning, Planning Center has become the industry standard. And it's also a way that you can really help your volunteers serve well or your staff. So for example, when I talk to leaders, they're so frustrated because they're like, "I'm trying to schedule everybody but like this guy isn't unavailable then, and this person isn't available then and we can't get enough people." Well, if you don't use Planning Center, or maybe you do and you don't know about this feature, you don't have to do any of that. Your volunteers and your team members, your staff, can set up their own block-out dates when they're out or they need a break, and that takes a tremendous load off of you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Planning Center also makes it really easy to follow up with volunteers, send thank you emails, and track people who have RSVP'd for that week's event or rehearsal. And using the people app, you can use their workflow and list tools for following up with new visitors, volunteers or even something like prayer

requests or what's going on in people's lives. So they also have an incredible support team. And if you want to check them out, make sure you visit them today at Planning.Center. That's Planning.Center. And as you may know, none of us is going to hold our job forever. And succession is a massive issue in the church, in so many places, and it's something I care so passionately about. It's something that I started in my own church that I founded five years ago.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And if you're a leader sensing that transition is in your future, maybe even 10 to 15 years out, there's a curated cohort just for you and your spouse to begin thinking about it and processing that. It's hosted by The Ascent Leader. And in this particular cohort, you will be with Kenton and Laurie Beshore for three days and ... This is going to be hard, Palm Desert, California. Kenton was a longtime senior pastor of Mariners Church, one of the largest churches in the United States. They've had a very successful transition. And he's just going to open up his book, Kenton and Laurie, and talk all about it. You'll navigate the sensitive nature of leadership succession. You'll get personal mentorship from Kenton and Laurie, and advice from high level peers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There are very limited spots available and you have to apply. But if this might be of interest to you, or you're on the team and think, "You know what? My senior leader could probably use this," even if it's 10 to 15 years out, head on over to [TheAscentLeader.org](http://TheAscentLeader.org) and check that out. Well, I'm so excited to bring you my conversation with Claire Diaz-Ortiz. So how about we jump right to that. Claire, welcome to the podcast.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Thank you so much for having me. Great to be here.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So you got a fascinating background including, and I don't know how I first heard of you but years ago, I learned that you were one of the early employees at Twitter, an actual number, employee number 51. Is that true?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

It's actually not a true number, but I am.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's not. Well, that's what Mashable said. Are you saying Mashable did not tell the truth?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Isn't that funny? I often think about how that was quoted in some article one time years ago, and then it just kept getting repeated. I actually do, truth be told, I do not know my employee number. I'm unclear where you look. It's on some stub somewhere, but I don't know it. Isn't that funny?

Carey Nieuwhof:

But it was early days, was it?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah. I once said in an article that I joined and there were about 50 people there, and that's what it turned into.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, there you go. Well, believe it or not, everything you read on the Internet isn't true. Did you know? Anyway, I would like to talk a little bit, to start out we're going to cover a lot of ground today, but the early days at Twitter. I mean, it's fascinating. I've listened to the stuff coming out of Silicon Valley for years, had a chance to visit there a number of times myself, but those are kind of heady days. Take us back to sort of what that moment was like in the mid to late 2000s in Silicon Valley.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So I mean, the way I ended up as an early employee essentially was because I was an early user. At the time, I had been traveling around the world and blogging about it. And then ended up living in this orphanage in Kenya, where I was also blogging about my experiences. And for those who know a little bit about the history of Twitter, Twitter actually was incubated at blogger.com. And so if it was 2005, 2006, and you had a blog on the Internet, you were probably writing it at blogger.com. So essentially, I was typing my words but tripping on words.blogspot.com, like the longest blog URL ever. And the Twitter folks found it and started to promote it. And then essentially said, "Hey, excuse me, the blogger folks found it and started to promote it, and then said they were launching this new service called Twitter. Why don't you join and start tweeting about your adventures, in the same way that you were blogging about them?"

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And so that was sort of how I got started on the platform. Obviously, there weren't many folks in Kenya, there weren't many folks doing what I was doing at the time. And I started to build a following. And eventually within, I guess about a year or two, and that led into me becoming an early employee out at the company. I was in business school at the time, and I just started with a three month kind of internship to write my thesis. And then at the end of that time, just essentially stayed. So it was definitely an exciting time. One of the early stories I remember, not fondly but with humor, is sitting in the office, there are about 50 people and we got a knock on the door.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And my friend who was working as like a BD person, and a receptionist and kind of everything all rolled into one goes to the door, answers the door and it's a user. And the user is having a problem uploading her profile pic to the platform. And so my friend helps her and all this kind of stuff, and she comes back and tells us about it. And we say, "That was nice of you, weird that the user could just knock on the door," and that kind of thing. And she said, "Yeah, and the weirdest part was that the profile pic was very revealing bikini photo." So it was just, the days. It was just, what's going on? It was just a very, very different time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, no kidding. And so around that time, were you at Stanford? Were you studying at Stanford at that time? Were you in England studying?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I was in England. So I did my MBA at Oxford. Oxford has an incredible program for social entrepreneurs. And I had been coming out of this nonprofit that I was running in East Africa, so I had been granted this scholarship to study up there and it was an incredible experience.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's awesome. Awesome. You have the coolest username too, right? You got @Claire.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I did not get it initially though. Another thing that people do not understand.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You didn't?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

No. Because when I first joined Twitter, I had the name of this long winded blog name as my Twitter name. So that was definitely not my first Twitter name.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, right. But Jack Dorsey is he like @jack, and Biz Stone he got ... I guess when you start the company, you get some pretty cool handles. Did you have any idea? This is one of the questions that I think is circulating now in a different light. But did you have any idea that social media would become what it has become at that time? Because Facebook was starting to really gain traction, Instagram was I don't think even around at that point. I think that started in 2011. I mean, when you look back at what you thought this would become, what did you imagine it would be?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah. I mean, so when I joined Twitter back in 2009, the opening to the speech I would give most often about how Twitter, and how social media more generally was going to be used as a force for change and a force for positive good in the world, at the time the beginning to the speech I would always give would reference the fact that, when Twitter started in the end of 2006, people thought it was just something that you would use to tell people what you're eating for breakfast. And so even in 2009, which was two years into it, but only 50 really employees into it. So this first couple of years didn't see a ton of growth on the company side. We were still getting the same kind of feedback and pushback, and a lot of news media.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

People just simply didn't understand that it was actually going to make a big change, in the way that not only individuals approached the world, but in a way that communities, and governments and social systems did. And my role, I had come from this nonprofit background, and the thesis I wrote on Twitter was about corporate social innovation. So that was my first role at the company. And what that meant essentially was that Biz Stone, one of the co-founders, had this belief that Twitter could be used as a tool for good, and so he wanted someone to proactively push that agenda. So that was kind of what I was tasked with in the early days and throughout my time at the company, but in later years I had some other mandates as well.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And so for me, it was incredibly powerful to watch kind of these early firsts. The summer of 2009 you had the island nation of Moldova having this revolution, and people called it the first Twitter revolution because new people were able to organize was through Twitter. In January 2010, you had the hurricane in Haiti, and that was the first time that we really understood that Twitter and social media more generally, could really be used in disaster relief. So I mean, we were seeing these moments building up, and eventually within a few years by 2013, 2014, we sort of recognized its power. And then all this curb, because then by the time you get to 2017, we started to see the limits of its efficacy and the problems that came along with it. So it's been really interesting, I should say, to watch the last 10 years of our understanding of social media come and then grow, I should say.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it's interesting because I think we're all kind of watching what's happening, not just on Twitter but on different platforms now, and the things that were initially empowering also empower a toxicity, that I'm not sure any of us really realized was as big or as profound. Any thoughts on that when you look at ... And Twitter now, I mean, there's a lot of you have to be really careful. I think Donald Miller even said in the bio to your book, you try to stay away from Twitter sometimes because it can be depressing. I'm still on it. And we're trying to use it for good, trying to use that a little ... Trying to be some of the good people on the Internet. But some days you feel like, "Wow, there's a lot of strange and a lot of toxic out there." What are your thoughts on that Claire?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. I mean, I like to say that 2018 was kind of the worst year of social media's life. That's really the year where we started to understand, "Okay, what is this doing to our brains? Our inability to focus and to concentrate, what is this doing to our adolescents?" We've looked at potentially increased suicide rates in girls and boys, as potentially a connection to their social media use. And we look at what it's doing to political systems throughout the world, in terms of what we call these filter bubbles or these information silos which is that idea that, "I go on Twitter or I go on Facebook, and I read the things from the people I already follow. And so then I become more entrenched in my own views." And so it's kind of the exact opposite of what we initially thought of social media.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

We used to call it an open information platform and the reality is, yes, it's open information. But that doesn't address, that phrase doesn't address that information is weighted differently. So that's how you end up with these silos and these filter bubbles. I think that social media is a tool that can be good or bad, and I think we are seeing it now used very widely in both ways. And I think now what is happening is just that, we are realizing that these individuals actually have to use more self restraint and be more in control of our use on these platforms. In the past, we just thought they were good things and let us all use them as much as possible. And now we're seeing, hey, it's not really like that. We do have to mediate things.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

That being said, I'm a marketer and I do believe that if you want to sell anything at all these days, you're going to be online. And if you're online, you really got to have some type of presence on social media. It's your most ubiquitous and your least expensive marketing tool. And the reality is as with many things, use in moderation is okay for individuals.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, and that's hard to get to, but just to ... I guess it's become so much more than anybody thought it was even a decade ago, and revealed a lot more. This was not really the trajectory that anyone had in mind, would you say? I mean, they're conspiracy theorists, not in the crazy Internet sense. But you listen to people like Tristan Harris or so on and so forth, and there's a variety of really thoughtful people weighing in on social. I want to shift gears, but I just want to see if there's anything else you want to say on that before we move on.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yes. I think my final thought would be, so Tristan Harris and he has the Center for Humane Technology. It's a great initiative. I do think the one challenge I would insert into his mission, I would say in this larger mission to kind of take technology back as I like to say, is I do think one of the problems in the creation of social media as we know it was a lack of diverse voices early on. And so I just want to be clear about ongoing initiative like the Center for Humane Technology, that I do think they've got to really push the agenda now to make sure they've got diverse players and diverse people weighing in, because I do think some of the kind of systemic problems we see, a perfect example would be bullying on a platform like Twitter.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

We're not really understood thoroughly, simply because you had a really homogenous group of engineers creating this stuff. And I mean Evan Williams, the co-founder of Twitter, he's acknowledged this. He said straight up, "Had we had more women or people that look different at the table in those early days, we might have thought about some of this stuff differently." So I just want to make sure that that stays forefront based top of mind that we look towards changing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's fair, and it's a good note to everybody leading something or starting something today, to look at your own biases and even the unconscious biases you might have, or the direction that you might have. Okay, this is going to feel real random, but I got to ask you a couple of questions while I got you. And again, the Internet does lie so if this is wrong, correct me, but I believe that I either read or heard something that is attributed to you a few years ago, and I'm actually writing a book on this that comes out next fall about how to leverage your time. And you said something like, "Even the most brilliant engineers at Twitter probably only had about three great hours a day in them of coding." True? And if so, what do you mean by that?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I don't know if I said exactly that but I believe exactly that, and I would say it works just as much for an engineer as for anyone else. I mean, there's lots of studies showing how long we can as individuals actually focus and actually be productive, and the reality is that you can't really no matter what you do, no matter how much coffee, or how much isolation or how much you in a creative, beautiful space feeling inspired that you add into the mix, you've really only got a few hours a day of really good, productive time. And so I think one of the biggest mistakes that certainly companies like these tech companies have or make, is just by getting people to try to work all the time. And they do that with free food, and with gyms and all this stuff, which is helpful, but those things would be helpful if you didn't make them work all the time.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I just thought on Twitter, I don't even know what company it was. But it was a company that reduced all employees to a four day workweek and then saw incredible productivity gains, and things like that I'm always super fascinated by. Because I think it's what all the studies are showing, the less we work, the more productive we can actually be. And I mean, there are folks that say, "Hey. If you figure out your biological prime time as they say, so the time of the day in which you're most productive, that time of day, you can actually be like 100 times more productive than you at 4:00 PM, and in a sluggish post lunch state for example."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I would be one of those people who completely agree with that. I think that's very, very true. One of your earlier books you wrote on scheduling your day. So you have three children, is it?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you've written multiple books, you've been involved in some really fast paced startups. You're a tech advisor, also a startup advisor and investor. I mean, you got a lot of balls up in the air. So do you want to speak to everyone who's juggling a lot? What are some of the strategies, the rhythms, the habits that you've employed, that have helped you try to keep it all in the air, have your sanity and still have time for interviews like this?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So I think one of the big things is trying to compartmentalize my life as much as I can. So there are a lot of people that talk about this, but trying to do the whole, "When you're a mom, you're a mom, and when you're at work, you're at work" thing. Certainly it makes you more productive when you're at work. But it also makes you enjoy both sides of the coin much, much better. I think there's nothing more stressful than like having a small child yell at you, while you are trying to respond to an email on your phone. You're not doing either thing well in that scenario. So trying to separate out those worlds as much as possible.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I have a friend, Crystal Paine, a money saving mom who I think last year did this whole experiment where when she got to the end of her work day, and she has a home office like you do, but when she got to the end of her work day, she would leave her phone actually in the basement, the office she has until the kids went to bed or something like that. And I love little experiments like that, because I think the reality is we all have a lot less self control than we think we do. And so putting up those barriers helps us to live better essentially.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

For me, the challenge is always the disconnection. I went through many years of not having email on my phone. It's been back on my phone for about four months now, and I don't like it and I've got to get back into the rhythm. And I went through many years of not looking at email at all during the weekend. And I would say about three months ago, I slipped back into both of these patterns again, and it's been a

challenge. It makes me feel more exhausted when Monday morning comes around. You know what I mean? So I want to get back into that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why and how did you cut it out a few years ago? Because that's a really important strategy. I've moved it to a third screen on my phone, and sometimes delete it when I'm on holiday.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

You delete it when you're on holiday?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So I actually got, it when I was writing this book, Design Your Day, maybe about six years ago, that was when I was doing all this research into productivity. And that was when I said, "Okay, I want to get this off my phone." And then interestingly, I've been doing it for a few years. And then the thing I did that really convicted me of it's kind of power was about two years ago, I did a 21 day detox. So my phone was just a dead weight. I didn't have phone, or email, or social media or anything like that for 21 days.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And that was super interesting to me, and it definitely made me more convicted about trying to compartmentalize my life and trying to not always be online. But it also did something that was surprising, which was show me that I think sometimes we can idealize life that we think people lead before technology. For those 21 days, there were a couple times it was very clear to me that if I had my phone, life would actually be significantly easier at this exact moment, you know?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Okay, that's good. And then you put it back on, because you were in the middle of writing a book, that's it.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And then three or four months ago, I just fell out of the habit. I think it was following a vacation where I felt very frazzled, and just put them back on my phone again. And it's so easy when you do something like that to realize that you don't have the self control often to stop it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Any other hacks that have really helped you try to balance family, work and the various things that you're doing?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Meditation, exercise and then a morning routine. Those are kind of all main phase. I have gotten really into meditation. About two years ago, I got really into it. I tried it for years, but the thing that changed it for me was finding an application that I actually really liked. I use the Calm App. I use it every day and I

swear by it. I think it's just super helpful. I think being able to listen to a guided meditation makes it easier to do, so that's really important. And then making sure I exercise and then having a morning routine.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's your typical ... Because we do have the majority of the listeners are young. They've got kids right in the zone, kind of where you're at right now with kids still very much at home, very much dependent on their parents, not teenagers. What do the first few hours of your day look like?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Well, I think this is the big thing that has shifted since I've had children. My daughter is almost six and then I have two boys who are three. And for me the big, big thing was realizing that actually at this stage of life, morning routine for me, it's not going to be the first thing. And I think that meant for a long time that I wasn't doing it because I said, "Oh, I can no longer do it first thing so I don't need to do it." And so for me, what happens is I end up at the office about an hour and a half to two hours after getting out of bed. And that first hour at the office is devoted to me with coffee, doing my morning routine. So doing expressive writing.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I usually do expressive writing, journaling and then some type of motivational or devotional reading, essentially. And that first hour is essential. It's so funny because I do it in my office co-working in the ... Sorry, in the kitchen part of the co-working because I like to do it away from my desk, I want a different space for that first hour. And a guy came up to me just yesterday and was like, "What are you always doing for a whole hour every morning without your computer?" And it's the best hour of my day, it's the best hour.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's a really good strategy actually is saying, "Okay, if I can't get 6:00 AM or 7:00 AM, or whatever the wake up hour is, if I can't get it, you're right. A lot of people would just write the day off and go, "Well, so much for that." But to actually make a break and start your day there, I think is a really good idea. Okay. So a couple of other questions for you. Just when you look back on your leadership, what would you say this far in have been some of the greatest challenges that you've faced as a leader?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I think one of the challenges that I've faced is having a multi-passionate career. I think that is something that we see more and more, and we see it as more and more popular. Obviously, you are an example of that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

By multi-passionate, can you just talk about what that means, multi-passionate?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

You have a few different interests that you feel are very strong, and maybe they all have one sort of North Star and maybe those interests ... Either the interest could be one North Star with multiple ways

you express it like a podcast, and then a book and then speaking, or it could really be maybe two kind of diverging interests that you want to...

Carey Nieuwhof:

I love that phrase. It's good.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And I think for me that was tough to wrangle with, because some of my favorite books of all time and some of my favorite leadership teachings of all time, are all about focusing on that one thing. I love Essentialism by Greg McKeown. I love the One Thing. I love all the stuff Michael Hyatt, talks about this. And I believe it, but it has always conflicted in my head with how you deal with having a few different kind of missions in life, or ways you express that one mission.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So how have you navigated that multi-passionate career path?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah. I mean, I think I've just tried to make things, like the tenants that are talked about in Essentialism are in the one thing I've tried to make them my own, and realize that I'm never going to have exactly one thing on the goals list, or the vision board or whatever it is, that is going to be the absolute priority in a given year. And I think I will have a couple, and I think actually just based on my personality type makes me stronger in the other things that I do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Okay. Would you say ... No, this is really good. Would you say that there's a thread there, Claire? I had a couple of people speak into my life. I remember one day I was listening to, I think a podcast by Reid Hoffman, I had another guy coaching me. And it occurred to me that of all the various things I've done, the one common thread and I didn't see this until a few years ago, was communication. Whether that was law, I gravitated to courtroom. If that was ministry, I gravitated toward the sermon. Here I am in this entrepreneurial space, and what am I doing? Podcasting, writing books, speaking. It's all communication. Would you say looking back at your variety of things, can you distill a common thread that kind of ... Like is it all entrepreneurial? Is it all ... What would you say it is that really-

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

The way I think about it and I thought about this a lot, is that there are two things that I consistently thrive at in all areas of my life, and one of them is basically content creation. So I really like writing and I really like speaking. And then the other thing is connecting, because I really like connecting people to people. And so those things are happening a lot. And when I'm not doing one of those things, I think I'm really outside my sweet spot, not in my sweet spot I'm saying.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I bet you for a lot of people who are multi-disciplinary or multi-passionate, if you look through, you probably find a thread there. There probably is a thread. Okay, good. What's been surprisingly easy? Like most people in the outside would be, "Oh, that's got to be tough." And you're like, "No, actually it's pretty easy." What's been easy in leadership for your life?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I mean, I think one of my superpowers is just, I really enjoy connecting with people. I'm a total introvert, but I love connecting and I love making those connections. And I think my brain just kind of does that. I see someone, I meet someone, I think, "Oh, you should talk to B person, and then B person should talk to C person," and that's just one of the things that I completely love doing. And so that has really never been a challenge for me. I feel like I can go to some conference, and drop into some city and randomly find 10 people to have an interesting dinner with that night. That's something that I'm good at.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is a superpower. Okay. So your latest book, it just came out is all about the difference between brand marketing, or sorry, between social media success. And I want to start by talking about the difference between brand marketing and direct marketing. So can you clarify those terms for us?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah. So I think this is super important and when I was just coming up with this new book, Social Media Success for Every Brand, one of the pain points that I developed this book really out of, was this real mistaken idea people have that social media should lead you directly to a sale. So you should be able to put up a social media post on Twitter, and then you should see someone buy your widget and if you don't, then that means that social media didn't work. And so, one of the ways I really began to think about this and one of the things I talk about in the book is, that I think most people mistake social media for a direct marketing tool when really it's a brand marketing tool.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So direct marketing or direct sales marketing is, I send the marketing message and you purchase something as a direct result. Brands marketing in contrast, is marketing for the sake of creating awareness about the brand and engagement around the brand. So these are very, very different goals. And one of the things that I see all the time in startups I advise or invest in, is this immediate complaints upon joining a new social media platform that the sales aren't rolling in. So basically this whole new book that I wrote is all about looking at why social media works for brands marketing, and then how you can get people interested in your brand, and then lead them up what I call an engagement ladder, to the point at which then you can make a direct sale or make a direct app of them, and then see the sales that you actually want.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now that makes a lot of sense. I mean, when I've thought about this in the past, I think car companies do something similar. You think about a vehicle, you might purchase one somewhere between every four to 10 years. I don't know what the average would be. And you see car ads every day, right? You see car companies that are advertising every day, but it's not like, "Oh, wow, I saw that billboard. I'm going right into the dealership, and I'm going to drop \$35,000 right now." But we expect that from social.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I've never thought about that in terms of cars, but that's a perfect example. We don't mind that we see. That's really interesting actually. Right. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. And so the idea is you need to be out there, and I think what I find fascinating about this, it's a partnership with Don Miller and the StoryBrand people, and I'm an avid listener to the podcast and reading a lot of what Don is writing over the years. But you've taken his StoryBrand framework and adapted it to social media. So can you walk us through some of the broad strokes of that adaptation, Claire?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So I mean, the background to this, Don and I have been friends for about a decade and I love the StoryBrand marketing framework. And it's something I've used with startups that I've worked with a lot. But one of the challenges that I see with it, is that there was never really an exact plug and play model for then using the StoryBrand framework on social media. The framework, if you've been through it or if you've read his book Building a StoryBrand, is really great for showing you exactly what you need to do on a website and what you need to do on an email newsletter. But it doesn't go into what I call the third kind of pillar of digital media, which is social media.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So that was when I came down a couple years ago and said, "Hey. This is amazing. I love StoryBrand for my clients, but I think we need something related to how to use it exactly with social media." And he said, "Hey, why don't you create it?" And so that's where this came from. So essentially what I did in the book is create a five step model. I call it the share model, and it walks you through really exactly how to go about doing this. And the first step in the model is figuring out the basic StoryBrand framework first, so you understand your story and how to tell a clear story before you do anything else. And then it's the next four steps of the model are taking you through the practical logistics, and some of the theoretical ideas about how to really post well on social and how to see results.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I think one of the things Don has done really well and he's changed the conversation I think in a lot of circles on this is, it's like stop being the hero of your own story. If you look at every good novel, every good movie, every good story that gets told in human history, the idea is that there's sort of a guide and then there's the hero, and the hero struggles. And so his big thing is no, in my case the podcast listener, or the audience or the reader, make them the hero. Do you want to talk about that a little bit as it applies to social media? Do we still try to make ourselves the hero?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

We try to make ourselves the hero all the time. And one of the ways you most do that is the type of content that we promote, and that we send out on social. So one of the big things I try to encourage people to understand really early on, is that your social media platforms are really like a bank account. And in order to keep your bank account in the black, you need to be depositing more than you withdraw. And depositing in the world of social media is about creating valuable content, and then withdrawing is when you make that call to action. You ask someone to go to your website and to download your PDF, or to even buy something or to share your product with a friend.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And so it's really, really important when you think about making sure that your customer is your hero, so make sure that 80% of the time you're really depositing value, giving them thing that matter to them. Because that's really the key to keeping people around, and keeping people as your followers on a social

media platform. And obviously, you don't just want them as your followers, you want them to then move up this engagement ladder to become increasingly engaged with you, up to the point that they are these diehard fan potentially.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, how do you do that? Can you give us some concrete examples of content that you think would not be about you, versus the direct ask like?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So I mean, in the book we walk through exactly how to create kind of the perfect editorial calendar for your brand, and the perfect social media schedule for your brands. But I think on a macro level, the most important thing that happens before that, is to figure out which platform is actually for you. So one of the things that I think is really valuable about the book is that we have the social media evaluation. And in it, I basically just created an evaluation that any brand can take, to figure out which platform matters most to them and which should be their priority platform. Because I cannot tell you the number of brands or startups I've worked with who have said, "Hey, we just put all our content on Facebook but no one cares. And so social media doesn't work."

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And I say, "Well, what's your brand about?" And they say, "Well, I'm a recruiter or I'm an executive coach." And I say, "Okay, well, take this evaluation. But I'm going to bet before you take this evaluation, that Facebook is not going to be your priority platform, and that actually you're going to see a lot more success on either LinkedIn or Twitter." So each of these platforms is really good for different things, and people often do not realize that. You talk about ... We mentioned in Twitter earlier on, the superpower of Twitter is connecting people. So if you are looking to recruit someone, if you are looking to invest in a startup, if you are looking to find a thought leader who might be able to share the good news of your latest book coming out, all those types things are perfect on Twitter and they pretty much suck in most of the other platforms.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

In contrast, if you are a blogger and you have a lot of content you produce, and you want a lot of eyeballs to that content, you're going to see way, way more success on either Facebook or secondarily Instagram, depending on if you have good images or not. So it's really important to figure out the best platform, before you then start thinking about what kinds of content is going to work best, because the different platforms have different types of content that really worked for them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Do you want to take us up the ladder a little bit, the engagement ladder? Talk about that. I'd love to drill down on that, Claire.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So I mean, basically, I like to say that social media in many ways is like a cocktail party. And so if you think of cocktail party you think of, what are your goals when you go to a cocktail party? Your goals are probably to have a good time, maybe meet someone, to maybe meet someone that you connect with and maybe exchange business cards, to maybe follow up at a later date. Your goal at the cocktail

party is probably not and should not be to rush in and run up to your ex boyfriend, husband, wives, roommate and try to sell your latest healing essential oil. That doesn't work. You're going to be the guy at the cocktail party no one wants to talk to.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And so when we think of social media like a cocktail party, we think of, "Okay, how can you stand out in a positive way and potentially make a connection, that on both sides might lead to following up at a later date?" So you can send out valuable content perhaps to make that happen, stand out in a positive way on social media with the hope that then someone will follow you, which is the first step on that engagement ladder. And then as you walk them up the engagement ladder, as you continue to share good content with them, you're hoping that first they follow you, then they maybe respond to you on social media, then they maybe share one of your posts with someone else, then they maybe click on your website URL, then they maybe join your email newsletter, then they maybe open that email newsletter and then they maybe make a first purchase. And then they maybe become one of those diehard fan.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So that's the example of how that engagement ladder works, and the specific rung of the ladder can differ from brand to brand, but that is really the overview. And the idea is that social media have this incredibly ubiquitous tool that is oftentimes free or nearly free, is one of the best ways to get people on that ladder in the first place. And then you're going to use some of these other digital media tools to pull them up the ladder, while you're still connecting with them on social.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can that be a long sequence sometimes, the engagement matter?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Absolutely. It can be an incredibly long sequence. I mean, I've had folks on my email newsletter for 10 years and some of those people actually open regularly, but they're not interested in any of the things to buy yet and maybe they will one day, maybe they won't. But for them, it's been a really long ladder so far.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it's interesting because there's one guy that I've been a fan of for a long time, Ramit Sethi, and I've followed him online. I think it started with an email newsletter. And then I started following him on social, I was really engaged. I got all the sales emails, but I would read his emails but never click. And then a few months ago, as our team needed to do some training, I went in and bought one of his courses. His courses are not cheap, not cheap. I mean, they're multi thousands of dollars. And I'm like, there is a great example. I was thinking if I was Ramit Sethi I might think, "This guy has no interest in me. He reads all my emails, he's never going to do anything." Then all of a sudden one day I decide, "I'm flipping a switch" and I made a major investment. Is that typical? Is that what can happen?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I do not think that's typical, and I think ... Ramit is a friend of mine from college actually, I just saw him at our reunion, and I've done the same with him. I've followed him for years and I've made-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Because you are both Stanford, right?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I finally bought one of his very expensive courses last year. I think he would probably tell us if you are really targeted towards online marketing, that you would probably not want to keep that person around that long. You probably want to shorten that cycle to some extent. But everyone's different.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you were at that reunion? My wife and I were actually right next to Stanford at the Stanford Park Hotel while that was going on. And I thought, "I'm just going to like crash the party," but I didn't do it.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

It was really hot day. I mean, October in California is always hot. That was wow, I was like.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But it was a good time, was it?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

We had a great time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, not a total, just a bit of a detour. But Stanford has produced a lot of incredible graduates. Any idea what some of the secret sauce is there?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

It has \$50,000 palm trees, I got to tell you. You heard about that?

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, I have not.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I remember we got there as freshmen, we went on some tour with our freshman dorm resident advisor, I don't know of campus. And the thing he told us that I repeat to this day, I have no idea if it's true or not, is that on the main entry way on Palm Drive, each of the trees cost \$50,000 to fly in from like Russia or something. I don't know. So.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's it. That's the secret. Okay. We know. Okay, back to the main story. I just had to throw that in. So the engagement ladder and the time sequence, what are some keys to getting people to move up? Because I know there's a lot of churches putting content out there that they think is valuable. There's a lot of businesses it's like, "Wow, I've shared like ..." If you're in real estate, "I've shared five ways to prepare your house for resale, got free information out there." What are some tricks or tips I should say, not so much tricks, but strategies to moving people up that engagement ladder a little bit sooner?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So one of the things is you've got to make sure to have calls to action. So I say, 80% of the time you're depositing, and then 20% of the time you're withdrawing and doing a call to action. I just did a LinkedIn live with someone who has a really large community of HR professionals on LinkedIn, we were talking about my book. And I was sharing the engagement ladder and he was just like, "Wow, I really never call people to action." And he was telling me he's had his business for a number of years, he's got all these thousands of people and he's never asked them to buy anything. And they all just. And I'm like, "This doesn't work."

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And I think this is something we need to talk about also, it's a little bit of you do have to train your followers a bit to understand that they are going to get some sales messages from time to time, and some people are just not going to like it. I mean here, I come out with one book every two years. And I sent a few emails the week my book came out to 20,000 people on my list. And this one guy, he must have responded three times with just these horrific messages about, "Stop showing for your book, I will never buy it." And I'm thinking, "Why are you here?"

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So there always, there always going to be people that are going to complain, even if you're just selling your list about a book you write every two years, and those people probably are not meant to be there. So you want to train people on social media and in your email newsletters, to accept the fact that you're going to be calling them to action occasionally, but you're not going to be doing it all the time. You're not going to be pushing it down their throats. I just think that the biggest problems on social media is just that people think it's like a billboard, but really, really small, and so you can just push a market at people all day and all night, and you really can't. I mean, people will unfollow you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you respond to people like that guy who emailed you three times? Or do you? Do you just like read it and let it go?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Read it and let it go. I mean, I try not to read any of those kind of responses. I try to get them not shown to me. I think that's just too much a negative energy, but I think that that was almost-

Carey Nieuwhof:

But you can't win.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

You can't win. I mean, what can you do? And honestly, why is he on my email list? It's creepy, right? But there's always that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's like Seth Godin. Those people are not for you. That's not your audience. That's not your target.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

That's good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No. I know, I've got a fairly large list and I used to be paralyzed when I saw people unsubscribe. And now I've just resigned myself, I send out a daily email. I'll get 20 to 50 unsubscribes a day on a list of about 55,000, but I will always unless it's a really weird day, there's always net gains. Like way more people subscribing than unsubscribing and do you look for traction like that, to see whether you're hitting your like too many unsubscribes and not enough subscribes can tell you something? Or how do you gauge whether you're connecting in the right way, I guess is the question under the question?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Well, I mean, on social media, the way you figure out if you're connecting is the engagement metrics you see in terms of the posts you're sharing. So on Twitter, or on Facebook or on LinkedIn, you're seeing what posts are actually working and what aren't. And some of the best posts that you will find will always be what I call pattern disruptors. So in my book, we talk about coming up with a social media schedule and an editorial calendar, but one of the best things to always do is then go a little bit off course from time to time. So I share a story-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Let's talk about that.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

So I share a story in the book of, one my favorite mentor is Marshall Goldsmith. He's this big executive coach and he has a couple million followers on LinkedIn, and one of his most engaged posts of last year was just a family photo he posted around Thanksgiving. And the reason that was so engaged upon, is just because LinkedIn you think of as a professional network. You don't think of it like Instagram where people are sharing those types of photos. And so it was a total pattern disrupter. And it was obviously really an easy post for him to create. It was just a family photo, but it got tons of engagement. I think family stuff when that's not your norm is always going to do that, but any kind of pattern disrupter can really be a net gain for your following.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So anything that is, I think you said in the book or somewhere, I think I was reading that for your sabbatical, when you really scaled back and then all of a sudden when you did jump on, engagement went through the roof. Is that right?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Absolutely. Absolutely. So I mean, I've seen that a few times when I've gone offline once, intentionally for those 21 day digital detox and then another time a few years ago had twin boys born really early, and so I spent a number of months with them in the hospital not really doing a lot of tweeting or posting on Instagram. And I really saw very clearly when I did during those times, it was nuts how engaged upon my posts were. And I think most people will tell you the same thing. The problem is though, you don't want that to be the norm because that doesn't build a consistent following of course.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Right. So just occasionally do it.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right. Well, as we wrap up, what is ... I love asking this question when I get social media experts on. What's the difference between a leader's profile and the organization's profile?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Well, the specific definition will matter, will change a little bit depending on the platform you're using. But essentially, all you're saying is just there's a profile on a platform like LinkedIn, or like Twitter or like Facebook that's for you as an individual, that either could be you as a dad and human and dog walker, or it could be you as a leader in your organization, you kind of get to choose. And then the organizational profile is just all going to be about the organization. So I think in this day and age, you see more movement towards having the person be integrated within the personal brand. So you see a lot of these personal accounts that are doing some business stuff at the same time. So that's kind of an interesting crossover if that is-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Richard Branson comes to mind as somebody who's done that fairly well.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And that's a really effective and important part of his personal brand. We would all feel like he disappeared if we didn't continue to see him kite surfing in Necker Island from time to time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. But I've run into a lot of senior leaders who are like, "You know what? My organization, my church, my company, they're online. I don't need to be online." Thoughts on that for senior leaders?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

I think it's a limited, short sighted strategy. Obviously if an individual is really against social media and is never going to be personally engaged, the amount to which a media team can sustain that individual around them can be limited. In general, I think senior leaders can really benefit their organizations by having some type of presence. But again, the whole thing I talk about in this book is figuring out your one priority platform and caring about that. So not caring about the 10, 20, 30 new social media, many social media platforms that are out there, and instead focusing on the one that's actually going to move the needle, and then putting some effort into that, but not crazy effort by any means.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, lots of information here Claire that's been super helpful. And your book is really detailed. It's not theoretical ... Well, it's theoretical, but it's like super practical, and I look forward to walking my team through it. But for the leader who's like, "Okay. In light of everything, I think I half know about social." What is one good step in the right direction? Or do you have like, "Hey, just try this. Okay, today before you go to bed, try this"? What would you say that would be?

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

The absolute number one thing you want to do on any social media platform is to create ... It doesn't matter how many times Mark Zuckerberg changes the Facebook algorithm, engagement is always going to give an account greater reach and ultimately greater followers. So you want to create engagement. And a really, really easy way to do that is to ask a question. So that would be a great first step for anyone listening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

And then be there to respond.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Don't just ask a question and come back in two weeks. Okay, that's really fair. Claire, tell us one more time about the book, where they can find it and where people can find you online.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Sure. So the book is Social Media Success for Every Brand. You can find it on Amazon. We also have a great free video series at SocialMediaMadeSimple.com, which is basically a five part video series that can give you some introduction into some of the insights in the book. And you can find me at ClaireDiazOrtiz.com.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, that's awesome. And @Claire on Twitter, back to where we started.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

@Claire on Twitter.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right. Claire, thank you so much.

Claire Diaz-Ortiz:

Thanks so much for having me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, there was an awful lot in that episode. And if you want more, head on over and check out the show notes, they're provided to you for free at CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode324. We've got all the links to Claire's stuff, her book, everything we talked about, plus there's transcripts if you're a reader or you want to use this for your team or whatever, we've got all that available for you. And if you can't spell my name, which I understand, then just go to LeadLikeNeverBefore.com and search Claire Diaz-Ortiz, you'll find everything there. I want to tell you a little bit about what's coming up. So if you listen to the end, I've got my new segment called What I'm thinking About.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I want to take some of the stuff that Claire and I have talked about, had a recent meeting with a CEO, and it just occurred to me, most of us are actually in the same business these days, and I want to explain how that is via social and our presence online. So that's just literally what cement. It's called What I'm Thinking About. It's at the very end of the podcast. But I want to share with you who's coming up next on the podcast. Coming up, we've got an incredible guest list. Adam Duckworth is the founder of Travelmation and he is disrupting the travel industry, we talk to him. Lysa TerKeurst is back.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mark Driscoll will be on the podcast. Gary Thomas, Cathy Heller, if you listen to the Don't Keep Your Day Job Podcast, you know what a treat you're in for. Bobby Herrera. Pat Lencioni calls him, "The best CEO you've never heard of." Nir Eyal, Ryan Hawk. Who else have we got? Danielle Strickland, Michael Todd, Jo Saxton. It's going to be a packed year. So I'm really excited. But coming up next, we've got Susan Steinbrecher and she's got some incredible insights on how to lead change and deal with conflict at work. Here's an excerpt.

Susan Steinbrecher:

In 15 seconds within, they thought of that individual. And why is that? It's because how that leader made them feel, and often believed in them at a time when they might not have even believed in themselves. It was really powerful. And this is where you touch that chord of what really matters. And of course part of what I'm sharing in that message is, what kind of legacy are you trying to lead here? If we're all going to work our 52,800, whatever the current status, it's actually more now, for most working, what are we doing? I mean, what is this all about? What are we doing this for?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's coming up next week on the podcast. I'm so excited for that episode. And well, let's get to our feature What I'm Thinking About, and make sure you check out our partners on this episode Planning.Center. If you really want to coordinate your volunteers and your team well, they are the industry standard. Check them out on Planning.Center. And if you're thinking about succession, visit TheAscentLeader.org and make sure you register now. Apply now to be part of a cohort that's beginning with Kenton and Laurie Beshore in Palm Desert, California. I've been part of those cohorts. I'll tell you they're pretty, pretty amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So what am I thinking about? Well, I was just hanging out recently with a CEO, a founder of ... I won't say exactly what his company was, but he's number one in the nation. And it's a sales based organization. And we were just talking shop and he said ... He's talking to me about his org chart and he says, "Basically, this is what we've got. We've got branding, marketing, social, analytics and lead generation. And I'm like, "My goodness. That sounds exactly like what we're trying to do at the church, and exactly what I'm trying to do in my company. I mean, a little bit of branding, some marketing, social media, analytics and lead generation." And it occurred to me, because he's in hard good sales, actually selling assets, I'm like, "I think we're all in the same business these days."

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I don't know what organization you lead, we have a lot of church leaders, we have a lot of marketplace leaders listening as well, but I really think that's where the future is going. And I think one of the reasons he's emerged in a very short window to be number one in the nation, is because he's taking branding really seriously, marketing really seriously, social media really seriously, analytics really seriously and lead generation really seriously. So think through this. I mean, whether you're leading in a church or in the marketplace, if you really want to grow your reach and grow your impact, what are you doing in terms of those five categories? Like lead generation, what's lead generation?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's like the free document, or the free assessment, or the free quiz, or the free message or whatever that is, that allows you to collect somebody's email address and in exchange for that, give them a free resource, but it gives you what Seth Godin would call permission marketing. They giving you permission to say, "Yeah, you can talk to me in my inbox." And I've said this before, I'll say it again, I think email marketing is some of the most effective marketing out there, because right now it's the only thing not actually controlled by an algorithm, that you have zero control over. So lead generation is really important.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Analytics, right? Normally we just pay attention to lag measures. It's like, "Well, attendance is up or down, or dividend is up, or revenue is up, or sales are up or sales are down," or whatever. Those are lag measures and you see it after you can't impact it. But when you're looking at your analytics, it gives you clues as to what you can do to actually move the needle, like number of first time guests at a church, maybe you need to pay attention to that. Well, that's something you actually have control over. You can change your strategy to do that. So analytics, like who have you got on the lead gen? Who have you got on analytics? Who've you got on social? You probably have someone on social. Marketing, you're thinking about that. Okay, well, who have you got on marketing?

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then who have you got on branding? Your branding actually matters. If you've got a logo that looks like 1996, you're going to get 1996 results. So I just thought that was kind of interesting. I'm still puzzling through that. I really enjoy this segment because it's like, I don't really know 100% what that means but think about that. Like take that matrix away and look at your organization, what you're leading. What are you doing about branding, marketing, social analytics and lead gen? Yeah, I'm thinking about that too. So that's What I'm Thinking About. Hey, if you enjoyed this episode, would you let me know? Just hit me up on social. I'm Carey Nieuwhof on Instagram. I'm also cnieuwhof on Twitter and Facebook, would love to hear about that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Or drop me an email. My email is [Carey@CareyNieuwhof.com](mailto:Carey@CareyNieuwhof.com). And speaking of email, if you would like to get a daily, almost daily infusion of leadership fuel, head on over to [CareyNieuwhof.com](http://CareyNieuwhof.com) and sign up. I would love to give you that. We've got about 56,000 leaders who get that pretty much every day. And if you want to be one of them, I would love to help you out solving the problems that honestly we're all working on. Thanks so much for listening guys. Can't wait for the next episode. It's coming up next week. And I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

Announcer:

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