

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 330 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I'm so glad that you took some time to tune in to this week's episode in the middle of our crisis. I want you to know we're praying for you, we're trying to get behind you. Today's guest is Sheryl Brady, and she talks about going through a crisis of her own. I think you'll find her story really helpful, and this episode is brought to you by Pro Media Fire, who are doing some awesome things have for free before Easter, and by ICM, International Cooperating Ministries.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Leaders, it's been so encouraging to hear from you over these last few weeks. We are doing our best to get to you everything we can to give you some resources to really help you lead through this crisis, and it is unlike anything we've seen before, anything I've experienced before. One of the things I'm working on right now is I've also got a second podcast that just launched called The ChurchPulse Weekly that I'm doing with David Kinnaman, and the Barna Group and GLOO, and this is going to put some crisis toolkits into your hands, so we'll link to all of that in the show notes, but I just want you to know we are coming alongside you as best we can to help you through this crisis, and part of that is not just working on the immediate issues, but the longer term issues, which is what this podcast is here for.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So Sheryl Brady talks about, today, how to lead when you don't have all the answers. Is that not true and timely? What to do when your faith is in crisis, and how to get through a really difficult season personally. So Sheryl, who has a huge audience in her own right, in her own field, she's the lead pastor of The Potter's House North in Dallas, has a huge international ministry, never saw herself as a leader, talks about the whole self doubt to become a leader, and then how to lead when you go through a crisis and some personal tragedy. So wherever this episode finds you today, I think you'll find it encouraging. I know I did. The world is in the midst of a global panic right now, in pandemic, and the church has an opportunity unlike, I think, ever before to reach out with hope and with love digitally.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So from now until Easter, our friends at Pro Media Fire, regular listeners, you know them, they've come together to help churches spread peace and hope in these uncertain times. So every single day, the Pro Media Fire team is providing free social media graphics, videos, and strategies to help reach people during this season. So if you want to get some free resources to fill up your social feed, spread hope in your community, here's what you can do. You can head on over to [GreatNews.world](https://www.GreatNews.world). That's [GreatNews.world](https://www.GreatNews.world). You can sign up for free, and you get free social media graphics right up until Easter. Spread the hope of Jesus in your community churches. Actually, it isn't restricted to churches. If you want to do this on your personal feed and you don't work for a church, you can do that. Just go to [GreatNews.world](https://www.GreatNews.world). That's [GreatNews.world](https://www.GreatNews.world).

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then we've got a crisis going on in our own lives and in our own culture, but hey, that happens elsewhere in the world, where even response to a global pandemic, access to healthcare is not nearly as real as it is for most of us. So during the moments of crisis here, we have the benefits of leadership and ministry resources. We can jump on the internet. We, as tough as it is, have resources that others don't have. So imagine navigating this in India or Lebanon or South Sudan. Not only would you not have access to the resources in your language, you might not even have a bible that you could use regularly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So these are the challenges that global church leaders are facing. So there's a ministry called International Cooperating Ministries, ICM. They're a leader in global church development at work, and while we have crises of our own, since 1986, they have been equipping and helping indigenous church leaders around the world. They're in a hundred different countries. So if you can take some of what God has given you to support others, they are EFCA accredited, they have four stars on Charity Navigator, and for \$35 a month, you can equip pastors in a developing nation to respond to crisis and minister effectively.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Honestly, sometimes one of the best things you can do as a leader is say, "You know what? I'm going to help someone else." So make sure you check them out at [ICM.org/Carey](http://ICM.org/Carey) to learn more. That's [ICM.org/Carey](http://ICM.org/Carey), and you can learn more and you can give there, and it'll really, really help as you help others who are even less fortunate than you and I are in this season.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I am excited to have Sheryl Brady. We tell a fun story at the beginning of how we first met a few years ago. She is an internationally renowned speaker, pastor, pastor of The Potter's House North Dallas along with her husband, Bishop Joby Brady and their family and a great body of believers. She's a frequent guest on numerous TV shows, has been a contributor to The Washington Post and Huffington Post. Without further ado, here's my conversation with Sheryl Brady. Well Sheryl, welcome to the podcast.

Sheryl Brady:

Thank you. Glad to be here.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. We met, was that five years ago that we met, maybe?

Sheryl Brady:

You know, it might've been, and it was the greatest day of my life, because it was so unexpected. You were in our church building. You were in town with Orange.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, with Reggie Joiner. Reggie and I.

Sheryl Brady:

I was already a big Carey fan, and I hadn't told any of my family about you. I was just like, "I love this guy. I love his writings," and I hadn't told anybody about that. So you were in town for an Orange event, you were in one of the rooms here with your team and Reggie Joiner. So y'all are in this room, and my son-in-law, Mark, and my daughter are part of the Orange team, and they brought me into that room and said, "Do you want to meet Reggie and his team?" So I walked in the room thinking I'm going to meet Reggie and his team, and I look, the first person that my eyes fell on was you, and I'm like, "Oh, it's so nice to meet you!", and I'm wanting to hug you, and my son in law, Mark, is like, "Mm-mm, that's not Reggie, that's not the one," and I'm like, "That is the one." I don't know where Reggie is, but Care, that's Carey. He's the one I've been reading all of his blogs and he's helping me. It was so funny.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'll tell you, I will never forget that moment. I think you shrieked and jumped up and down, and that does not normally happen. I do not get that reaction. So Sheryl, I try not to kid Reggie about that too much, but we've been friends for a long time, so they can withstand it. I think, come to mention it, for long time listeners of this podcast, I've had Sam Collier on, I think that was the first time I met Sam Collier too, because he was with us on that ride to The Potter's House North Dallas that day. Oh, fascinating. Anyway, well I came in, did a little bit of work with your team, and you were so gracious, and I'll tell you, you're in a bit of a relatively unique position in that lead pastor of a large church, and you have been a female lead pastor now for a while, and that was probably a little bit less common a few decades ago than it is today. Do you want to tell us about how you got started in leadership and take us back to the beginning?

Sheryl Brady:

Absolutely. It was 10 years ago that ... I had been with Bishop Jakes for almost probably 30, 32, 33 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

T.D. Jakes, right? You knew him before anybody else knew Bishop Jakes.

Sheryl Brady:

Well, I don't know about that, but I did come in on the ground floor of his major exposure explosion to the world. I met him through a cassette tape, and it's ... Cassette tape. Now let me be-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Those were the days, man. We all had cassette ministries. That was amazing.

Sheryl Brady:

That was amazing. Absolutely. So I met him through that, and I was so intrigued by it, I wanted to actually see him in person, so I worked it out to where I could go see him in person, and from that moment, that night in particular, it changed my life. It was a little tiny small church in Cleveland, Ohio, and it was hot, there was no air conditioning, it was in the summer, they had the windows open, and I watched him preach, and the more he preached, he could tell a story like nobody that I had ever seen tell a story out of the scripture, and he made it come alive to me.

Sheryl Brady:

So just simply because of that, it started churning things inside of me and things I didn't even know were there. You have to know, I wasn't the only child, but I was a lonely child because I was one of the late bloomers, and my grown sisters were all married and moved on. So I was kind of quiet and kind of shy, and people still, to this day, don't really believe that, but it's very, very true. I was a very quiet type person.

Sheryl Brady:

As I was watching, the more I watched Bishop Jakes, I kept feeling something wake up inside of me I didn't even know was there. I was 32 years old before I realized that God really wanted to use me to speak to people's lives, into people's lives.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What were you doing at that time? You had kids, you were ... Yeah. So what was your day job, so to speak, at that time?

Sheryl Brady:

Actually, my husband traveled and spoke a lot, and I had three kids under the age of two, so that was pretty much my day, my nights, my middle of the nights.

Carey Nieuwhof:

100%.

Sheryl Brady:

It was every day. I would travel with him periodically, but all that time ... I loved it, because it was quiet, and I married a man who was a big talker, it just worked. He would just talk and I would just amen him, and I loved being a mom, and I loved making sure my kids had what they needed every day. I loved all of that, and so I never even gave myself to thinking that there was anything else in me. I didn't give myself to that. I loved the Lord, I loved my church, I loved all of that, but I always thought that I was supposed to be somebody's cheerleader, and it was never supposed to be me. I didn't realize that there was anything in me that was called to speak or had the courage to even take a platform.

Sheryl Brady:

If somebody said, "Well, you're a preacher," and I'm like, "No, I'm not a preacher. I'm a reacher. Okay? I don't want to be a preacher because there's too much pressure that comes with that." Those kinds of things, I shied away from everything, until I heard Bishop Jakes' voice and started reading his books and began to know him. We ultimately ended up moving to West Virginia, which ... If you look at it now, people would probably say, "Why would you just even move to West Virginia?" I was from Detroit.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, yeah, yeah. I was born in Windsor. That's why we connected so well. Right across the river.

Sheryl Brady:

It's right there. So it's like, how do you make those kind of moves? I was so hungry, and he spoke in a way that woke up something in me, and my wonderful husband, while he was blessed and while he was fed as well, he was so firm about that thing getting woke up in me, and he was so supportive and just

such a strong individual himself, but he knew that if that could wake up in me that it was unlimited what God could do for us. So we moved there and we joined his church, we were elders in the church, sat on the front row, and when he moved to Dallas back in 1996, we moved with him.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Sheryl Brady:

We came to Dallas, we just continued to serve in the church, and then after a couple of years later, my husband said, "I think God is calling us back to the East coast." He said, "We need to build a church." I was so busy just playing those supporting roles with the Bishop Jakes or with my life in the church there that I thought it was going to be a horrible thing, because I'm sitting there listening to him preach every day and every Sunday, and I'm like, "This is the greatest thing in the world. Does it ever get any better than this?"

Sheryl Brady:

To think that now we're going to go start our own church. I was like, "Okay, well I really hope this is God." I went, but I went kind of kicking and screaming in my spirit, because I didn't want to leave, and yet those 10 years ... When we finally did move back to Raleigh, we built the church that is called The River. Those 10 years were incredible years. It was where I learned so many vital leadership principles and issues, and I learned how to love and pastor people how to get involved in their lives, and yet not get so involved that I became overwhelmed and lost my own life in the middle of it, because I know when you are in ministry or you're in leadership, sometimes you can do that. You can get so involved.

Sheryl Brady:

I learned so, so much and God opened so many great doors for me, and we ended up just ... Bishop Jakes calling us 10 years later, and he said, "You know, I want to start a campus in North Dallas," and he said, "I want to know if y'all will pray about coming home," and that's exactly what we did. We prayed about coming home, and we came home, and here it is now. We've been here for 10 years, and he said, "I want to put you out there in that campus," he said, "I want you to lead it. I want you to pastor it, and let's just see what God is going to do." 10 years later, we're here. It's had its challenges, of course, but I'm telling you, it's been phenomenal. To have people like the Bishop Jakes and my husband being strong be as pillars in my life, I think it's enabled me and empowered me to do what God has allowed us to do here at The Potter's House North.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it's fascinating to hear the story, and I appreciate the way you told it too, because I think you have a lot of unlikely leaders listening to this episode who maybe, to some extent, felt a little bit like you in your early thirties. It's like, "This is not what I'm going to do with my life. What do you mean I'm a leader?", and you're somebody who's grown into incredible influence on your own, just a huge impact around the world globally as a leader and as a preacher and as a communicator, and of course, as an author as well. So I think that would surprise a lot of people who met you a decade or so into the journey that, "What? You really struggled with whether you were even equipped or gifted to lead?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

You mentioned that you had, in that first church you planted, before you did The Potter's House North in Dallas, you learned a lot of leadership lessons along the way. Can you walk us through a few of those, Sheryl, and just tell us what were some wake up calls where you're like, "Oh, this is leadership."

Sheryl Brady:

Hello, this is leadership. Good morning. It's in your face. One of the things, anybody that's in possibly in ministry, or even in corporate America, if we're not careful, we can build our careers, our churches, our ministries, our businesses, we can be so busy pouring into them that, and not even intentionally, we can neglect our home base, and home is so vital, and especially for people that are in ministry, I say we can neglect home, because it's like you're helping people that are in need, so there's something in you that feels like, "Well, this is legitimate. I need to do this." It's easy to sacrifice our families on the altar of the church.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, I want to dissect that a little bit, because men do that all the time, and I don't want to be gender stereotyped here, but you found that to be a struggle, even as a mom in leadership, a woman in leadership. That was something you had to self correct on?

Sheryl Brady:

Early. I did that early in life, and I tried hard. I've not been perfect at it, by no means, but I am an advocate for the fact that sometimes we need to slow down and realize that home needs you too. When I came to Dallas, I came with my family. That's a whole story in and of itself, which was such a blessing, but I think because they knew that they mattered to me, that they could trust that what God had for my life, that he had something in it for their lives as well. I think that's the true power of team. I never came expecting that this was, "Oh, this was something for me." No, I came holding, locking arms saying, "Guys, this is going to have to take an entire team, because I don't have everything."

Sheryl Brady:

I remember sitting down at the table with my three daughters, my three son-in-laws, my husband and a few of the people that came with us from Raleigh, and I remember sitting at the table, and we were trying to cast vision, and I was like, "Let me tell you something right now. Don't look at me for this whole thing, because I don't have this whole thing. I don't know how to do this. We have been called here as a team," and when I tell you that when the Bible says that iron sharpens iron, it is so very true, because over the last 10 years, we've sat at the table, hashed things out. Somebody would bring a piece, somebody would bring this, somebody would bring that, and one thing about it, I may not have been the originator of that vision, but the minute I see it, I know that's a part of us, and we would adopt this and that. I think we have the fruit today that says this is the way God meant for us to be, and I just never felt like I had all the answers or all of the vision. Bishop Jakes, of course when we came, he was kind enough to say, "You've been with me, Sheryl, for 20 some odd years. You know me. So you know what I would like, what I wouldn't like," but he was such an incredible leader through that time because he never put me in a box.

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Sheryl Brady:

He never said, "You have to do this, you have to do that." And he gave me whatever I would ask for as far as can we start this? Can we do that? He would always say yes. And that kind of bothered me a little bit because I was thinking, "Okay, why is he always saying yes?" One day I just asked him and he was like, "Well, because if I give you everything that you want and it doesn't work, then you'll know why. Basically, if I give you everything, then you can never say, 'You didn't give me that and you didn't give me this.'" So, he gave it to me. Of course, by the grace of God, I didn't ask for crazy stuff.

Sheryl Brady:

But anyway, he really helped me in the foundational part. But the team, when I tell you the importance of team, I mean, I can't talk enough about it because even the Bible says, "We know in part and we prophesy in part." And I think where a lot of leaders miss it is they are not willing to admit what they don't know, and I had to admit that, Carey. I had to say, first of all to myself and then to my kids, who are grown men and women and they have their own worlds going on, but I had to admit to them, "Yes. I was kind of the door. The opportunity came to me, but we need to attack this as a team because your destiny's tied up in it as well."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that's a very ... Go ahead. Go ahead.

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah. I was just going to say, so family, and that didn't start just when we came to Dallas.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

Like I said, I think I tried not to sacrifice my family along the journey on the altar of saying, "Oh, no, I can't. I can't do this because I have to go to church," or, "I can't go to this because I have to be at the church." I really tried hard, and I want to encourage leaders, whether it's your business or whatever it is that you're doing in life, if you have a family, man, pour into them because your family are your ... To me, they were my shock absorbers that no matter what I went through and through the loss, and we'll get into that in a moment, of my sister and mother, it was like my family had the ability to absorb the shock out of me.

Sheryl Brady:

I think it's because I made them a priority, and I still have to work at it now. We all do, but it's not at the end of the day what you've got. You might have a great business, but when you can't fix your own hair and you can't brush your own teeth, hello, it's those kids or those family members that are around you, and I think it's important that we cherish family. I cherished family and now my family cherishes me, and when you spend your love on family, everybody wins.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that's such a good insight on so many levels, Sheryl, and I think you had fingered in that a lot of leaders struggle to make it seem like we have all the answers. And one of the things I've always appreciated about you in the time that we've spent one-on-one is when you speak, it's powerful. I

mean, it's like you're ... It's really quite powerful and you seem on the outside like a really powerful leader.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But to admit that, "Hey, I was in my 30s. I didn't know I need team." And you're right. We've had Les McKeown on this podcast multiple times and he says, "The key to scale is quality, team-based decision-making." When you look at the size of the church that you lead and the team that you lead and the movement that you lead, there has to be team-based decision-making. But I think a lot of leaders come to it like here's a download. This is what we should do. Now everybody gets on board. But you kind of came about it the other way around going, "I don't know which way to the promised land. I need your help." Right?

Sheryl Brady:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Which I love. How did you discover that? Can you drill down a little bit more on that? Because I think that's a very important insight.

Sheryl Brady:

I think that it was, and it is, even to this day, I think that it's easy for me to admit I don't have the answers. I can't fix everything and I need help. And because we've walked so close as a family ... Now this leads into something else because you all ... A lot of times, people that have churches, you wrestle with the fear of people thinking, "Oh, this is a family church and there's nowhere for me to grow or there's nowhere for me to fit because this is a family church." I heard that a lot of my life, and so I thought about that a few times. But then I thought, "Well, just because my children are biologically related to me, if they can play the role, does that disqualify them from the part?"

Sheryl Brady:

Now I'm quick to say, "If you can't play the role, then you can't do the job, but I'm not going to disqualify you." To me, there's something about family. God wanted a family. That's why the body of Christ exists. And so I think in a lot of places, there's a fine line where it can be maybe not so healthy, but I think that my kids, they knew me. They know my thought processes. I know theirs. And a lot of times, they'll finish my sentences. And I'm like, "Why don't we just take this and let's work in the church with this."

Sheryl Brady:

Now is that always easy? It's not because, especially when family is important to you, it's hard to be family and to work with family and to have all of your kids sitting around a table, and some of them are biological. And now our circle is broadened and we brought in other people that have really been sons and daughters for years. But the Bible says, "Know them that labor among you." And that's the kind of people that I have around my table and I respect them. They respect me. I respect their thoughts, they respect mine. And we're 10 years in here and I can say, so far, so good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, yeah and-

Sheryl Brady:

So far, so good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wisdom is provided by all of our children. I think that's very true. We were talking about one before we hit record, but what have been some of the challenges and hurdles you've had to clear in leadership? I know there's always a lot for everybody.

Sheryl Brady:

Sure. I will always point back to just not allowing the demand of ministry to cause you to forget your own, because sometimes we just think that, "Okay, get over it. I'll be back to you in a minute, but right now I got to go heal this person. I got to touch, I got to pray, I got to counsel. I got to do whatever." And I found out that ultimately, the strength of my ministry has come out of the strength of my family, and when my house is right, I don't just go in my own strength or leftover strength.

Sheryl Brady:

But I understand the power of agreement and the force that comes from just knowing that my home base is behind me and we're together, so not just giving your family away and trying to help everybody else's family or your marriage away and trying to help everybody else's marriage. You see a lot of that today. That's been challenging, not the decision to do it, but the decision to not allow yourself to become distracted from that because you understand how important that is.

Sheryl Brady:

Working with family can be challenging because you want to be family outside of here, but in here you got to lay all of these things down and you've got to be like, okay, bring your best ideas to the table. And then you got people at your table who will disagree with one another. And my mother hat is on, I'm like, "Oh my goodness, my daughters are arguing with my son-in-laws. My son-in-laws are arguing with each other. You know?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you navigate that? Do you have any rules or-

Sheryl Brady:

Let me tell you, if I knew how to do that, Carey, I would put it in a bottle and sell it and I would be rich. I don't even know how to do that except to sit there and pray and say, "God, give us wisdom. Give us understanding." Because at the end of the day, we all want the best.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

We want what is the best. We want God's perfect will. And so many times we just had to hash our way through it. Ultimately, it's made us stronger. And then, just personally, I lost my sister in October of 2017. She had been in about a seven-year battle with cancer, and my sister and I were very, very close

and I lost her. That was the thing that I just knew God was going to touch her. I knew she was in a fight and I wanted her to make it, and I just knew He would. Okay? And then I lost her.

Sheryl Brady:

And when I tell you that. That started challenging the core of everything I believed. It's bad enough to lose somebody you love, but then to have to be challenged on the very thing that you thought God would do and He didn't do, that was a real personal challenge for me. I even got to the point where I said to God ... I had to ... We were having a night of hope at our church and it was shortly after my sister passed and I was supposed to come out there. The music had been great, all of the arts. It just was a beautiful night and I was supposed to come out with a grand finale and wrap it up and talk about hope.

Sheryl Brady:

I was standing on the side of the stage and I was holding a microphone in my hand, waiting for my cue to walk out and just wrap this up and put a nice bow on it like a pastor's supposed to, and I felt like fainting. I felt like running out the back door because I felt like I didn't know what was going to come out. As a speaker, you pretty much kind of have your thing, your talk mapped out, all your words mapped out. You kind of know where you're going. That night, I was afraid that I wasn't going to have a filter and-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What were you feeling inside when you're standing leading up to that?

Sheryl Brady:

Fake, like a phony. I know what they expect me to say. I know what I should say, but what I could potentially say is absolute opposite of that because I wanted to come out and say, "Where's God when you need Him? I know I've told y'all He's a healer, but I'm not sure that I can tell you all that anymore." That's raw and that's rare. Maybe for some people, maybe nobody ever goes through that kind of a thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think you'd be surprised.

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah. I know I did, and I even got to the point where I told God, "I don't even know if I can tell them what I've always told them about You. I don't know that You are everything I always said that you were." But this is what I knew. No matter how much I doubted and no matter how hurt I was and no matter the loss, I knew I loved God and I knew that He was everything to me, and I knew that He had blessed my life. And yet, I didn't even know that night if my love was strong enough to withstand this particular storm. I walked out when they said it was my time. I'm thinking to myself, "I got to walk out here now, put a bow on this, and make them feel hopeful when I feel hopeless."

Sheryl Brady:

I walked out there and I just started talking and I just got real real and I just put it out there, told them how I felt. I remember just quoting the scripture. When I want to tell you that there's power in the word of God, for me as a leader, there was so much power because I remember opening my mouth, and some

of this is on video. You could see a clip of it. But I remember opening my mouth and saying, I was saying, "I don't know if God's this. I don't know if He's that. There's a lot of things I don't know. But what I do know is I will let nothing separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. In all of these things we are more than conquerors." I said that and when I said it, it was like all of a sudden, okay, God, I don't, I still don't know why You, why this happened, but I know one thing, I'm not going to allow it to separate me from You and the love that You have for me. And that night just being honest is because I think if you don't own where you are, you can't fix where you are.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

As a leader I'm looking at a wonderful church, wonderful staff. I was so busy looking at what I lost that I didn't realize what I had been left with, and I had been left with a wealth of people and relationships and opportunities and I had to ... Everything shifted for me that night and even at that point, people started calling and telling me, "Man, you don't know what that did for me to hear you say that you struggled with this." It just was one of those moments in my life where I was just honest and God intervened.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really appreciate you sharing that and you come from a tradition, as do some of our listeners, which tends to emphasize the positive side of-

Sheryl Brady:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... the God. You're a very positive person, positive preaching. God can do anything and now you're there with your own crisis. You must have been nervous that night to be feeling those emotions and to share that with your church?

Sheryl Brady:

Yes, because I never have been good at faking anything, really. I always say when you're in love, you can't hide it and when you're not, you can't fake it. I've never been really good at that. And so I was walking out on that stage, just my whole world, it was like everything was shaking because I knew my face was going to tell it all no matter what my voice was saying. That was a moment I had to really ... But I had to be ... I had no other choice. I had to be open and honest. And what is amazing is the hope that filled the room in that night of hope, just through us being honest, through us, through me saying, "I don't have the answer." I think that, I think if people could just ... I think ego plays into a lot of the front that we put up today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It sure does.

Sheryl Brady:

Because we put up this, I don't know, this front that we got it going on, that we're all together, and that God is good all the time and all the time, God's good. And yet, sometimes I don't always feel that God was good, especially in that moment. But we put up this persona and then it's our ego's job to protect the image that we have built. There's so much that goes on. You're wrestling with your ego, you're wrestling with your image, and in the middle of it, in all of it, you lose your integrity. We have a great image, but we have no integrity because we're not really being honest. I realized that night that the absence of my faith in that moment did not equate to the absence of God. He was still there, and He helped me through that moment. It was just when I say you never get over grief, but you can, there is a path that you can get through it. And as I began to work my way through that, it was seven months, seven days later that I lost my mother.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Sorry.

Sheryl Brady:

Both of them were pillars. Here we are back on this same thing again, but it was not to the severity that this first loss was. Let me tell you something. I am a pastor. I've walked people through grief. I've prayed for them. I've buried their loved ones. I've done all of that. But it was not until I went through grief myself that I realize now what people really need. They don't just need our words. They need our heart. Sometimes they just need our ear and they need our honesty. And through that, it was a personal challenge, but we developed a grief and loss support group that is revolutionizing people in our church's lives. People are hurting, they're just hurting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What do you think that night of hope, where you kind of just opened up your heart and said, "Look, this is where I'm at. I know this is not where pastors are supposed to be, but this is where I'm at," what impact do you think that had on your church in terms of their permission to be honest and truthful about where they were at?

Sheryl Brady:

Yes. It had a huge impact. I remember them breaking out in applause and clapping because all of a sudden ... As pastors, you try your best to connect with your audience, in your congregation. We use all kinds of stuff. We use stories. We use everything to try to just make a heart connection. I had done that for years and little would I have ever thought that my raw, honest, I'm struggling with God issues too, would cause them to open up like they opened up. I think that just seeing me survive now has given them the hope that, listen, if Pastor Brady can get through this, I can get through this too. And we've been blessed to see a lot of people find hope again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. It's interesting because it's a fine line. I've seen church leaders, and even frankly in the corporate world, I've seen CEOs who have lost the vision, lost heart. It's like they're not really in it anymore. They're leading the company, but in name only, pastors who have deconverted or had crises of faith. That's not what you're talking about. It's not-

Sheryl Brady:

No, no.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You still very much believe in the mission of The Potter's House, so I just want to clarify that. And yet, you had a very real moment of transparency.

Sheryl Brady:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think there's a really significant difference between the two. Has that kind of moment, which seemed like a unusual thing for you, has that changed the way you've communicated or connected with your church since or the way you teach or preach since that moment?

Sheryl Brady:

I believe it has because pain is not prejudice. Okay. It hits all of us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:42:04]

Sheryl Brady:

Pain is not prejudice. Whatever, whoever you are, there'll be moments of pain. But like I said a moment ago, we have a tendency to build, to maybe cover ours when we're on a platform, when we have a title, when we have a position. But you know what? Jesus came and he went through everything that you and I would ever go through, so that when we bring it to him and say, "God, the heart is broken." He's like, "Yeah, I know exactly what that feels like." And, so he's moved by the feelings of our infirmities. So if Jesus had to come and go through what what Sheryl Brady or what Carey would have to go through, if he had to go through that so that he could identify with our feelings, then who are we as leaders, as CEOs or whoever we are, business owners, who are we to think that we don't have to connect with people?

Sheryl Brady:

That's gold. Okay? That's your superpower, as some might say, is to be able to connect with people. Because when people, when they realize that you're not some drastic difference between you and them, all of a sudden it causes there to be a connection, and they-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it bridges the gap, right?

Sheryl Brady:

Yes, and they buy into you and, and you buy into them and it's joint supplying joint. It's all of us connecting and it's, every president that that has been touchable or had that persona of like, "Yeah, I bet he is an ordinary man." It makes people love that. And, the real reason is because it's real. It's honest. We're human. I don't care if you are a leader, I don't care if you are the CEO of your company, we're still human. And sometimes we can find ourselves backing into this bubble.

Sheryl Brady:

Leaders do it every day. We back into a bubble. Sometimes we back up because we don't know the answer. Sometimes we back up because, we just don't want to be vulnerable for whatever causes you to back up, like the prophet Elijah backed up into a cave. Whatever your cave is, I'm grateful that we serve a God who will reach into our cave and find us and pull us out. He climbed up under a Juniper tree and said, "I just don't want to live anymore." First of all, okay, I want to say to him, "It's not that serious. All right? It's just this one woman named Jezebel." But the truth of the matter is, you can put that into our lives and people do it all the time. They back up, and I think it's important that in those moments that we have connections and friendships and we're able to dialogue with one another, and not take ourselves so seriously. I've seen that so many years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What are some of the best decisions you've made in leadership?

Sheryl Brady:

I will say right off the bat is, one of the best decisions I have personally made was to have a growth mindset. I come from a line of preachers in ... My father was a preacher, my grandfather was a preacher. So I come from, I've been in the church all of my life. I was born on Easter Sunday. So I was, I'm always saying, "Yes, I've got resurrection power in me." But I have also seen generations that have gone by that, and some that are yet here today still alive and among us, that refuse to have a growth mindset. It's, everything is the same way that it's always been. And I learned early to be open, to stick my head in some different worlds, to listen to different writers.

Sheryl Brady:

There's no way in the world I should have found you. And, yet when I saw something, you have a beautiful way of just categorizing things that grabs people's attention. And it grabbed mine and I leaned in and, the more I read, the more I wanted to lean in. And then, the more I read and wanted to lean in, the more I wanted to tell everybody because it helped me.

Sheryl Brady:

And I think, just having that growth mindset because I may not have all the answers when it comes to what's next, but I am open to hearing who does and to hearing what they will be. Because, I think I'm very grateful for what I've learned and how I've gotten to the point that I am. But I also realize that sometimes where I was cannot take me where I want to go. And so I'm in between. And I think at that point, to say it's scripturally, the Bible says that, "A wise man takes out of his boat, out of his treasure, both old and new." And I think when you could merge the old and the new, then that creates, that carves a path for you to go forward.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that growth mindset is 100% a characteristic of high capacity leaders. I just don't think you make it decades in unless you have that. And one of your growing areas, I'd love for you to tell us about your new book. So writing a book's really easy, right? You know all about that.

Sheryl Brady:

Oh, my Lord. Listen, I have birthed three children and I think that my book was harder to birth than my three children.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm so glad you said that. I've never birthed children. I've fathered two, but I've like, "Oh my gosh, this last one's just eating my breakfast."

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah, and I'm trying not to sound super spiritual, but I will say this. If you look through scripture, there was always a battle or always a warfare around the birthing of a miracle. And so I look at my book like this is what we set in the process while we were writing. This is either really supposed to be, or it's really not supposed to be because there was a lot of the loss and just the battle of, "Are we doing this correctly and is it really answering the questions that people are asking?" And so I was writing, I had already signed the contract with my publishers before my sister passed away, and I was excited.

Sheryl Brady:

We had the title, we're going to call this book, Don't Miss the Moment, and it took me, I just released it just a few months ago. It's not even out. Well, it's out as of March 17th, so-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah, but it was the hardest thing in the world to get to do, to get it out. I thought, "I'm going to miss the moment while I am writing the book."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Missing the moment.

Sheryl Brady:

Don't miss the moment.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Any content creator has been there, for sure.

Sheryl Brady:

Oh my God. This is my second book, but I have a whole brand new appreciation for authors and I'm excited about the book because I feel like there's something in my personality, in my nature, that slows down everything. You know? My husband is a complete opposite vision, hits him, he's like, "We're gung ho, we're ahead. We're running with it." I always have a tendency to kind of slow things down a bit. And I think this book has been, it's enabled me to tell people, especially to today's generation, that sometimes we can get so busy trying to get to where we're going, that we totally miss all of the little moments that it will take along the way to actually get there.

Sheryl Brady:

I wrote the book because I wanted people to understand how powerful a moment is. It's small enough to miss, but it's big enough to change your life forever. And I also feel like sometimes we can get so consumed with what's next, that we miss what is. And those kinds of moments, the moments that are very important in life, we don't always get them back. And so I wanted to just bring an awareness that, let's not be so busy. I realize the importance of vision and vision casting, and without a vision that we perish, whether it's in our business or whatever it is that we do with our lives. But at the same time, don't miss what's now. We're so busy looking for what's next that we miss what's now, and it's only as we are stewards over what's now that we can walk into what's next.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh yeah. What are some habits, or disciplines, or practices that you've adopted, Sheryl, to help you slow down and see those moments? Because you're right, things have just gotten busier with technology, devices, phones, pace of life. That's harder than ever. And, I'm a futurist so I live in the future on the slowest of days. So I have a hard time with the now. What are some disciplines, rhythms or practices that help you slow down and catch those moments? Because, you got grand babies now too, so you don't want to miss them.

Sheryl Brady:

I do. That, and you know what? That's nine reasons right there. I have nine of them. So that's nine reasons for me to slow down. Also, I have a daughter who has always been one of those people who says, "Whoa, let's enjoy the breeze. Let's enjoy the walk." But, you know what? Sometimes life can, especially when you are a leader, so many doors can open for you, that if you're not careful ... I think one of the questions, I think that I read, that we were going to talk about today was the question like, "If you could get any of your mistakes back, what would you do?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah. Let's go there. Let's talk about that.

Sheryl Brady:

Or, decisions back, what would you do?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

And I was thinking about that so much and I believe this is why I've slowed down to the degree maybe that I have, is because that I wished that I would have not always said yes, just because there was an open door. So many things. I went to one church and spoke and from that one place, all of a sudden I started getting these phone calls and invitations to come to people's churches and speak. And I was, I couldn't figure out how in the world. Nobody knows me in Iowa, who's calling me in Iowa, they didn't even know I exist. Just places that I had never been in my life. And so many things opened up, and I didn't know how they were opening up. I didn't know what was going on. And I found out about a year or so later after I had received several hundreds of invitations to speak, I found out that I had went and preached for somebody who had a show on BET. And they aired that whole show for a solid year, that sermon that I was at their church.

Carey Nieuwhof:

For a year, just you over and over, and over again on repeat.

Sheryl Brady:

Over and over, and over again. And so, and the reason I found that out was because the pastor flew in and he said, "I just want to personally tell you that we have done this." And, I was so shocked. When I do mentorship classes, I always tell people, "I had a TV ministry and never knew it. I had a TV ministry I didn't have to pay for." And so that's where people were hearing. I literally did not know that, that's where that was coming from. And so one door led to another door, to another door, and the next thing I knew, I was saying yes to a whole lot of doors because when you haven't necessarily had an open door and God gives you one, you just think they're all God. And you don't slow down and you don't discern the doors.

Sheryl Brady:

And, we really have to do that because what happened for me is, I ended up so burnt out that still to this day, to this very day, I get triggers. You know what I'm saying? I get those things that say-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I do. What triggers you?

Sheryl Brady:

If invitations come in, if people say, "We want you to do this, we want you to do that." I really take the time now to look at it. And the first thing I'm asking myself, "God, do I have anything that's going to help where I'm going? Is there anything you've given me to say? Do I fit this group? Is it going to be a blessing to them and to me?" Because sometimes, I will just tell you I ran just because the door was open. I ran into it. But every door is not a blessing. It exhausted me and so still to this day I find myself, which ultimately it worked together for my good, but it took me through a whole lot of years of just being burnt out. I know what that feels like and it started out a wonderful thing, but it ended up wiping me out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really appreciate you sharing that and there's a lot of leaders, I agree, that leadership opens up all kinds of opportunities. And I feel like you're right in one of our meetings that we have almost every day with my team, because there's so many requests, so many opportunities. We're just in one of those seasons and I realize it's not going to last forever, but there's more speaking opportunities than days on the calendar. There's more opportunities to do interviews like this, where I've flipped the mic and I'm being interviewed, than we have time available in the calendar. And so I find that for our team, we're always asking the question of, "Which doors do we walk through?" To use your metaphor. And that the criteria that we use to make that decision keeps changing, because the offers keep changing. Our life keeps changing. What we're doing keeps changing. What are some of the filters you have found really helpful, to deciding what you say yes to and what you say no to?

Sheryl Brady:

Is it good versus God, and that this is spiritual, maybe spiritual for some of your audience.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But, what does that mean to you? Good versus God?

Sheryl Brady:

Like, is this just a good idea?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, right.

Sheryl Brady:

Because if it's just a good idea, I mean, I'm going to be a blessing to somebody. They're going to be blessing to me. But I found out that ultimately when I go, it takes of my strength. It always takes away from something. It takes away from their home life. It takes away from your church or your business or your family. So in some of those things, it's easy for us to see it as an expense, but it really is an expense. And I learned that toward the last years of my mother's life, because she had Alzheimer's and when I would leave her, it would take me a day, I'd go a day early and I didn't do the event, and come back the next day.

Sheryl Brady:

So I was gone for two and a half, three days. And I would see a toll that it would take on her body and her mind, because she didn't know where I was and it costs me in my mother's health and in the way that she learned to maneuver, or we helped get her through the last moments of her life. And it's, at that point I would just begin to realize, "Will, this cost me?" Okay. Yes, I'm being a blessing. And yes, they're being a blessing. But at the end of the day, there are some costs that I haven't calculated. I didn't count up the whole cost. And I found myself and I still am to this day. I'm like, "I need to count up the whole thing," because if it takes me away from my church, if it takes me away from my team, those are costs that matter.

Sheryl Brady:

And so that I think, maybe it's a good thing, but when it's a God thing for me, God always made up the difference. And I saw fruit. I saw fruit that remained, not just instantaneous fruit, but fruit that had longevity. I would go and I would minister it and I would come back and I would have something in me from where I went. So it wasn't just a one way thing. For years, I'm going to be honest and say, I went and I went so fast that I was just pouring my heart out and I don't ... My husband would call me up at the end of a service, I'd be in the hotel room and he'd say, "Hey babe, how was church?" And I was like, "I guess it was good. I think the people were blessed." And every time I would say that, I was a little more depleted and there is something that you can kick into that's just called robotics.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes.

Sheryl Brady:

And you're just doing it. And at that point, yeah it's maybe a good thing for some people but it's not necessarily a God thing. So I found myself feeling very empty and so that's important to decide, if this is good or if this is God.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a really helpful filter and I appreciate how you shared to calculate the personal cost, which I'm not very good at. And you're right, it does cost my marriage if I'm away sometimes or, and I'm not talking about we're heading to divorce court. I'm just saying no, these are hours you're not going to get back. And this is a time with your kids you're not going to get back. This is sleep you may not get back. And we do think robotically, and we think that we are indestructible and I learned the hard way 14 years ago that I'm not, when I burned out. And it sounds like you've been through tinges as well. And I think that's really important to remember. That's super, super helpful. Anything else yeah, you want to share on that?

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah, that we're not superheroes and that we're not Superman, we're not super women. And I think if we're going to go, we'd really have to have that reason to go. And sometimes what's hard is when somebody invites you in January and you say yes, and then here it comes, it's the date's not until August and August rolls around, and you're like, "I don't feel the same as I felt when I said yes in January." I think-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, you have been talking to me team. Sorry.

Sheryl Brady:

Yes. And so I think we really have to think it through, and don't be so quick to say yes. And, I can just share just briefly with you and then we can move on. But, I remember one time as I was really starting to come up in ministry, I remember I was invited to speak somewhere and I walked in and I was prepared to speak. I took the stage and just some things happened. And I never really got to minister that night like I wanted to. And I almost felt like the moment was, it might be hard for your audience to understand, but I felt like the moment was kind of stolen from me. And I remember going back to my hotel-

Carey Nieuwhof:

How so? How so?

Sheryl Brady:

This was before all of the burnout. Okay? This was, oh, this is at the beginning stages. And, you have a little bit of anxiousness. And I was grateful for the opportunity. I was speaking to several thousands of women, and so I was excited about it. But then somebody, the person that was in charge of the conference ended up taking the service and deciding that they felt like they needed to do something different.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Got it. Yep, yeah.

Sheryl Brady:

So anyway, so I-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Upstaged.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:03:04]

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah. So yeah, that's a great word for it. So I remember going back to my hotel feeling like, why did I prepare? Why am I here? What was going on? And I felt like the door had been shut on me and I was just talking to God about it. And Carey, I will never forget this, I was ironing my shirt for the next day. I was standing over the ironing board, tears were falling off my face and I was saying, God, but that's not fair, that's just not fair. And God said, Sheryl, He said, it's so clear to me, there are moments that God has said things to me periodically that I'm like, that's God. I don't care what anybody believes. I just heard God, He said to me that day, I'm the man in your life. And I'm like, "Yes God, you're the man in my life." And he said, no, He says, "You don't get it, I'm the man in your life and I will get every door for you."

Sheryl Brady:

You don't have to put your hand on that door, every door that you need to walk through I will open, I'm the gentleman in your life. You don't have to fight, you don't have to force, you don't have to flip out, just rest in me. And it was almost like I could see a grocery store back in, I don't know if they even make grocery stores like this anymore, but when I was a kid, we used to walk up on this little mat that when you stepped on the mat, the door would fly open.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I remember that, was it the camera or was the mat? Yeah, I remember that.

Sheryl Brady:

You know what it was? There was a sensor and that sensor sensed that somebody was coming, somebody was there and the door opened. And when I tell you that was like a revelation to me that Sheryl, you don't have to force, you don't have to push, all you have to do is be ready. And when it is time for that door to open, I will open it and that there, it's great, it's powerful but therein is where my struggle lied. Because I was like, but just because they all open doesn't mean I can walk through all of them. So I just had to be at the right time, at the right place. And there are practical things that you have to consider before you say yes, and one of those for me was count up the whole cost.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's so wise. I love your idea of I'll open the door for you. It's funny, hundreds of hours of interviews a year, but something Kevin Queen said last year on an earlier episode, we'll link to it in the show notes, is pray a door open, don't pry a door open. And that something that's been part of my last year so I've been like, okay. And it's so funny because sometimes you wait a little bit longer and sometimes the doors don't open the way you think they will. And then every once in a while the gates swing wide and it's amazing that way. I love that thought.

Sheryl Brady:

That's amazing. I pray a door open, don't pry. Because the truth of the matter is, I don't want to be in a room that I have had to pry the door open because it makes me like, do I have what it takes? Because there's a lot of people who want that moment, but you don't want to fail in that moment. And I feel like that's the difference between maybe a good and a God. I think when God opens that door, you got the goods and you're going to have just what the audience needs to hear you say, you'll have it. At least that's how it's worked for me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

This has been so good and so rich. So as we wrap up, you've got a lot of young leaders listening. I would love for you to give them some advice. You're like, okay, speak to 30 year old Sheryl and say, girl, here's what you need to know. All right, so what advice would you give to young leaders who are listening to say, hey, keep your eye on this one?

Sheryl Brady:

Yeah. It's been like a staple in my life and I keep going back to scripture, but that's me, that's my job. I've always, I try to live by the motto and the scripture that says how important having clean hands and a pure heart is. I feel like if I, and I say it almost everywhere I go, is that we just have to keep our agendas in check. We have to keep our heart right because at the end of the day, God is all powerful. He has no problem opening any door to anybody, He can do it. But you've seen Him do it for your life, I've seen Him do it mine. I mean the fact that I loved your podcast and now I'm on your podcast I mean, tell me God is not real, He's very real. But he has no problem opening a door but what God does have a problem with, when we take that opportunity and we mishandle it.

Sheryl Brady:

And one thing that God is not going to bless, is when we don't do right by people and when we are not, would we get our agenda in the way of his agenda? Let me tell you something, everything I go, everywhere I go, everything I do, even doing this today, none of this for me could have happened without God. And I say it so many times because I'm a high school dropout. Okay? And I don't say that proudly, but I dropped out of high when I was 16 years old, I was 15 actually towards the end of my 15th year, I dropped out of high school. And I look at my life today and I think, God, thank you so much for having a plan for me that even when I tried to mess it up, you still were faithful to me and you open things for me and you made a way for me.

Sheryl Brady:

You found a way to put me on Carey's show or to know people like Reggie or to know your circle of friends or to just put me in the life of a man called Bishop T.D. Jakes, to give me a wonderful husband and family. I should have been a statistic but I feel so rich in so many ways because it really didn't have to happen for me like it did, but God was merciful and He was kind. And so I feel like that whenever He does extend me an opportunity, I can't make this about Sheryl, I can't make this about me. I mean, ultimately I'm happy if anybody sees Him in me. But the truth of the matter is I didn't become the CEO of The Potter's House of North Dallas because I was so smart no, I am where I am because He fine tuned me and fit me into this place. So I think it's important that we keep our heart right, our hands clean and that we do people right and that we extend the love of Christ everywhere we go.

Sheryl Brady:

I think if we keep those things and it's like I said in my book, Don't Miss the Moment, let's not be so what's next that we miss what's now. Because here's what happens, on your way up, on our way up that's where we build in the system that holds us up when we get there. And if we don't build that system and that structure, we bypass A, B, C and D and just want to get up and hang out at E, you won't stay. You'll shoot up maybe, but you're going to come down just as quick. And it's in being faithful over every little moment that enables you to hang out there on top for just a little bit longer.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, this has been so good for the mind and for the soul. And tell us a little bit about where people can find you and the book online.

Sheryl Brady:

You can find the book at, pretty much anywhere books are sold and you can find it at [SherylBrady.com/Moments](http://SherylBrady.com/Moments). And I would just be so happy if everybody picked up a copy and just went through that journey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that Sheryl with an S just so you know.

Sheryl Brady:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And of course we'll have all the links in the show notes. This has been a joy. I've always enjoyed our time together, it's an honor to have you on the podcast and thanks just for sharing in such a real way.

Sheryl Brady:

Thank you Carey, it's been wonderful.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really appreciated how much Sheryl shared from her heart and I want you to know we're praying for your heart. So if you want more you can get more at [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode330](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode330) there are show notes there and we got transcripts for this episode, plus you will get links to everything we talk about. Coming up, we've got, What I'm Thinking About segment and I want to talk about the current crisis we're in. And one of the mistakes I've seen leaders make, and I want to suggest a paradigm shift for you and also for me. I mean everybody's using the word pivot, what do you need to pivot from and pivot into in this time of unprecedented change? Going to talk about that in a moment, but in the meantime, next episode, Gary Thomas on how to walk away from toxic people and how the classic Christian response of love them more, really isn't all that Christian. Have a listen to what's coming up next.

Gary Thomas:

My son who's married called me and said, "Dad, it's Christmas, we just can't make it, it's best for our marriage." I said, "If I'm healthy, I'd say, buddy, I'm proud of you, you're making the wise decision. I raised you to put your marriage first. We're going to miss you, I'm so sorry you're not going to be here, but I'm proud of you." I wouldn't make him feel guilty, I wouldn't declare war, I wouldn't punish him.

And I said, "We have got to stop feeling bad about unhealthy people having unhealthy reactions to healthy decisions."

Carey Nieuwhof:

So leaders that is coming up next time. If you subscribe, you get it absolutely free. And I've really enjoyed Gary Thomas' writings they've really helped me a lot. Well, now it's time to talk about What I'm Thinking About and like you, I'm thinking about what's happening and what's next. This is brought to you by ICM, make sure you check them out, help out somebody who actually is less fortunate than you by going to [ICM.org/Carey](http://ICM.org/Carey) where you can give and learn more. And then if you want some free social media graphics heading into Easter, go to [GreatNews.world](http://GreatNews.world) that is brought to you by our friends at Pro Media Fire. So I'm recording this about a week in advance of broadcast and I mean these things are so timestamped, right? What you say at 8:00 AM may not be true at noon anymore. So please hear that this isn't happening live.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But here's what I've seen in the first few weeks of the crisis. A lot of us who are church leaders who lost access to our church and this may be true for businesses as well, I know we have a lot of business leaders listening. What do we try to do? We tried to do what the NBA did, which was basically do a service with no people in it, right? Because of the restrictions on gatherings and public gatherings. And that was good for the first weekend and then the second weekend people were like, okay, we're going to try to do high production. But what is increasingly happening as I record this is that more and more of us are being confined to our homes. And first of all, I think more and more live streaming from homes is happening as I record this, that's happening with artists and musicians who are off the road who can't do conferences anymore.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And it raises a whole host of issues. And I think what we're seeing before our eyes is the collapse of one system and the advent of a new one, which is still uncertain. And that's why it's so important to focus on the mission, not on the methods. So what I saw in the first couple of weeks of this crisis as we lost the ability to assemble, is people were trying to recreate what we had. In other words, how do we get back to what we want? I'm also hearing as I record this from numerous church leaders saying that's what our people want, they don't want to see you in your kitchen they want to see church the way it used to be, business the way it used to be, restaurants the way they used to be, and I get that, I get that longing. However, I'm not convinced when this gets back to normal that normal is going to be what we had or that normal will be what we want.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And perhaps it's an opportunity not to try to recreate as we go through this transition period what we had, perhaps it's an opportunity to build what will be. I want to give you a very practical example from my life, one of the things I do is public speaking. And obviously all of my public speaking is off indefinitely, perhaps for the rest of 2020. I'm re booking 2021 but perhaps public speaking isn't going to be what it has been in the past. And as the economy collapses, is there even an economic base for what used to be? It's a great question to ask, but what I've realized is I'm home and it makes me ask the question, well, what is possible? What does this crisis make possible? And what it makes possible for me is the ability to get online and really help leaders in a real time basis. So here's a few changes I've made. I'm blogging a lot more, I'm blogging about what's happening. I'm shooting an Instagram TV series.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm actually developing that free course I talked about that we're going to release to church leaders next week called, How to Lead Through Crisis. What else am I doing? I'm partnering too with Barna Group and GLOO to start another podcast. All of a sudden because I can't be on the road, I can do a lot more digital because I've got a bandwidth of time that I didn't have before. What I've also realized, and this is the interesting pivot, is I will reach far more people through those few digital initiatives, like literally, probably hundreds of thousands of people that I can't possibly reach speaking. So what's a translation for you? Well, if you're a church leader, everybody you want to reach is online. So instead of trying to get back to what you had, why don't you think about the mission and rethink your methods?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now I'm not saying I'm not going back on the road, I'm not saying I'm doing any more live events, we're re booking some as we are, but perhaps there won't be as many. Perhaps I can have more impact and help more leaders in a more powerful way if I focus on digital and maybe there is that opportunity for you. Now what does that mean? It means repositioning staff. So one of my staff members, I employ a halftime person and you know what she does? Speaking and travel. Well, by the time you hear this, there's not going to be much of a job. However, we are creating new courses, we are launching another podcast, so there's lots of opportunity. So you might have to redeploy staff. You may want to think about some of your leading remote teams in the workplace. Well, you're saving on office space right now or perhaps you could in the future, you could invest in other team members, you could look at serving clients digitally, online. You can look at connecting with people online. I mean there's so many other opportunities.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So the big lesson in this, and we'll talk a lot more about this in the future, is rather than trying to recreate what you used to have, why don't you build what could be, and the way you do that is you focus on your mission. So the mission at your church is probably to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus. There are lots of ways to do that, you don't have to gather in a building to do that. In fact, you might be able to be more effective at that by reaching out to people online and in my company, our mission is to help you thrive in life and leadership. Well, I don't have to be in a room with you at a conference to do that, I can record another podcast like we have with the ChurchPulse Weekly podcast with David Kinnaman. I can launch an online course, I can do some IGT V series. I can be more active in blogging, there are lots of other ways. So you don't have to reinvent your mission, but you probably need to reinvent your methods and that's what I'm thinking about right now,

Carey Nieuwhof:

Everything's changing. Thank you so much for listening. Thanks for being here. I'm praying for you, I'm rooting for you and whatever we can do to help, please let me know. You can actually email me I never give out my email on this, but just drop me a note at [Carey@CareyNieuwhof.com](mailto:Carey@CareyNieuwhof.com) or hit me up on social, on Instagram I'm Carey Nieuwhof, Facebook, Twitter, [cnieuwhof](https://www.instagram.com/cnieuwhof) would love to serve and resource you. We are here to serve, we're here to help and I so appreciate you. Thanks so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

Announcer:

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