

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 a special episode of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I do hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Today's episode is brought to you by our friends at Financial Peace University, something we could all use right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

My guests are, well, it's a panel I put together as the world kind of collapsed last week over the whole coronavirus epidemic, and then the global financial meltdown, the locking down of continents and countries. I mean, my goodness, I've never seen anything like this, and I thought, "Wow! We are leading through the biggest crisis I've ever seen in my life, and perhaps one of the largest in history." And I thought, "Who would be able to bring us good advice?" because my phone has been blowing up as yours has been with leader after leader going, "What do I do? What do I do? What do I do?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, I've put together today a panel. This is an hour-long episode. You can hear the heaviness in our voices. There are pauses. There's reflection. It's a serious situation. I'm so grateful for the friendship and leadership of Jud Wilhite, Senior Pastor of Central Church, Las Vegas. He has led through the 2008 shootings, massive financial collapse a decade ago, and now this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Kevin Queen is the Lead Pastor of Cross Point Church in Nashville, a multi-site influential large church that had its main broadcast location knocked out by a tornado about a week before the COVID-19 epidemic really broke loose in America. So, he's got his plate full.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then Tricia Sciortino. She's the CEO of BELAY, the premier virtual solutions company in America, who can help us with working remote, and also has had her share of challenges as well. So, yeah, you're just going to get some really raw stuff, and some great advice along the way from three experts, and also, at the very end, some hope. Plus, I'll share what I'm thinking about in leadership because, obviously, I'm processing this daily with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, right now, people in your community, your neighbors, your family, and your friends are experiencing a heightened sense of anxiety, and they're worried about employment, healthcare coverage, what to do in a crisis, and the problem, eight out of 10 of them are already living paycheck-to-paycheck. So, one emergency can turn their whole world upside down.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Here's the thing. People aren't just looking for a plan to help them navigate. They're looking for hope. So, I would love for you to get around your people by bringing Financial Peace University to your

community. It actually works in a crisis. It is the proven plan that's helped nearly six million people save for emergencies, pay off debt, and build wealth.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Here's the thing. You don't have to be a financial expert. You don't have to take the class. 40% of group leaders lead a class while taking it for the first time. All you need to do is want to help other people, and a lot of people need help right now. So, Dave Ramsey and his team do all the teaching. A dedicated adviser will walk you through every step of leading in class. Plus, you can lead a Financial Peace University from anywhere, even online, through a virtual group. Yes. You don't have to meet in person, and probably by the time you hear this, you can't anyway.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, with the virtual groups, you can spread hope, and keep everybody safe. Dave Ramsey's team will give you everything you need and here's how to get your hands on Financial Peace University for your church. Just text GIVEHOPE, all caps, GIVEHOPE to 33789. That's GIVEHOPE, all one word, to 33789. You can get started today. Thanks to Financial Peace for what you do helping millions out. I think that is going to be more timely than ever. So, I know you're dealing with a lot. This episode is on YouTube if you want to watch. In the meantime, here is my conversation with Jud Wilhite, Kevin Queen, and Tricia Sciortino.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, leaders, thanks so much for tuning in to a special edition of the leadership podcast. I'll tell you at a season like this, I'm grateful for friends. So, we have three friends joining us today, Jud Wilhite from Las Vegas, Lead Pastor of Central Church there, Kevin Queen from Nashville Cross Point, and also Tricia Sciortino from BELAY Solutions. You're the new CEO there. So, talk about a time to step into leadership. My goodness. Welcome to all of you.

Jud Wilhite:

Thank you. Great to be with you, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud, you said something before we started recording that just hit me, and can you repeat it? That's why I'm like, "We better just record."

Jud Wilhite:

Well, yeah, I think the question was, "Are you okay?" I think the answer, there's layers to that answer, but as a leader, you don't really have a choice but to be okay. I mean, now is the time where everybody looks to us. Your team is looking to you. Your city is looking to you. Your circle of influence is looking to you. In times of crisis, I always feel like I go into leader mode, and I'll process the crisis maybe even a year after it happens, six months after it happens, but for a leader, you don't really have time to emotionally process the crisis in the middle of it. You have to lead.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. That's interesting. I've been waking up at 4:00 AM everyday. I was just saying to my wife, "Waking up at 4:00 AM, I'm not even leading our church day-to-day, but I just feel the burden for all the leaders." Tricia, how about you? How has this hit you personally?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. Absolutely. I feel the absolute same way. I was sharing that these are the moments we weren't sure if they would come, but here they are. It's sometimes easier to lead when the economy is great, and the world is functioning the way we think it's supposed to, but times like these really test your character and strength as a leader. To your point, it's really not an option. This is all what we've been called to do. I feel like I've been poised in this position for a good reason. Like you, I do. I kick in to leader mode. I feel like the high emotional intelligence means I'll process the information later, but now we've got a job to do. So, let's roll up our sleeves and make really smart decisions for a whole lot of people who are looking up to us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Kevin, checking in with you. Man, your most recent crisis management happened two weeks ago when you got hit by a tornado, and here we are in the middle of this. We're recording this on a Monday. The President is speaking as we record this. The Prime Minister of Canada is speaking as we record this. Even if we try to respond to that, it would probably all be different by Wednesday, anyway. So, Kevin, do you want to check in? How are you doing?

Kevin Queen:

It makes me think about ... I had a professor that said probably the most helpful thing in grad school. He said, "The greatest gift that a leader gives in a crisis situation is a non-anxious presence." He said, "As a leader's anxiety is down and the entire room, the entire group, their anxiety comes down as well." So, I think as a leader, we have to, and as followers of Jesus, I think about when the disciples were in that room with the door locked for fear. Jesus came in and he breathed on them. He said, "My spirit I give to you. My peace I give to you."

Kevin Queen:

I think we have to be the ones out in front, but we have to be the ones who are filled with peace because our peace is contagious as well. So, we have to get to that non-anxious place, and that takes work, right? I mean, that takes work. We have to go first in that. So, I'm just trying to lead out of that place, Carey, and trying to get some peace, and then be able to lead from that place. It's not automatic. It takes work. You got to dig for the gold, but it's there. It's the most helpful thing I think we can hand it out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, can we start there, non-anxious presence? I think you're right. How do you even begin that? I mean, particularly, and Kevin, I'll go right back to you. Tornado, week one so to speak. When did the tornado hit? What was the actual date?

Kevin Queen:

I walked in to a situation where I've never been a lead pastor before, and had a great team, and great church, and great people just looking for a leader. So, that's when some of this training I'm going, "Man,

I need to find peace." Carey, gosh, years before that, I was like, "Man, I want to build a prayer life that I can hand out to my kids." So, I think some of that training, I think we can all look back in our past and see God has built us for this. He's used things and circumstances in our life to build and construct us for moments like this.

Kevin Queen:

So, I think prayer is a big part of putting that pressure on God, and just continually put that pressure, and put that dependence on him. Man, there's desperation, and God is the only person that's attracted it. So, that desperation, just continue to put on him, so we can be at a place of peace.

Kevin Queen:

So, the tornado hit, that's a long answer to relational question about the tornado. Gosh! It seems like forever ago, but it was a little over a week ago or two, a week and a half ago.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's the specific date for people not listening in realtime? March?

Kevin Queen:

Gosh! March 3rd.

Carey Nieuwhof:

March 3rd. We're recording this on March ... Yeah. What day is it? 16th. Okay. It's Monday. So, literally, two weeks ago, you're hit by a tornado, and then last week, the whole economy, coronavirus, lockdown. As we speak, it's changing in realtime. Probably by the time this airs, a whole different future for all of us. Markets are crashing. I mean, none of us have lead through this before, not like this, not like this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Non-anxious presence. So, Kevin, I know that's a big part of your legacy so far at Cross Point is prayer. You had prayer every Tuesday, which now will probably have to happen virtually. Any other thoughts on non-anxious presence as a leader?

Kevin Queen:

Yeah. I think having some other people that you pray with is important. When Jesus like two or three get together, I'm going to show up, I'll be right there in the mix. So, I think we all have solitude, our personal prayer life, but there's such value in having a couple of other people that you can unite with, and that you can pray, and that you can, actually, you borrow up in their faith sometimes, and that you can share what your process and what you're feeling and have them come together with you in prayer. So, I wouldn't want to leave without having a couple of people that I pray with. Yeah. That's been super helpful as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Other thoughts on non-anxious presence?

Jud Wilhite:

Well, I think the simple principle of you got to feed your faith to starve your fears. We've got to be exposed to what's happening in the media, in the culture on a timely basis. We have to have open hearts and minds. We just have to be super intentional about how we balance the headlines of the world with the headlines of the bible in our own hearts. I think time with God, time in his word, every morning, especially in a crisis, where you wake up to 100 texts on your phone and everybody needs you, but you have to spend that time with God. It's the most important half hour, 15 minutes of the day in a crisis to maintain that non-anxious presence.

Jud Wilhite:

So, for me, I don't find certain platforms of social media helpful in a crisis. So, some are more helpful than others. So, for me, I tend to know what I don't open and what I do open. I'm more of a headline scanner, and then I read a few articles if I need to because things are changing. I just start managing the amount of fear-inducing material I'm allowing in my heart with the amount of faith-inducing material I'm allowing in my heart and trying to balance those. It's a tension.

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. I couldn't agree more. I think being mindful of what it is you allow in your head space. I'm with you. I'm absolutely very particular about what I will listen to, what I will read, who I will listen to because that stuff can really sip into your soul and your heart. So, it's like what are allowing to speak to you, is it the right sources, is it the right people, and being able to decipher different pieces of information to guide you in your calm. I think to your point, keeping some of it away from you is sometimes is what's most healthy for you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Let's talk about filters because I've found this. I can't remember a time where I feel like I've had spent more time trying to find quality information and more struggles trying to find quality information. I've been on the WHO site, the Centers for Disease Control. I'm fortunate to be connected to the medical community locally. So, they've been really good in answering my questions, but this had been really tough. How do you sort out? Because there's hype on the one hand like all the hysteria, and then there's like, "Oh, wait a minute. This may actually be a real threat." How have you processed those filters, that filter as leaders in this crisis?

Jud Wilhite:

Well, yeah, I find that I'm going to the CDC's website, I'm going to WHO's website. I'm not looking at Twitter for my factual information. Frankly, I'm not watching broadcast news shows for that information. I'm trying to lean in to the best core information out there remembering that a lot of the news and media is a business. They're publicly traded companies. It's clicks for cash. So, they're under their own tension, right? So, I don't have the answer. That's just what I try to do for what it's worth. I'm trying to get to respectable sites that aren't necessarily going to overreact.

Jud Wilhite:

When the Centers for Disease Control says, "No more groups over 50," you sort of stop in your tracks. That's serious. That's not a thought. That's a serious statement.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Anything else on sorting through the news in all this? Because I think that's been a real part of the problem. I feel like it's been overplayed in some circles, and completely underplayed in others. Kevin? Tricia? Anything?

Kevin Queen:

Well, I can speak in the past couple of days. It's just some key source, some people. I started looking at people who are experts, and picking up the phone and calling, and saying, "Hey, can you let me know?" In a three-minute phone call, I can get more accurate news from the right people than 30 minutes or three hours of watching the news. So, just trying to pick up the phone and tapping to experts and people that I trust.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Without naming names because it may not even be helpful, but what kind of person would you be looking to for that?

Kevin Queen:

So, doctors, people in the healthcare field, national headquarters or healthcare industry in many respect. So, picking up the phone and calling some people there. Those conversations have been super helpful. At the same time, being able to pray with them, and be a source of peace and strength, and maybe give a word of encouragement to them because they're carrying a heavy load right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Tricia, how have you navigated that?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah, I would say the same. Just connecting to individuals in the health industry, as well as the CDC and the World Health Organization. I've been to places where I've been leaning in to information that I feel is most reasonable and right, and trying to stay off of social media, and not using that as the place where I get sucked into. There's a lot of rhetoric and emotion going on out Facebook and Instagram right now. I'm trying to remove myself from some of it, not so that I don't understand the pulse of what people are feeling. I want to be connected enough so that I'm not disconnecting myself from what people are honestly feeling and suffering through right now, so that we can provide answers.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, I feel like it's a great source, maybe social media, to get context of what people are feeling as a global community, but to leverage it to then say, "Okay. These are groups of fears that I'm seeing different people come to the table with, and how can we provide answer for that? Is there other resources we can provide to groups of people who are worried about how am I going to work from home, other resources we can provide for people who don't know how they're going to feed their children lunch next week because they're not going to be in school to get lunch. So, I think social media has its place. It's just not for health information more than it's for community understanding.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Each of you has a public voice as well. We're consumers of online content, but we're also creators of online content. You all lead teams, significant-sized staffs, and in a couple of cases, large congregations.

What guidelines, principles, thoughts go through your mind when you are crafting your own communication? How much do you say? How do you angle that? Any tips because the thousands of leaders listening to this, that's their job, too. They lead their community. They lead their staff. They lead their church. They lead their organization. They lead their not-for-profit. Like you said, cultivating that non-anxious presence is really important. So, how do you do that as a leader in the way that you shape your word statements, messages?

Jud Wilhite:

So, I think it's important for us to think about our social media platforms and our audiences. Some people have more of a national audience, national platforms. I'm a pastor at my very core. While I may have a little bit of that audience, I tend to view things through the filter of the people I'm called to shepherd. I just think that's important to state as my filter.

Jud Wilhite:

So, I'm always thinking about the faces and the names of the people that I'm called to lead through our church ministry, other people that click on or a part, that's great, but that's how I'm leveraging social media for me. I'm not saying that's the way everybody else should do it. So, that becomes a filter for me. I'm wanting to provide hope and spiritual encouragement. I don't feel like I have to comment on everything. I don't feel like I have to make a statement on everything. I'm more focused on how do I bring some balance to maybe some of the other things that are flying around from a spiritual standpoint and shepherd my people well.

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah, and I think for me, being that foreign organization that has led and run virtually, we're seeing so people in fear of how to work from home, how to move the organizations from working at offices to sending employees home, and can they still function as an organization and keep the health of the organization. So, I feel like we're compelled. I feel very compelled to get messages out there on content around how you can do this. Giving people resources. You can continue some of what you do virtually just like I've seen so many churches do online services on Sundays. You can replicate all of that in business, and giving people the tools to help them. In and of itself, that creates its own sense of calm instead of panic like, "Oh, my gosh! My boss told me I'm going to start working from home on Monday and I have no idea how I'm going to do my job. My kids are home, and I'm not sure how this is actually going to work."

Tricia Sciortino:

So, for me, I'm trying to provide resources or want to provide continued resources on how people can continue to get through the day-to-day and still work and help their organizations thrive to keep our economy parts of it going, right? So, we don't need to shut the doors on every business out there. We actually need to help them keep running. So, if we can put content out there that's going to help any business to figure out how to keep doing business without being in an office, that's absolutely where we feel compelled to add value.

Tricia Sciortino:

For me, I mean, on our team meeting this morning, we talked about that is our current ministry as an organization is how we can help minister organizations to keep on keeping on, so that we don't have further economic repercussions.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's an interesting approach. So, rather than respond to the noise, respond to the thing and you're like, "No. We're just going to help, and here's some things that can help." That's interesting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Kevin, I've seen you because I've watched some of your Instagrams. The double crisis you are in right now with no building. You're a portable church for a week. Now, you're a virtual church. It's just head snapping the stuff you've been through. How do you curate that kind ... Oh, dude! Yeah. Maybe for five years from now, right, Kevin, after you've been in the wilderness for a while? Oh, but you have a very calm presence about you. You really, really do. I think that's you, generally, but you've kept it together.

Kevin Queen:

Well, let me give a couple of things. I think one is the heart is where the message comes from. So, I've got a friend named Chip who tells me, he's a counselor, he says, "Kevin, you got to feel the feelings. Tell yourself the truth, and then embrace life on life's terms." So, feeling the feeling is being honest.

Kevin Queen:

I mean, I've been asked, "How are you?" more in the past two weeks than any other time in my life, but there are a few people who will say, "How are you doing, really?" When they asked really, that's when I get to go, "Okay," and that's when you pick up the rocks and you go. That's where the squiggly and crawly things are, the things under the surface, and your able to talk through, "Man, I'm scared. I'm afraid. I'm tired. I'm uncertain."

Kevin Queen:

We start going through these feelings. Then we tell ourselves the truth. This is where we remind ourselves of the things that in an uncertain world carry that we're willing to die for. These are our core convictions. These are the things that we build in our life upon. This is the storm that's come, the rock that we're building on. I think we have to get to that place of bedrock, and then I think we embrace life on life's terms, we can't live in denial. This world is jacked up, it's broken, it's fallen, it's filled with uncertainty. We can't live in denial, but we live from a place of truth.

Kevin Queen:

So, I think I have to get to that place at my heart level before I crack the communication, and then the communication, I know personally that I want it to be spirit-led, that I want it to be scripture-fed, that I want it to be laced with hope. I want that there would be hope all over it, and then I want it to be Jesus-centered. I mean, this is the time. This is the opportunity we have to point to Jesus where people are looking, "Where do I go?" We can point them to Jesus.

Kevin Queen:

Then I also want to look up stories when I can. I don't think this is the time that we tell the church necessarily. This is what the church needs to do. We hold up stories and we honor stories and testimonies that the church be in the church, right? Then people go, "Okay. I'm going to follow that example."

Kevin Queen:

So, we've got some beautiful ... A guy told me, Todd Adkins wrote me a text and he said, "Kevin," he said, "your church, from everything I've seen online, your church is a mess." He said, "Your church is a mess, but your church is beautiful."

Kevin Queen:

I'm like, "Man, that is the picture." So, we look around with eyes of wonder. Where is the church beautiful right now and how can we hold that up? I think that inspires people to want to walk in that way. So, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's been the hardest part of the current crisis personally for each of you?

Jud Wilhite:

I think for me I tend to be more of an instinctive leader. Instinctive leaders, I actually really thrive in crisis because I can make decisions fast, and we go and it's, I don't know, it's like I'm made for this. I'm wired for this. This crisis changes every single day, sometimes every single hour. For the first time in 25 years as a leader for me, I don't always know what to do instinctively in a crisis. I don't want to overstate that I always knew what to do, but I just feel like I've had the hardest time figuring out, "On Wednesday, we're going to do this," but then on Thursday, it's like, "Maybe not." By Friday, "We're not doing that, we're doing this."

Jud Wilhite:

Then the President is going to speak, and what's it going to mean. So, I'm definitely feeling that pressure. I think, for me, that's been the hardest part is trying to make appropriate decisive decisions for ways that we can serve and help today and keeping my team and everybody aware of how fluid things are, and everything could change in the next hour.

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. I've used the word pivot repeatedly last couple of days and said to my team, "Okay. We're at plan C. Tomorrow, we'll be plan D, and then by the end of the week, we might be on plan M because things keep evolving and changing." So, we are in the mode of being able to constantly pivot on new information. That's been trying as a leader to be constantly in the place where you're having to change and make a decision off a decision you just made. So, I agree with you. I'm a very decisive, quick decision type leader as well. I feel like I've always been in tuned with what I should do, and it's very rare. I find myself in a place where I have to really stop myself and go, "Huh, I need to sit in this for a minute."

Tricia Sciortino:

So, it's a unique place to be and where you're making decisions that are potentially life-altering and life-affecting, and having to remake them multiple times throughout a day. It does certainly a ton of mental fatigue that I would say leaders are probably feeling at this time is that we're carrying a burden of having to lead and make decisions constantly throughout a day and all day and all night, but then the ramifications of the weight of what those decisions need for people, people's health, really.

Jud Wilhite:

Hey, how many people have eye strain? I seriously have eye strain for three days because of the text messages and all just so much change going on everyday. Kevin, you're ahead of us, man. You're over a week into eye strain, but I'm just like, "Man, my eyes are killing me."

Tricia Sciortino:

I had a goal to decrease the screen time on my phone. That was my goal three weeks ago, and I totally failed horribly. My phone keeps telling me every morning how I've increased my screen time everyday.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I hear that. I'm popping these glasses off a lot to read a text these days. I can't see. Kevin, hardest part of the challenge for you?

Kevin Queen:

I think just there's no normalcy. I mean, there's so little that's normal. A lot of times we go through a crisis, we're like, "Let's just find our new normal." I think we just don't know what new normal is. Then I think all of you are heart ... You lead from the heart. So, when people that you love are, and you can already forecast some of the challenges. Nashville being a gig economy and you just forecast what that's going to mean and what that's going to mean for the church. You hurt for people, and then you bring family into that as well.

Kevin Queen:

So, I think the part of us that hurts for people is what makes us leaders worth following, and that our hearts are connected, but that's why we have to run and we have to grab truth. There was a time where ... Remember Moses and Aaron, they were in the wilderness, and there was a plague that was spreading across the land, and they got on their face. They put their face to the ground, and they cried out to God and God told Moses, "Tell Aaron I want him to get up and I want him to run to the altar and get some fire, and I want him to go and I want him to take that fire and stand between the living and the dead," and it said that where he stood, the plague stopped.

Kevin Queen:

We have to be the ones who run to the altar and get some fire. I don't know how we stop the plague in the natural, but the plague in the spiritual, that's our call. We have the spirit of God. We have the fire of God. We are the ones who where we stand, that's where fear finds faith, and that's where people find peace, people find truth, but it was through feeling what they were feeling. That's what drove Moses and Aaron to their faiths, man. I just think we have to continue to put our nose to the carpet.

Kevin Queen:

This is not time to pray and say, "God, would you bless our plans?" Time has changed the ministry. This is put your face to the carpet until you receive the peace of God, and then we get up and we lead from that place. So, yeah, that's the hard part, yeah.

Jud Wilhite:

That's super powerful. I love it. I'm thinking, too. I was with some younger leaders last week as this was dropping, a mentoring group, and how different their reaction was from my initial reaction. I envied it. They were quickly moving to opportunities, and they were quickly thinking about in the changing world

what this could do to help people open their hearts and minds spiritually and to walk. I really admired it. There is a negative to experience, negative experience. I'm not so naïve anymore. All of that can happen, but it's going to hurt.

Jud Wilhite:

The first few days as the dominoes are dropping, I'm just being honest, I had a really hard time even getting to opportunity because we went through the Vegas recession, well, the national recession in '08 and '09, but it felt like we were one of the key epicenters. Honestly, it was a 10-year climb back to normal, 10 years.

Jud Wilhite:

So, we're talking about how we're processing, what's the hardest part. One of my challenges is the burden of experience. There's a blessing through experience, and then there's a burden you carry with experience. I found myself having to say, "Hey, okay. That's your experience, Jud, but you got to work through those emotions and be honest about it, but don't let it stop you for this beautiful, naivety of faith that I'm seeing in leaders. We got to get to the opportunities as well." Of course, the challenges we still don't even know what we're facing, so it's hard to get to opportunities, but that's been a need that I'm continuing to wrestle out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I appreciate your honesty. Go ahead, Tricia.

Tricia Sciortino:

Oh, sorry. I was even going to say, and on the flip side of that, recognizing that even if you're quick to move and quick to decide or quick to adjust or quick to live in a new normal, there's a bunch of people around us who aren't. So, as a leader, sometimes I got to pull off the gas for a second and say, "I might feel like I've made this decision today. That's probably going to change in an hour from now, but everybody around me, are they in a place where they can move? Can they react? Do they need time to process and marinate and get right with themselves and also trying to not push it?" Right?

Tricia Sciortino:

So, trying to advance things everyday in a way that feels like it's positive and momentous, and bringing hope, and bringing action and what are we doing tomorrow that we're not doing today, and recognizing that there are so many people who they aren't there yet, they're not ready to hear about what they're going to do next. They just need a minute to sit in it and absorb the information and feel their faith, and talk to God, and they don't care about what they're going to do tomorrow. They need to feel what it is they're doing right now, and let that be okay and get tons of grace in those moments to let them not feel like they're ready to move.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a really good point. One of the things I know about my leadership is I process things quickly. Sometimes I realize I've already moved on, but everybody else is still stuck a couple of hours ago. I would say the hardest thing for me, just to weigh in quick for leaders on this crisis, is the multiplicity of things happening right now. The global financial collapse and markets that normally run in opposite like bonds and gold going down while stocks are going down, while the oil prices are collapsing, while

borders are closing, while continents are shuttered, while airlines are going bankrupt, while people are quarantined in their homes, and hundreds of millions over this disease, it's like, "Wow! This is just crazy."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then I don't know whether you would agree with this in past crises, you can almost see the landing point like if it was a landing place. It's like, "Okay. If this is a downturn, the markets gone from bull to bear, all right. Well, you know that six months to a year from now it's going to bounce back or a decade from now, it's going to bounce back, Jud," but I don't know where the landing place is on this one. That is really, really hard to see, and I don't even know that we know where the bottom is or what this does with this kind of dislocation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, that has me, my prayer life has become much more rich very quickly, and not that it wasn't present before, but I mean these are heartfelt. God, I have no idea what's going on right now. Yet, here we are. We're the leaders for a moment like this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud, do you want to talk a little bit more about the three crises that you've led or leading through the financial crisis of '08-'09, which lasted a decade in Vegas, the mass shootings a couple of years ago, and then today. Have you got a few principles that you have said, "Hey, in the past, this is different, but in the past, these have helped us"?

Jud Wilhite:

Yeah. I mean, we've covered some of those core things that I think when I think back over those experiences. Typically, as a church leader or I would think as a business leader, as an organization leader, the typical first response is we gather rapidly. We get our people together rapidly. We need to be in community. Now, whatever we're going through now is throwing a total wrench on that, right? I think online with virtual communities, so what we're going through now is throwing a wrench on that, but online with virtual communities, you gather rapidly.

Jud Wilhite:

I think there's a few things that we've been to. Well, my first thing in any crisis is I get with my lead time. We start to talk and process. We start meeting daily, if not two or three times a day, virtually to start work through realtime information. We start deploying teams for the best ways that we can serve our city. We're often thinking about first responders and ways we can help first responders or their kids or their families or their spouses because in any situation, even in a full quarantine situation, first responders, they do not get to sit home and watch Netflix. They still have to be out there right in the middle of it.

Jud Wilhite:

So, there's a whole lot of people, even in the most extreme lockdown situations that aren't locked down. How do we serve them? How can we help them? These are all the questions that we ask. I think once I get over that initial heartbreak of what a crisis is, I remember that the church, the faith community, we're made for moments like this. This is where we're at our best. This is when we shine.

Jud Wilhite:

I just try to keep looking ahead and keep our team looking ahead to the fact that God is still in control, and God can use this in people's lives. How do we leverage that? How do we serve? How do we help our ... So, our question is always, how do we serve? Our question is always, what can we do for our community? What does our community need? Not, what do we want to do, but what do they need.

Jud Wilhite:

Then one thing that's helpful for us is there's a whole lot of things they may need. I like the acronym. It's actually a test you can use called the ICE test. That's something that we've I would say roughly in conversation laid over different opportunities. It's just an acronym. It stands for impact, confidence, and ease. When you're looking at 50 things you can do for the community, all right, what would have the greatest impact on the community of these five ideas? What do we have the greatest confidence in that we'll have that impact, and that we can pull off?

Jud Wilhite:

From an ease and implementation standpoint, and I would even say not just ease, but experience, what do we have the experience here to do ... You could immediately go, "We're going to help first responders by providing free childcare for their kids," but if you're in a middle of a viral situation, and now you're bringing kids on your campus that are potentially exposed from a family standpoint, legal's got to get involved, all these layers right the pole, and you might lay an ICE framework over something like that and say, "We're going to do it. That still fits our criteria," or you might say, "Let's find other community organizations that arguing that."

Jud Wilhite:

In our case, thankfully, our city is providing that childcare once the schools closed for first responders. So, then it's like, "Well, what can we do for our city officials?" They're better prepared to handle that, but maybe we can come alongside them or we can provide that support or let them know we're here for them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Super helpful. It's interesting. I hadn't heard of ICE before, but that is totally a helpful framework. I realized I think I've used that without ever knowing it. Now, I've got it. That's brilliant. That's really brilliant. Okay. Kevin, again, the double recent crisis. Any principles that have helped you so far that you're like ... I loved your idea of the non-anxious presence. Anything else that you would share with leaders that you're like, "Hey, when I do this, it tends to go better"?

Kevin Queen:

So, first thing I'd do is call Jud and ask Jud.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud, I think your phone just blows up at a time like this. Everybody I know is calling Jud. That's so true.

Kevin Queen:

I think something that's been helpful for me and might be helpful for some other leaders is just to remind yourself that you were built for this, that you were called to this, that God has put your feet

where they are on the planet. We go with the confidence of that God calls. My brother actually gave me a plaque when I started at Cross Point that says, "You were built for this." So, that's become a mantra is that I just remind myself there are things that God has put in my backpack along the journey that I'm using now because it's part of his, and we talk about calling, wherever, wherever God has called us to. There are things that he's used to build into us.

Kevin Queen:

The other thing, in the interview process I told Cross Point, they were asking me questions, and I just knew it was where God had called me. So, one time, they asked me a question. I didn't know the answer. They said, "What would you do if this happen?"

Kevin Queen:

I said, "Well, I don't know. We got a lot of smart people. We'd get around table, and we figure it out together."

Kevin Queen:

That was what I said in the interview, where normally, I would have maybe made something up, but I just did it. I didn't know that it was going to be a tornado and a coronavirus. I didn't know that was, but I think what Jud said, there's just something to get around the table whether it's in-person or whether it's virtually and locking our eyes with one another and saying, "We're in this together."

Kevin Queen:

Then the other thing is to continuing to ask ourselves, what are the things that we can do that will bring peace to people that are on our team? So, I'm just trying to care for the needs of the people on the team. It really felt like we were fighting a battle on two fronts. We had disaster relief in the community and helping people rebuild, and then we had, how do we figure out how to pull off Sunday? So, the team set up portable church for thousands in 48 hours. It was remarkable. It was incredible.

Kevin Queen:

So, okay, let's celebrate that. We can celebrate that when you guys, which today, if we would ask, "Hey, guys. How long do you think it would take for us to do portable church for thousands? We're going to do it six months from now."

Kevin Queen:

They'd be like, "Okay. We do it in six months."

Kevin Queen:

"Oh, no. we need at least three months."

Kevin Queen:

They did it in 48 hours, which is remarkable, which is a test. I mean, it attests to the truth that Jesus said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move a mountain." It's going to take faith, but it's going to take a lot of hard work. We're in one of those. At that teaching, he said, basically, anything is possible for those who believe. So, I think this is one of those times we go, "Hey, God. What is the

mountain that you want to move?" Then it's going to take a lot of people working together with humility, with integrity, with relational unity, and let's get scrappy. Let's figure it out.

Kevin Queen:

So, yeah. That's where I feel like we've been, but now we just had one more battle on the front, which is-

Jud Wilhite:

That was last.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That was last week. Portable church that lasted seven days, one day, and now you're in the virtual church. It's insane what you guys have navigated. Tricia, any thoughts that have really helped you? I mean, you just went through that massive transition into the CEO role a couple of months ago yourself, right?

Tricia Sciortino:

Welcome to the new role, yeah. It's like feet to the fire. What's she gonna do now? No. It's actually been great. I think I could not agree more. Having the right leaders, the right people around you is so important. We have an amazing leadership team. I do nothing alone at the end of the day, the rallying the troops. For us, getting around the table is easy. We're used to jumping on video like this all the time. It's what we know how to do. So, for us, it's jump on video and really start thinking through where're we at, what are the problems we need to solve, what are we hearing.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, I think, first and foremost, having the right people to surround yourself with, whether it's inside your day-to-day, personally, mentors, professionally, all those things are so relevant for a support system as a leader. We need the right support systems for ourselves, and great leaders aside from ourselves to make the right decisions. So, that's been really important.

Tricia Sciortino:

I think caring. I think as leaders, we shepherd people, whether we're leading a church or we're leading an organization, shepherding thousands of people right now who are scared, who are uncertain. I think showing heart, and concern, and I am genuinely concerned for so many individuals who are so scared right now. I mean, oddly enough, in the midst of crisis, I am typically am naturally very calm. I'm just wired that way, where I'm not an overreactor, which is odd because I am an Enneagram eight and high D and all the things I would say I should completely overreact in crisis, but for whatever reason, when crisis hits, I'm the most calm.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, leveraging that to really shepherd the people that I feel need it and let them know that they're cared for, and show all the grace in the world right now. So, I think those are the two things, surrounding yourself with the right people and just offering a ton of grace and really genuinely caring for the people, our community that needs it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, we've hinted at numerous times, but virtual church is on the radar of pretty much every leader listening. Now, that's new. Probably work from home, virtual teams, that was a novelty, the whole gig economy. Now, it's the new normal. There will be exceptions, but for the most part, let's just assume by the time this podcast goes live or very soon after, we're all going to be working from home. We're all going to be leading remote teams. We're all going to be, yeah, just trying to figure our way through that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've had a lot of experience in that. One of my favorite parts of your story, Bryan reminded me of this last week, is you started less than a decade ago as his assistant. Now, you're the CEO of a major national leading company, which is amazing, Tricia. Can you walk us through just in broad strokes, and there's so much more at BelaySolutions.com, et cetera, but can you walk us through some broad strokes of best practices and here are some things to avoid when it comes to leading virtual teams or virtual organizations?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you, Bryan. Yeah. Leading virtually, working virtually does have its own subset of challenges. First and foremost, it's very easy to find yourself in a place where you're in a silo because you're home, working in your office, and you're not physically around all the people that you used to be around. I think being very intentional right off the gate to have plans to combat that with lots of video conferencing. So, I know I'm going to sound like a broken record when I talk about video conferencing, but we are all about it. This, right here, what we are doing, this replaces what used to be you sitting at a conference table or somebody is sitting in your office.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, recognizing that right away and making sure that that happens for us has been crucial. When we first started the business, we didn't mandate, if you will, video conferencing. We were conference calls, right? We were all listening, but we weren't seeing each other. We very quickly figured out that we were missing an element of body language and facial expression. It's great to be here and be able to see your faces even though we're not in the same room together. There's so much value to be added.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, first big thing let's say for anybody is get on Skype, get on Zoom, get webcams to your team, the equipment they need to be able to do these things, and make it happen. It will make a very big difference regardless of what you're leading through. It adds a great proponent to being able to see people.

Tricia Sciortino:

I also would say you would probably have to be more maniacal than ever with your schedule. I know, Carey, you have a whole course on scheduling, do a workweek and all the things. You won't have the opportunity to walk down the hallway and pop into somebody's office and tell them X, Y, and Z. So, those water cooler, office popping moments go away.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, for us, what we do is we assume we will have things we're going to have to talk to certain people about, and we schedule them proactively. I have standing meetings with every single person on my team that I may or may not have something to talk about with. So, those are just recurring. If by chance we have nothing, we can cancel them, but let's be honest. That really never happens.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, have your core individuals pre-schedule and meet with your direct leaders or the people that you need to be in room with as frequently as possible. Then also your leadership team. We do the same thing for our leadership team. We have a cadence with which we have got to be together on video at least a few hours a week and when do we schedule that, how do we mandate that.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, I would say being really maniacal and intentional about creating virtual face time will be important to be successful, and then even when you do all of that great stuff, you will start to notice communication gaps because you're still going to miss the meet in the lobby, saw you in the elevator. All that stuff goes away. You're still going to uncover gaps in communication. So, developing a pretty aggressive communication plan. It's going to sound like it's aggressive, but there will still be gaps in communication.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, we use multiple channels in addition to video. Our leadership team has group text that we communicate with each other via texting. We have instant messaging groups. We use Chatter, which is an IM feature of Salesforce, which is the CRM application we use, but even if it's Gchat like some instant messaging type of area where you don't want to send an email, you're not going to talk to somebody on video, but you need a quick and dirty response, and you don't want to blow up somebody's phone. So, instant message is a great place to get the quick and dirty communication or like a Slack channel. A lot of people out there are using Slack.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. We use Slack for that.

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah, and putting into aggressive communication strategies to make sure that gaps aren't missed. You'll probably uncover over time that you need to be in front of people way more than you thought you were going to have to be in front of people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If I can underscore that for a moment, we'll link to a blog post, but, Tricia, what you're saying is so critical. When I went into leading virtual teams, it's amazing how intentional you have to be about which channel is used for what because, otherwise, you get into the non-ending text wars or email wars that will literally destroy your day. You found similar things?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. Absolutely. So, I think you really have to define. We're going to save our Zoom. Our video conference meetings, these are going to be the topics that we cover. These are the type of things we're

going to email about, and then these are the type of questions that we're going to instant message or text about, and defining the place where everything is going to exist.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Bingo.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, there's really clear communication marching orders. That could be different for everybody. It's really based on preference what those channels are that work for you, but ... So, I would say setting really clear expectations, overcommunicating, and mandating video will be the key places I would start if I was going to start working from home tomorrow. That's what I would tell everybody.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Great. Well, I want to honor all of your time. I got a few questions left. I know this is ... Minutes are like hours, and hours are like days, and days are like weeks, aren't they in this season that we're in right now? It's insane. Any other pitfalls to avoid in crisis management for leaders that any of you have run into? I would add one, which is reacting in public. I tend to be very reactionary at times.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I am an eight as well. So, I have opinions on everything, whether they're well-formed or not. Reacting in public has never done me any service. So, it's sort of I need to take in the information, okay, thank you, be very neutral, go process it, go figure it out, go pray about it, go digest it with the team. Sometimes that can happen in 30 seconds. Sometimes that needs 30 minutes or longer. So, yeah, I would say that's something that I just have to remind myself don't react in public. When in doubt, well, I don't know whether you can sleep on it most days these days, but often in a crisis, you're like, "Okay. I'm going to take a quick break and come back later with an idea."

Jud Wilhite:

I think to just piggyback on that, which is so good, Carey, is a similar idea, which is don't pretend you have all the answers. There's a human element to this. This is a, "We're going to figure this out." Here's what I always say, always. Every crisis we face, I said it this weekend, the way you get through a crisis is together. Together we're going to pray for each other. Together we're going to support one another. Together, even if we can't meet in person, even if there's no toilet paper, we're going to do it together, and we're going to figure it out together. You don't have to get up in a crisis. You need to portray hope and confidence, and some calm, but you don't have to act like you have all the answers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Right. This reminds me a little bit of what Andy Stanley has said at different times that clarity is more important than certainty. I think we all crave certainty, but sometimes you just have to be clear. It's like we're not 100% sure what's ahead, but today, this is what we're going to do. Tomorrow, I'll let you know if there's another step.

Jud Wilhite:

Yeah. I would say really pragmatic for church leaders, don't feel like you have to communicate your plans for everything on Wednesday. My plan right now is I'll communicate what's happening the

weekend at some point on Friday or even Saturday morning. It's a social world. Everybody will get it immediately, but my hope, and we may have a lot more communications, but those communications will define what we know and then what we don't know, we're going to say. Expect the announcement on this and this and this at this time because this last week, there was just too much whiplash going on for everybody, right?

Jud Wilhite:

We make a decision on Wednesday, you make an announcement. I was really tempted to do that. In fact, I shot the video, and then I said, "Hold it." I had three videos in the can and in the end, I did a written public statement on Friday, but I think we're learning, and I'm reminding myself of other crises and tragedies we've gone through. It was like a reminder to me like, "Yeah, Jud. Don't communicate too early what's still unknown. If you can delay, it's okay. You don't have to have your plan for this weekend on Monday."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm. Hmm. Any other thoughts?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. I like delay is okay. Plus, it rhymes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. That makes it even better. You can preach that. That will preach.

Tricia Sciortino:

Delay is okay. I'm onboard with that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you keep yourself encouraged? We started there. I want to wrap up there.

Kevin Queen:

Can I say ... The day after the tornado, I went back and I looked in my journal and I saw that God called me to Cross Point back, just in prayer, on March 3rd three years earlier. So, I think going back and reading through the journal, I just realized it was three years today, and I said, "God, I will go to Cross Point if you want me to." Before I had any conversations with them, and that's still Cross Pointe with an E. So, I spelled it wrong, but it was like in that moment, in prayer, I just knew that was what God was calling to do. I hadn't even talked with anybody, but it was through that, that God used that to help me find faith.

Kevin Queen:

Carey, I went to the scriptures, and I was like, "God, you don't have to speak to me," because I got nothing. I mean, there was just a desperation. I was reading through my bible reading plan. Sometimes when you don't know what to do, you go back to your plans. I went back and I was reading my bible reading plan. I was reading about the Exodus when they were going through the wilderness. I'm reading it in The Message these days. It said that they were constructing the tent, and it said that they put dolphin skin on top of the tent.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah, we talked about this. Yeah.

Kevin Queen:

Yeah. I'm like, "Who will put that in my bible?" I'm like, "Who put dolphin skin in my bible?" I was like, "That's crazy. I've never read that before." Then I started looking where do dolphin skin come from? They're in the wilderness. Then I went back and looked at some of the rabbis when they talked about it. They said that the last time they would have encountered dolphins would have been at the Red Sea.

Kevin Queen:

So, when they're crossing over the Red Sea, this is not Peter-friendly, but when they're crossing the Red Sea, they see a dolphin and they're like, "Hey, we should keep that thing, and we should skin that skin." They were rednecks in the wilderness. They're like, "Let's skin that thing, and then let's put it on ..." God says, "Put it on top of the tent," so that every time they went to worship, they'd be able to look up and see that God got them through the Red Sea. If God got them through the Red Sea, who's going to get them through the wilderness.

Kevin Queen:

So, then for me, it helped me go, "You know what? There are things in my past that God has brought me through that I can hold strength and I can find faith from knowing that just like he brought me that, he's going to bring me through this again." So, just that one word, man, that was manna. That was random for that day. That was a word that I have hold onto, and it bolstered my faith.

Kevin Queen:

So, I think going back to the things we know to do, going back to prayer, going back to the scriptures, getting that word for the day that we can help because we can share that with others and help build their faith, too. So, yeah, that's one way that I encourage myself, draw courage off of that, yeah, dolphin skin.

Jud Wilhite:

I want to thank you for my next devotional thought.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud is going to put that in his next book, no attribution, just so you know, Kevin. Okay? Zero attribution.

Jud Wilhite:

Some attribution. I was reading in the scripture the other day.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I thought to myself, yeah.

Tricia Sciortino:

Dolphin skin.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Dolphin skin.

Kevin Queen:

Thank you, Eugene Peterson, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jud Wilhite:

Every note you ever had was from some Eugene Peterson.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud, how do you keep yourself encouraged?

Jud Wilhite:

Well, part of it is just this, what we're doing right here. You got to keep laughing in a crisis, not to minimize it, but so you don't lose your mind. You just got to keep laughing. I've laughed more in the last 24 hours privately, not publicly. Now, I just mean not in a way that's contrite about what's happening. My mom used to say, you either cry or you laugh. Sometimes you need to do both, right? I've felt like there's great therapy in appropriate humor and just laughing at how crazy the whole thing is that whatever it is we're facing and how it drops so fast, it releases stress.

Jud Wilhite:

So, when I'm with my core team, that's a big value of ours is we take it seriously, and we're not ... I think there's a fine line of minimizing what's happening. That's just denial, and it's not helpful. It's also okay to just acknowledge that, man, I don't even know how else to deal with this except to find ways to laugh about life in the middle of all this stuff. So, I do that. I've been doing that a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm. That's good. Tricia, how do you keep your head in the game?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. So, I would say one of our core values is fun. We don't take ourselves too seriously, seriously. So, there's always moments to find humor to get us through anything. For me, I'm a silver lining girl a little bit. So, not to minimize the crisis we're in and what people are feeling, but I really believe in my heart and in my soul that we're going to be all right. God is going to get us through. We're going to be on the other side. Life might look a little different than it used to, but we have successfully made it through all the things that were in our paths, all the way up to today. We've made it through them, and we'll make it through the days ahead as well.

Tricia Sciortino:

So, I really just have faith in the fact that we've gotten this far, and we're all right, and we will be tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that. So, I just innately in my core really do believe

that. I think if that at anytime that I feel like I'm on shaky ground on those things, I think it's just connecting with the right people that my faith feels low. My silver lining, I can't see it, that I connect with the right people, my core people that can help me see it. So, that would be where I would lean in.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Go ahead, Jud.

Jud Wilhite:

I just feel like we just need to say, again, we are going to be all right. We're going to get through this whatever it is. I grabbed my wife's hand last night and I said, "Hey, thank God we have a roof over our head right now. We don't have to worry about forever right now. We have food in our place, and we have a ministry we're called to. We're going to be fine."

Kevin Queen:

Good.

Jud Wilhite:

It's a different priority than it was last week when I was thinking, "How much do we have in the bank?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tricia Sciortino:

That was less worrying about what your spring break plans are ruined. Now, it's worry about-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. It's like, "How dare they close Disney?" Now, it's funny what you thought was a crisis.

Tricia Sciortino:

Right, crisis that we weren't going to get to go to the beach in two weeks. Now, it's a little different.

Jud Wilhite:

If we're going to lead at our best I believe, and we're going to arise the occasion, and I'm praying a national revival, a global revival through all of this. So, I know we're right in the middle of the shock factor right now, but I think it's okay. That's part of how I keep going is I know God is going to use his fame and his glory and his name.

Kevin Queen:

Yeah.

Tricia Sciortino:

Amen.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's a couple of thoughts. Kevin, as you were talking, I don't know why, the dolphin skin, which now will be in every pulpit in America this weekend, by the way, just so you know. So, the dolphin skin reminded me of a message I preached a few years ago, just God's faithfulness in the past is evidence of his faithfulness in the future. I think when those Israelites were at the edge to the Red Sea, they're like, "Well, this is it. How are we going to die? You want to drown or you want to get slaughtered by the Egyptians?" God's like, "Hold out your hands," and the strong east wind comes and the next thing you know, the waters are parting and they're like, "Are you kidding me?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm not saying there'll be an instant recovery here, but God has a way. His faithfulness in the past as evidence of that, I would affirm what you said earlier somewhere in the conversation one of you said, you were made for this. I think God shows you to be born the year you were born in, put you in the position you are right now, and chose you for such a time like this. I would encourage that. I think that's very, very true.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then we are really people of hope. That's it. We're dealers and brokers of hope, not unreal hope, not denial, not minimization, but just actual hope. Out of death, comes resurrection, and somehow we'll find it. So, wow. I want to thank you for encouraging all of us today. If you have a final thought or two, and then just tell us where we can find you on the socials and any website you would point us to because I think everybody is looking for good people to follow and that's why I wanted you three on this call because you're good people to follow in a time like this.

Kevin Queen:

One final thought that I would want to share. There's a book called Reading the Bible Through Western Eyes, and it talks about how no seminaries that is real remember that there was a famine in the prodigal son story in the United States, but it was in the third world developing countries that that word famine jumped out, and it was through a famine that the son, the younger son came to his senses and he returned home.

Kevin Queen:

So, my prayer is that God would bring great awakening, that he would, through the experience, that God would leverage it fully for his glory, and that people would wake up and they would realize that there's a father who's waiting for them with open arms. So, this is our hour. This is our time to demonstrate the love of the father. I think there are people who are hungry for hope like they've never been before.

Kevin Queen:

I think he's been preparing us as the Church, as the big C Church for such a time as this to present that message this time. Man, I don't think any of us would choose to lead in this hour, but God chose us in his position and his place. So, he's given us everything we need in Christ through his spirit to lead well. So, thank you, Carey, for that message of encouragement for people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Kevin, on social, just Kevin Queen on Instagram?

Kevin Queen:

Yeah, just @KevinQueen on Instagram. Yup.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you mention the Cross Point side as well because you do have a crisis going on, and I gave to it, and I would love other people, too, as well.

Kevin Queen:

Yeah. People can go to [CrossPoint.tv/NashvilleStrong](https://CrossPoint.tv/NashvilleStrong). On that site, there's an opportunity to give toward disaster relief and toward ministry recovery as we're in the middle of that crisis as well. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Tricia, where can people find you online and any closing thoughts?

Tricia Sciortino:

Yeah. So, I would just say to close out to all of our point, we'll be all right. I'm glad to have spent this time with you three gentlemen. It's been an amazing conversation. I'm glad to be part of it. You can find [BelaySolutions.com](https://BelaySolutions.com). We're really putting down some resources for anybody who feels like they are trying to figure out the new normal, what it's like to work and do life virtually. So, some resources on our website, and you can find me individual, [triciamsciortino](https://triciamsciortino), on Instagram as well, and trying to just support the remote work movement, if anybody needs resources, you can hit me up there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jud?

Jud Wilhite:

Yeah. I just appreciate everybody's thoughts. It's been really encouraging. This is the beauty of getting with leaders. Carey, it's why I love your podcast. It's why I listen always and tune in and get not only inspiration. I feel like I'm part of a larger global family of all of us just trying to figure it out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's what we're trying to do, buddy. Holy cow!

Jud Wilhite:

This has been awesome with the three of you, and Kevin. Love you, man, and just to hear how you're leading is tremendous. Christians, we're actually experts at how to deal with pandemics. We have 2,000 years of experience on how to do it. A lot of fascinating reading when you start looking at how we handled pandemics in Rome, in Germany, in Europe, London. Maybe not always the best medical advice, but I would just say this that as you know from your reading of church history like what turned in large part the popular tide in Rome from persecution of Christians to a more general acceptance view of Christians was directly connected to how the faith community responded in the plague. Everybody ran and ran for the hills, and people were leaving their family members out to die on the street.

Jud Wilhite:

Christians said, "No. We don't run. We don't leave our post." They went and took care of these, pick these people up off the street. Some of them took them in their own homes, took care of them. The way they loved them made a difference. Rodney Stark at Baylor says that if you look through the spread of the epidemics throughout the Roman empire in the cities where there was a large Christian community, he believes based on his sociological study that the death rate was up to 50% lower than in cities where there wasn't a strong Christian community because of the way they loved and cared for their neighbors.

Jud Wilhite:

I just say that because we have a chance right now, and we don't know how it's going to look in a potentially locked down virtual world, but we have a chance to love our neighbors, whether it's virtually, whether it's through a phone call, whether it's through technology. If we love them well, we could not only make a huge impact in their spiritual lives, but we could shine a light for the whole world to see, and we could change people's view of the Christian faith.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm. Well, let's leave it there. Jud, you're on Insta and also at CentralOnline.tv.

Jud Wilhite:

That's right, CentralOnline.tv.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, thank you so much, Tricia, Kevin, Jud. You have encouraged a lot of leaders and helped a lot of leaders today, and thank you for your leadership in the midst of this crisis. I really appreciate you guys.

Jud Wilhite:

Thank you. It's been an honor.

Tricia Sciortino:

Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I hope you found that helpful, but also encouraging. It's one of those things where we all need hope, but this is unprecedented, and I'm not sure where it lands. I would just repeat I think God puts you there for a reason, and we're in this together. So, for those of you who listened to this podcast and subscribed, there are going to be some new developments. I'm off the road indefinitely. We're looking at putting some new resources together for you on a regular basis. That's going to help you lead through this crisis in a way that I can't say what it is now, but I can tell you in days, we will have something together that's really, really going to help and we want to come alongside you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Also, I write a lot over at LeadLikeNeverBefore.com, also CareyNieuwhof.com. They would take you to the same place. Just nobody can spell my name. I will have a regular resources, articles, insights, so on and so forth to help you lead through this crisis. We're all in this together. I'm incredibly grateful. You can also hear I'm a little bit hoarse. I have done nothing but talk on the phone to leaders for days on end.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hey, want to thank Financial Peace University for coming alongside us for this episode, and coming alongside your people. I really think this is a pastoral moment. No one knows where this is going to land. Things that never happened together are happening before with the pandemic and the financial collapse and parts of the market that just aren't behaving like they should, and people having to shutter their shops and businesses and airline industries needing bailout. Wow! What if you could be the help and the hope?

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, you can do this by just coming alongside that works in virtual groups. Simply text GIVEHOPE, that's one word, GIVEHOPE, to 33789, GIVEHOPE to 33789, and they'll help you get started today. You do not have to have taken Financial Peace University to help your church through it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We are going to continue as strange as it sounds with some upcoming episodes that are business as usual. You've got to continue to grow your leadership, and some of these issues never go away. We have some great ones. We've got Tim Keller, Michael Todd, Danielle Strickland, Nir Eyal. We also have Joseph Sojourner coming up next, and you can get an excerpt from what's ahead right here.

Joseph Sojourner:

Everything she asked me I had a perfectly packaged answer. She said, "I can tell you've been standing on these stages because you're hitting behind all these perfect answers." She just beat me up for about a year straight and just said, "We're going to get back to Joe." So, she was able to finally strip that away and say, "You're scared of yourself because you don't feel like you're qualified or you don't feel like you deserve to stand on these stages." So, I don't understand why I was chosen, but I do understand that it's my responsibility to own this opportunity, but also be humble enough to know I don't deserve it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, that's next time on the podcast. For What I'm Thinking About, wow, I want to talk about what motivates you as a leader. It occurred to me last weekend as I was thinking and praying about all these things that were happening, and I was watching us lead on social media and online on which we should, and I'm like, "Wait a minute. Something is not right."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I couldn't quite put my finger on it, and when I did, a bunch of bells went off. So, I just want to share that with you. Normally, the way we lead as leaders is we lead by motivating, right? If you want to lose 20 pounds, it's like, "Okay. You can do it." Put that junk food away, go for a run, away you go. If you want to lead an organization, launch a new location, add a new team member, build a building, whatever you're calling people to do, yeah, you just motivate people to do it, "Come on. You can do it. If we're all in this together, it will be great."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, what that is called is internally-driven change. In other words, you thought of the change, it's not easy, but you've done it. Motivation works great for that. Here's what's happening. None of the change we're experiencing right now is internally motivated, all of it. Everything we've mentioned, the financial

collapse, the coronavirus, the pandemic, the locking of continents, quarantine, self-isolation, distancing, all of that stuff, involuntary. It's all happening to us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, what happens is when you lead internally-motivated change, you set the timeline, the motivation and the agenda, but with externally-driven change, you control none of that, including the fact that you don't control the outcome.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, COVID-19 and the radical change it's wrought on the world and daily life are all externally-driven changes. You didn't ask for any of this, but you have to lead through it anyway. So, what do you need to do? If you can't just motivate people, "Hey, guys. It's going to be better tomorrow!" It's probably not going to be better tomorrow. So, what do you do? What do you do?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You instead of focusing on motivation, one of your leadership responsibilities is interpretation. As we said in the interview, it's been really difficult to get great information. People are confused. They're looking to you as to what all of this means. You need to be clear and accurate, and sometimes you have to say as Jud or Kevin said, "I don't know. I'm not 100% sure," but they are looking for you to interpret. So, if you're like the hype guy like, "God has got this. No big deal. We're bigger than this," and that's all you say, people will lose confidence in you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you can be that calm presence, that non-anxious presence and interpret what's happening, and steadily lead people forward, you will gain credibility. They'll learn to trust you, and you'll be able to lead your people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, I hope this helps. There's a blog post we'll link to in the show notes. It's called How to Lead Through Rapid Unexpected Change Responding to COVID-19. We will share that link. There's a lot more advice on leadership there, but I really, really do hope this helps. I'm anxious to connect next time. Stay tuned on the channels for more. We're going to bring you all that we can as things continue to change in this unprecedented times. In the meantime, I hope this helped you lead like never before.

Announcer:

You've been listening to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change, and personal growth to help you lead like never before.