

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. Now, your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, hey, everybody. Welcome to episode 349 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, every once in a while you meet ... well, actually, no, that's not true. Every once in a while you do not meet a person like Bob Goff. We've had a chance to get together in numerous different settings, and I've had a chance to interview multiple times, on this podcast before as well. I don't even know the metaphor. It's like, this is the most fascinating conversation because it's like, you try to ground Bob with a question, and the next thing you know, he just blasts into orbit. It's absolutely fascinating. There is nobody I've ever met like Bob, and he's back on the podcast today. He is a New York Times bestselling author. He is a "recovering lawyer."

Carey Nieuwhof:

He's written a couple of books that have sold millions of copies, *Love Does*, and *Everybody Always*. He's the honorary consul to the Republic of Uganda. No, we're not making that up, and he's the founder of Love Does. It's a nonprofit human rights organization operating in Uganda, India, Nepal, Iraq, and Somalia. There's nobody like him, so we go all over the place. It's actually a very challenging interview. If you're an interviewer, you're going to have fun listening to this because Bob's just everywhere, and that's what makes him so amazing. Toni and I love him, my wife, Toni, and I just love Bob, and sweet Maria. Yeah, you're going to too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know most of you probably know exactly who Bob is, but if you don't, you're going to hear some stories you've never heard before, some paradigms you've never heard before. I try to pin him down on how he practiced law, which is a lot of fun. This is great. I think you're really going to love it. I get asked all the time, Carey, what podcast do you listen to? One of the podcasts that I really enjoy, in fact, a leader that I followed for many, many years is Michael Hyatt. If you haven't yet checked out, Michael Hyatt and Megan Hyatt Miller's podcast, *Lead to Win*, I would encourage you to do it. It's one of the best podcasts out there for getting practical leadership wisdom.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Michael and Megan share, from their experience, of more than 40 years of professional experiences. They've been where you are. They got the insights and the strategies to help you where you need to go and where you are today. If you're looking for practical advice, it's not just strategies to grow your business. They got plenty of that. They're about helping you prioritize what they call the double win, where you win at work and succeed at life. It's not just about work. It's bigger than that. If you're a leader who wants to grow without sacrificing what matters most to you, then I have to do is search for the *Lead to Win* podcast on Apple, Spotify, or your favorite podcast app. I listen on Overcast, by the way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know there's like 10 of you out there who do the same thing. Subscribe to *Lead to Win*. You'll get weekly leadership lessons to help you build the double win. They always rank in the top business

podcasts out there. There's one to add to your arsenal this summer. Another thing to think about this summer is how you're actually going to connect with your church. Some of you are actually reopening, some of you are not and cannot, and you're like, "Well, how do we keep everyone connected? That's why you've got to check out ServeHQ. They provide two services, TrainedUp and HuddleUp. It is an incredibly efficient way of tracking with everybody, connecting with everyone, training everyone and keeping your church together when it's never been harder to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They have the ability through TrainedUp and HuddleUp to send highly engaging mass video, text messages and video emails, no longer controlled by an algorithm, right? So you don't have to rely on someone else to get the message to them. You can do it directly through the ServeHQ apps. Your church will always be in the loop, you'll always know what's going on. Their safe chat feature lets you stay in direct contact with your people without worrying about inappropriate, private communications, which actually is an issue. It's like a smart, private social platform for your church members and volunteers, and ServeHQ's training feature, lets you offer engaging online video courses for volunteer training, member onboarding, even Bible training, leadership training. You can use their library of over 800 videos or create your own.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Check them out at [ServeHQ.church](http://ServeHQ.church), and get a free no obligation 14 day trial. That's [ServeHQ.church](http://ServeHQ.church). Get your free trial today. Well, with all that said, man, I am so excited to bring you this latest all over the place, wonderful, whimsical, powerful, man, stretching conversation with my good friend and a leader that I am so grateful to know, Bob Goff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Bob, welcome back to the podcast. It's a thrill to have you and be with you again.

Bob Goff:

Oh, thanks a million. What I'm enjoying is that I'm able to see you on Skype here. It's good to see your face, buddy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, thank you. Yeah. We're looking forward to being in person again soon, but we don't live in that world right now. Do we?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, but I'm okay with that. I think a lot of people are afraid they're going to lose their job, but I think there's a lot of people that are afraid they'll keep them. People, they've had three or four months on their own, they're like, "We're outta here." I think there's a lot of people composing their resignation letter. I got two words for you, I quit. Just mail that thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What have you learned in this pandemic so far? Because we were chatting a little bit. You have a property in Canada, and we closed our border to you, you closed your border to us, so you've been home bound.

Bob Goff:

You broke up with me before I broke up with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, that's true. We were first on that one, weren't we? But we'll get back together. I know we'll get back together.

Bob Goff:

That's just wisdom at so many different levels. That's all I'm going to say about that. But one of the things that we couldn't do is go to a place we love, and I think that's true for a lot of us, whether it was some work. I think a lot of relationships that were shallow relationships, as soon as everybody got sent home, they drifted away. Here's what it did, it left room for deeper relationships. We've had a friendship for years and I'm just so delighted that things have slowed down enough that we can actually spend some time catching up and talking about life and things that matter. I think that's what I want to celebrate during this time. Not because I'm an optimist and I'm an optimistic guy, but it's like earth threw the entire sock drawer on the floor, and then we get to match up which socks fit now.

Bob Goff:

I know your Argyle socks are tough to match with other ones, but to just say, "Okay, what's new, Bob? What's new Carey? What's this new thing look like?" There's all the things that we're capable of, like being a lawyer, you too, but we decided to go straight at some point.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you call yourself a recovering lawyer. Hey, we're going to talk all about Dream Big, the framework and everything, and congratulations on the new book. It's your third, which is incredible. For those of you watching, we will get to that. But I do want to ... Yeah, let's start here with your law career. When we met, which was probably five or six years ago for the first time, you were busy extracting yourself, and now call yourself a recovering lawyer. But you had a very successful law career. I think a lot of people who've read your books know the story of how you got into law school, but I'd love to know a little bit more about that chapter of your life, which was several decades, right? Practicing law.

Bob Goff:

Yeah. The biggest thing that I can remember about law school is Maria. I was super, super busy in law school until I met sweet Maria, and then I had all the time in the world for that girl. I remember she was going to bring 10 girls from high school. She was a young life leader. She was going to be a worker boss, and they were going to volunteer at this local camp. In a big hurry, I got 10 guys, and I just wanted to be within 10 feet of her. We were doing this, it was the first night of camp, and it was back, I think they were still improving pacemakers, because a woman, her pacemaker stopped and she did like face in the spaghetti. She was gone. I knew how to do CPR, and I'm trying to get Maria to like me these days, even get to know my name, but we got her going again. I know sweet Maria was thinking, "This guy is not much to look at, but he's helpful in a pinch."

Bob Goff:

Fast forward a little bit, and we just bought that camp as a family and with some friends, Miles Adcox, Jamie and Paulo. Jamie Kern, I don't know if you've bumped into her.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, I don't know Jamie.

Bob Goff:

But we decided to do something really beautiful. It started with me trying to get within 10 feet of my ambition, and my ambition, marry sweet Maria, make her sweet Maria Goff. Sometimes what happens is that a dream that you might have is a little bit ... it's a circuitous way of getting there. That's the best way I can describe law school. I just wanted to know one thing that everybody else didn't know and I decided to be a construction lawyer, and it wasn't because Jesus was a carpenter. It was just that it interested me. Then, after doing that for a lot of years in California, I decided to go to Washington state to be up a little bit closer to the border.

Bob Goff:

I commuted for 25 years. I flew up in the morning, I did my work, I flew home for dinner for a quarter of a century. Here's the deal, it's like that when you're raising a family, you must be present to win. I think the thing that I'm learning in my own journey is this idea of trying to provide for our family. Sometimes we were spending so much time trying to provide for our family that we're not providing for our family, and to remind ourselves that we're not like ... Maria didn't marry me because of my ability to produce money. She could have married an ATM and gotten one of those. He actually would've picked up his socks too.

Bob Goff:

But she wanted me to be around, and as much as I tried, I felt very distracted by the other things. Law became a distraction from some of the other things. I hope, perhaps like you, you made that transition from what you're capable of, which is practicing law, to what you feel a sense of calling to, which is to do those things in Matthew 25, hungry people, thirsty people, sick people, strange people, naked people, and people in jail. That's what I've been spending my time doing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Classic conversation with Bob, we just covered three decades and 17 different things in five minutes, which is the best Bob. It's a best. I want to come back to some of them, but I want to double click on some stuff. You commuted three states, if I've got my geography right. You went from San Diego, past Oregon, to Washington State every day after breakfast, and got home for dinner. Did you pilot your own plane or how did that work?

Bob Goff:

No, it was this guy called American Airlines, and another guy called Alaskan Airlines. I know this sounds nuts, but bear with me. We live way out in the bush in Canada, in British Columbia. The only way in and out is by sea plane, if you want get there any time soon. I started a little airline. I thought, "I'm a lawyer, I could start an airline." We started this little airline, we called it Pacific Wings, not knowing that there's an airline in Hawaii called Pacific Wings. I just figured, if they had a problem with that, they change the name and repaint their jets. We just kept the name, because I had an airline, and Alaska, and American had airlines we code shared. So I didn't have to pay for tickets to fly to work and back. Is that crazy?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. I don't even understand that. You actually started, because you can get into your cabin in Canada. Did you do most of your work for 25 years from Vancouver then, from that lodge? No.

Bob Goff:

From Seattle, but because I had an airline, Alaska Airline employees could fly on my airline for free, and so I got to fly on their airline for free.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's incredible.

Bob Goff:

It was commute. Just it cost me like seven bucks in taxes and I ate \$10 of peanuts. One of the things that I want to get at is this idea, if you find it ambition, and my ambition was Maria, and then my ambition was to be around the family, but you also have a tug, which is a vocation, which is sometimes a law practice, might take you somewhere else. I think you can find a really winsome way to do that. If you saw what the planes that we had looked like, they were mostly duct tape. But one of the things that you could do is a winsome way to get there, a winsome way to make these things happen. Sometimes people let the traditional way of practicing law get in the way of a better way to practice law. The traditional way of doing plumbing, or teaching, or whatever kind of advocacy lights you up, or pastoring.

Bob Goff:

I would say, can you do it? Is there a more fitting way, fitting in terms of how it fits, how God wired you to be? I'm a pretty optimistic guy, and I just thought, "Well, let's drive that thing around the block."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's such a Bob story. I don't know too many people who would start their own airlines to get to work. How long would that trip take you every day?

Bob Goff:

Two hours and 40 minutes. They called me Mr. G at the airport. I've done two adoptions for the ticket ladies behind the counter. Yeah, so I got to know them. At Christmas time, you know when he get your peeps together, I just thought of the terminal. I know the guys.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know everybody, and you're there every day, twice a day.

Bob Goff:

They would have my ticket waiting for me. They would see sweet Maria drop me off. They'd have the ticket out and I would just go by pick it up.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's incredible. So you did that every day for 25 years. Now, Goff rather, and DeWalt, right? You specialized in construction defect litigation. Is that correct?

Bob Goff:

Isn't that crazy? Yeah. It seems like such a long time ago, because it was such a long time ago. Danny DeWalt is smarter and better looking, and everything more organized than me. He actually lived in Seattle, and so we just commuted back and forth, or I just would go up and do my thing and go home. Danny now is at Pepperdine Law School, where we both teach.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. And you lecture there. Yeah.

Bob Goff:

Yeah. I also teach. I don't know if you've heard this, but I teach a class at San Quentin, and I tell my students at Pepperdine Law, "Don't end up in my class at San Quentin."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Which is, for anybody who doesn't know, it's a prison, is it not?

Bob Goff:

It is a penitentiary, capital P. But there's a whole bunch of guys in my class. We were in a small circle of men, and we were talking about how much time is still left to be served. There's not a lot of things to talk about, so this is something that everybody knows. The average unserved term per guy, excluding me 107 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you've got a little bit of time left on the clock.

Bob Goff:

They have had some setbacks. But we were talking about ... we'd gone through the prison yard, and everybody's pumping weights. I was talking about the idea of getting something off your chest. I said, "If there's something you need to get off your chest, what would it be?" We went around, and it was so beautiful as each man went through and talked about something, had been separated from their families, struggle that they've had, some shame. The last guy paused, and he said, "I've been in here for 20 years and I've told everybody, for all 20 years, I didn't do it." Then he stopped and he said, "I did it." I'll tell you, in that moment, he was more free than any man I've ever seen. He actually got this thing off his chest. My point is the beauty of authenticity.

Bob Goff:

If we could just get authentic with ourselves, your wife has written a beautiful book on marriage, and in a very authentic way, if we could do that with our work relationships, if we could do that with the people that were married to the children that we may have, or the circle of friends, to just keep it super real, and it can be messy and all that. But I'm telling you, I am not their teacher at San Quentin, I am their student. I, on this side, write these, I just finished a commutation petition. We're going to find some way to get that to the government.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you can commute the sentence of one of these people?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. I think there there's another guy that was in the class. He was a member of a gang, and the rival gang had killed his brother, so he killed that guy. So, he has spent his whole adult life in San Quentin. When he got out, I was his first call. He has never held a cell phone cause he has never been outside. He called me up, and he said, "I'm outside the wall." I'm like, "Buddy, tell me, there's not a bunch of bedsheets tied together." This is a guy, I said, how does it look? What's your first thought on the outside of prison?" He said, "You know what? I've got pockets." What the heck? I thought it was going to be something really deep and profound, but I realized it was deep and profound. You can't have pockets in San Quentin, because you'll just carry around the wrong things.

Bob Goff:

I told him, "Be really careful about what you put in those pockets." I think that was more words of advice to myself than to him, that I really want to be mindful about what I'm carrying around. Some of the guilt, some of the shame, some of the old narratives about who I used to be. Some of the lies about initials behind your names and all that. Just say like, who am I? Can I going to be really careful about what I'm putting in my pockets now?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you feel like, when you look back at Bob 25 years ago, do you feel that there were certain things you believed about yourself as a young attorney that you had to walk away from? You were, by every account, and I don't know a lot about your legal career. Number one, there's not a lot published. Number two, you don't talk about it a lot, but from the few people who know a little bit about it, they say you were unbelievable as a lawyer. First of all, you've freed a lot of people in your work in Uganda and around the world, etc, San Quentin. But if you got in the other side of Bob in a construction defect thing, it was a thing to behold. Talk to us about that season in your career, what you believed about yourself, how that's changed, and what law, practicing law for a quarter century taught you.

Bob Goff:

I thought I had to win all the arguments, and I actually got really good at winning arguments. But I just don't know if that's good advocacy. I think what I'm seeing in the wisdom of the men around me and women around me that are my teachers, is knowing the right arguments to lose. Never lost a case in 25-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I heard that rumor, and I didn't even want to say it, because I thought that can't be true, you never lost a case.

Bob Goff:

Yeah, and it's not because I'm an awesome lawyer. I'm an awesome picker.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know how yo pick your clients.

Bob Goff:

Yeah. If there's any chance I was going to lose, I'm like, nah. One of the things that I want us to do is be a little pickier about the arguments that we engage in. We don't have to swing at every pitch. Not every argument is one that you need to win. The only time I raise my voice is when I'm yodeling, but I never yodle. One of the things I think in our advocacy is to know why we're doing what we're doing. Like, so to remember that, and strangely, what that was is my undoing as a lawyer. Because at some point, it pivoted to providing for my family to actually a source of fundraising because we started doing stuff overseas, and you can make a lot more money taking a deposition than making cupcakes.

Bob Goff:

I thought, well, I'm not going to actually figure out another way because I'm changing, and that's when we wrote Love Does. I thought, yeah, yeah, so we'll just give all the money away, write a book, and they sold some copies and it ended up being the way to help make some of these other things happen. I got all of my firm together. We were in this tall building downtown in Seattle, and I knew it was time to quit because I got off the elevator on the 27th floor, and I walked up to the receptionist and she asked me who I was there to see. I said, "Oh my gosh, actually, that's my name right behind ya." I realized it'd been so long, I didn't even know the people that work there. That day I got everybody together in the biggest conference room we could, and I quit.

Bob Goff:

I just said, "I'm out." I gave the key, I took it off my ring, I gave it to a guy that had been working for me for a decade and a half, and I said, it's all yours. You don't owe me anything.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How many years ago was that? Was that like five years ago?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, six, maybe.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, six.

Bob Goff:

He said, "Are you kidding me?" Actually, he didn't say kidding, but that was the in word of what he reaching to say, and it was a stupid financial decision, but it was an awesome new creation decision. Here's what I'm thinking. If you're listening in, what's a new creation decision? You've had this wide spot in the road that you didn't want when earth stopped spinning a little while ago, so who's new you? I think you could do maybe what would be a courageous thing for you, and God never compares what he creates. I would say find a courageous thing for you, not a courageous thing for what would be courageous for Carey to have done or me to have done, but what's courageous for you to do?

Bob Goff:

I would say do that and see what happens, and this whole idea that God would be with us, Emmanuel, God with us. Even in the stuff that doesn't make a lot of sense. It's not going to end up with a great ending. You don't want to say the ending was, "So I quit my job, I quit all of my earning, and guess what? I invented like medicine." That didn't happen. No, I was just unemployed.



Carey Nieuwhof:

Bob, I see you using your advocacy skills in so many inspiring ways, literally ways that have inspired millions of people. How did you not lose cases? What are some of the keys to advocacy that you learned through law that obviously now you're using in life and in everything that you do, what are some keys to creating a great argument that can help people?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, I would say, and I'm lifting this from Paul in 1 Peter. He said to, "Be ready to make a defense for the hope that's ... be an advocate for the hope that's within you." A lot of people stop there and they don't read on, and it says, "but to do it with kindness and respect," because I just think you get so much further with kindness and respect. What I'm trying to do is measure these things that I'm thinking and then reacting to other people by doing it in a kind respectful way. What it does is it draws me back to scripture, not to my opinions. Because everybody's got an opinion. They're like ears, everybody's got a couple of them.

Bob Goff:

But just say, "What if we're kind and respectful?" Maybe to pause. You know in that cartoon when you have a thought bubble filled with things? I very rarely let things get outside the thought bubble. It's filled with things. I am thinking a lot, but I'm not saying all the things I'm thinking. I give them a little bit of period, kind of like Paul says, to check it against scripture, but to just pause, slow down a little bit, then give that a beat or two, maybe keep a couple of words inside the thought bubble.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a great idea. I see that in the stories you've told me and in your books and talks about dealing with witch doctors in Africa, and trying to help them change, or even, I'm sure working with the inmates at San Quentin, trying to see them in a way that the culture doesn't see them. How would you do that? Because there's a lot of business leaders listening to this too, and they're like, "Okay, Bob, I'm in your old life. I'm in the firm. I'm there." We're going to talk about dreaming big and escape in a minute before we're done. But how would they do that when it's a pretty cutthroat environment? What advice would you have for people who are in sales, in law, in accounting, in whatever, who are listening going, "But Bob, it's a pretty ruthless world in here." How would they do that?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. Well, I totally get that. I literally deal with crooks for a living, and it's a bad living because they do it nothing. But I always think of stories. It said, "Jesus never spoke to anybody without telling them a story," and it's not because I'm Jesus, I just want to be like him and understand my world better by an analogy. I've sailed across the Pacific to Hawaii two times. The first time, I did it ...

Carey Nieuwhof:

He drops in casually. Yeah, go on, keep going.

Bob Goff:

I was broke. Somebody needed their boat taken from Hawaii to San Francisco. I'm like, "I'll take it. Which ends the pointy end?" I remember pulling out of the Alma Marina, and glancing back at the Palm trees and all that. I saw this piece of kelp trailing behind the boat. I didn't give it any more thought. I

sailed that boat 1,800 miles. As we're going under the San Francisco bridge, I look back to see the bridge, same piece of kelp. I had dragged a piece of kelp across the Pacific ocean, and I think it killed some speed. What happened is that the kelp got wrapped around the keel, and the keel is actually serves a really important purpose. It keeps the boat upright. It makes you go.

Bob Goff:

But it also is a magnet for kelp. I think sometimes, our busy lives, some of the stresses that you have in work, you've got the keel, is the economic engine. It makes it work, but it's also a magnet for kelp, the things that will slow you down. What you do to get the kelp off the keel is stop the boat. You can actually turn the boat into the wind, drift backwards, and all the kelp will fall away. I think that idea of finding a quiet place to get a little rest that Jesus talked about in Mark, I think there can be some benefit to just slow it down a little bit, quieting it down. When I was in college, and I scraped together enough money to go to a Bruce Springsteen concert.

Bob Goff:

I went with three buddies, and one of the guys had the keys to my car. So, I was shouting to him like, "Do you have the keys to my car?" Because I needed to leave. The other guy thought we were in an argument. We weren't arguing. I was just trying to get the keys to my car, but the room was so loud that it sounded like an argument. If I can analogize that to today, the world is so loud, and it looks like we're having arguments, when we're really just trying to communicate an idea. If we can slow it down, let the kelp fall off, if we could quiet it down, go find a quiet place. If we could communicate what we need, we need to know who we are, where we are, what we want. If we could just say who we are, not like what our driver's license say, but who we really are, where we are.

Bob Goff:

I'm in a difficult marriage, I'm in a rough job, I'm in a wherever, and then just describe what you want. What I need is a break. What I need is ... If we could self prescribe to ourselves, but we got to slow it down. We gotta let the kelp fall off. The keel's not the problem, the kelp's the problem. You could think of these commonly, you referred to them as limiting beliefs. What are some of the things that got wrapped around? The kelp's not a bad one trying to screw up my trip, but it ended up slowing me down. I think if we can pause enough to do that, just take this big assessment that we have the time to do, and then to say, what are the things we want? I've been in 110 cities a year for the last seven years talking to people. I remember praying from Motel 8 like, "If I could just get home." I feel like three months ago, earth leaned over the rails and said, "What's your second wish?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know.

Bob Goff:

I'm like, wow. To be fully present where you are, I love it in the South they say, "Be where your feet are." Sometimes we're not where our feet are. If you're listening and you've got one of these iPhones, this is not your friend. But what you're doing, you're lying in bed. Your eyes are closed, but you're not asleep. You're not resting. You're thinking about work. What I want you to do, get out of bed, get fully dressed and then get back in bed. Because then you will realize that I'm actually at work right now. If you're at the dinner table and you're sending text messages, I want you to leave the dinner table, go get

a bag, get out of your sweats, get in your suit and tie. Everybody else knows you're at work right now. You don't know you're at work right now.

Bob Goff:

If we could have that kind of awareness about where we are and what's going on, and then just get real with that. No shame. Let's just say let's just get accurate.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One of the things that's an inspiring arc for me with the way I see your life, Bob, from what I know of you, and we've spent a bit of time together is, you saw that law practice as a means to a greater end. Again, whether you're pastoring a church, for those of you who are listening, or whether you're running a firm and you've got success, often, that becomes an end in itself. When did you start to see your law firm as a ticket to something bigger?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, I just started thinking of it as fundraising. I'd just go like, "Come on, let's go do this thing." It was a pretty good day job, but then-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Was that early on? Did you have that vision from day one or did that happen five, 10 years in?

Bob Goff:

61 now, I bet by 41, my love had gone somewhere else. I was in other countries. I started spending all this time over there, and I'm still popping to make sure things are going okay. But by 46, 47, I was like, "I'm out of here." It's like owning a Baskin-Robbins.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've had enough ice cream, right?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. By early 50s. It had to do with the age of my kids too, that as they started growing up, I started realizing, "Man, I really want to leave behind what would just work," and I wanted to do things that would last. I think practicing law is really honorable. Most of the professions, like bagging groceries, just very honorable way to earn a living for the people that you love and all that. But my love had shifted to saying, I really saw these kids in these war zones that were losing out on the chance to get an education. What we've been doing since then, maybe 18 years or so, is pivoting to starting schools in these countries and making friends with the folks that are in leadership in the countries.

Bob Goff:

I don't know if you knew, but our most recent school has been in Afghanistan. The Taliban won't let little girls learn how to read and write just because they're women, and that just chapped me. We started flying into Afghanistan several times a year. We started a school for girls. We just load them up with books. Get this, this is in the former capital of the Taliban.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Bob Goff:

It feels really alive, but here's the message to everybody listening. God isn't dazzled when you go across the ocean, he's wowed when you go across the street. He just wants you to do it right where you are. It sounds noble to go far away. It sounds like what Jesus talked about when a young lawyer like you and me said, "What's the big deal?" It's love God and love your neighbor right here. I want to be reminded about this. Again, God doesn't compare what he creates, but what he wants us to do is to be where our feet are. He wants us to be fully present, not distracted by all the things, not shouting over all the noise, finding quiet places, and saying, "Who's the newest version of Carey? Who's the newest version of Bob?" Hopefully, a kinder, more respectful version of that, one with kindness and respect towards other people. I don't always get it right, but I'm aiming to.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've challenged me a lot on that personally, and through the writing that you've done over the years. I got to say, yeah, that's one of the joys of getting older for me is like, "Oh, how's this year going to be different? How's it going to be different?" I love the fact that you saw your firm as a way to fundraise for the kingdom and things that were really important. Some people have that gift, but they don't have the bigger aim. They have the gift of making money, they have the gift of success at work, whatever they do, but they don't have a bigger purpose. That kind of morphs us into like dreaming big, which is your brand new book. Congratulations on book number three. Is it number three?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. That's a lot of words spelled correctly and a couple incorrectly. You got to know how to spell the word before you call it a typo.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Dream Big, man, Bob, I don't think I've ever met, and I know so many people who would say this, somebody who dreams bigger than you do. So, I'm so excited that you're doing this. There are going to be people who would say, even those who might be introduced to you by this interview. I don't know how many of those are left, not too many, but they would say, "Oh, that's just Bob. Who starts his own airline, and who just goes out and buys a camp, and who goes and decides, I'm going to educate women in Afghanistan in the former capital of the Taliban, and I'm going to go and teach a law school class in San Quentin. That's just Bob." What would you say to people who say oh, I could never do anything big with my life?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. There's a neighbor that lives across the way. She's with Jesus now, but we got a baby monitor for seven bucks, and she was living all alone. We've gotten to know our neighbors. She asked if we would be willing to listen in on her just to make sure that she's okay. For seven bucks, you're doing something that's right in line with Jesus. Jesus isn't going to talk about schools in far away places. He's going to talk about what you did with your neighbors. He isn't dazzled by all that stuff. If it isn't about the hungry, thirsty, sick, strange, naked, or in jail, it's just not going to be discussed. This woman, we heard a bump in the evening, and she actually had fallen over with this massive stroke, and we got to spend the last minute or two of her life with her.

Bob Goff:

If you can do that for seven bucks, just because you asked somebody, "Not trying to eaves drop on your life, but why don't you turn that thing on when you want me to listen, if you need somebody in the house with you in your advanced stage." Those are the things that I think we'll remember. The other stuff is off-putting actually, that's why I drive a 2001 Suburban covered in an inch of Cheetos. That stuff creates distance between people. I cringe at that. What I want to do is be like really engaged where my feet are. To say, can we do that one step of kindness?

Bob Goff:

I've never given sweet Maria a daisy that had more than three petals on it. The first time she looked at it, she's like, "What? Like defective daisy." Then she's like, "Oh, I get it. He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me." Don't even start. Guys, get the pedal count right. But one of the things that I want us to do is just delight in the simple things. Jesus heals people with withered hands. You and I, when we were connected a little bit earlier, it was on a phone on FaceTime, but I told you I can't handle on the phone because my hand has this quiver in it now. I got malaria on one of these trips, and ever since then, I've just had this, like something got disconnected. Not sure what it is.

Bob Goff:

So, I'm just aware of by limitation. It's not a big deal. I don't self identify as the guy with the shaky hand, but I go like, "No, I'm just aware of that." We would be like all over the map and be like whipping eggs to be having this conversation, not on the computer. I've had this mark on my forehead. Ever since I was kid, I had a mark on my forehead. I was at a dermatologist, he said, "You know, you don't need to have that mark." I'm like, "Really?" I just thought I was like ... He said, "No, you're ..." It took him two seconds. He just went ... I'm like, "Wow." It wasn't a pride thing. It was just like, some of the things we've been carrying around, some of the things we've been filling our pockets with, some of the shame that's been wrapped around our keel, I'm seeing a theme in my life that we can just deal with it.

Bob Goff:

You don't need to make it complicated and go far away. Go across the street, go take a greater interest in somebody else. I'm a Bible verse guy, not everybody is, but there's a great verse. It's in Philippians 2:20, is Paul talking about Timothy. He's a guy who takes a genuine interest in the people around him. You want to do awesome advocacy, take a genuine interest in the people. You want to touch a lot of life, take a genuine interest in your neighbor across the street. Nobody will know you for that you'll know you for that. Make these requests known to God. A God who says, "I know what you need to pray about before you pray about it." I think He was just making your request known to you, know what you want, and then say it. Find the words. I just think of, we keep the right words in the thought bubble and we can find the right words to express each other, we'll find our next way forward.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Why do you think Bob, that Christians seems so obsessed with comfort? I know I can sometimes making everything predictable, comfortable, safe. Do you see that? What would you say to that?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. I think we gravitate towards that. Stated differently, we want to avoid pain, so that's the finger on the hot griddle. You learn early on to avoid pain. Sometimes, if you equate vulnerability with pain, you

say like, "If I was vulnerable and then that person told somebody else, that was really painful." It felt like betrayal. You make a rule for yourself. You make this rule, "I will never express that kind of vulnerability with anybody ever again." We've all done that. We make these stupid rules. They're like the things that we write inside our cave walls, "Never be vulnerable." I think the process of our life and aging is going down the cave, like spelunking, turning on the light, and saying, "What's been written on the walls of your cave by you, what was written by other people on your walls? You're not handsome enough, you're not smart enough, you're not rich enough, you're not poor enough, you're not whatever enough."

Bob Goff:

Then sort out what's true and what isn't. Did you know this? That the eraser was created 200 years after the pencil?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I did not. No.

Bob Goff:

Yeah. Now that it's here, let's use it, and let's erase some of the things that just aren't true. If faith is a big deal for you, let Jesus tell you who you are and erase some of these lies. You need to identify what it is. You got to know the kelps wrapped around the keel. You got to just pause and to say, "I'm going to rewrite some of this. I'm going to revisit the rule that said, I will never go deep again. I'm going to rewrite the rule that said that my weakness is going to be the first thing people notice about me." People don't know about me. I'm like, it's super, super lonely, punishingly lonely. That's why I flew home every single night for 25 years. I just get super lonely being all alone, and then go enter a virus.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Bob Goff:

Everybody has to be lonely for three months. I'm like, "Holy moly," or three years, who knows. But to get real with that, to say, "How can I deal with that?" What I dealt with, the things that are difficult for me, is by being fun. I deal with my loneliness or insecurity, or if you're listening, you insert your thing here, and figure out how you dealt with that. Because it makes me not feel lonely. I feel like we're enjoying each other. I'm like, just me and you are connecting. One of the things is to understand how you were wired from the factory and what are your little peccadilloes and how are you dealing with them? Then just make friends with that. Just get real with it, and make the adjustments you need to make. But you got to do it from a positioning. You got to see the kelp to know you got to back down.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're good friends with Ian Cron, Ian Morgan Cron, who has written some great books on the Enneagram, and he's an interesting guy. You would be like a textbook Enneagram seven. Is that true?

Bob Goff:

Flaming seven.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Flaming seven.

Bob Goff:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I'm an eight with a wing seven. What's your wing? Do you wing six or do you wing eight?

Bob Goff:

Eight.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Eight, that's what I thought.

Bob Goff:

A guy that tries the death penalty against the witchdoctors. Like, "You're mine. You want some of this?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Stand up for justice. What are you learning about the difference between health and unhealth? Ian has been on several times on the show, so we'll link to the episodes he has been in. What is it like for you to be an unhealthy seven? What's it like for you to be a healthy seven?

Bob Goff:

Oh yeah. It would be like the front and backside of each wave. I would defer to all of you that know more about the Enneagram, but as I've reflected on it, the front side of the wave is where all the action is. That's where all the surfing happens. You get to go down the front side, but every wave has the backside too. That would be the unhealthy version. Unhealthy Bob is kind of medicating his insecurity by activity, just like needs to be active, active, active. There's got to be the next 10 things going. I'm just learning a little bit at a time that I don't need to be that way. One of the things that I got ... one of the first purchases for this camp, I found a 1962 Jeep Willys. Oh, I love this. It's an awesome car. It can climb hills like a billy goat, but here's the deal, it's got no brakes.

Bob Goff:

We go to the top of the tallest hill, and for a seven, this is like happyville. We just go downhill trying to miss the oak trees. What I don't want to be in my life, maybe if you're listening, if you can identify as being like all gas no brakes. The backside of the seven is when you're all gas and no brakes. You don't pause, you don't back it down, you don't find a quiet spot. I've tried to bake that into my calendar to say, there's a couple of months each year, I go to Canada, we bring the family, we just spend time together. We grow our own food. We make our own electricity off of glacier. We were green before it was a thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What is that Bob like? What is Bob up at the cabin in the summer?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, it's like a hippie without the tie dye t-shirt. I spend my time, I usually go and catch a fish in the morning, and then I cut it into a couple pieces and I put that in the crab traps, because I'm not a big fish guy, but I love crabs. I put them in the crab traps, and then there's a lot of those up there, because there's nobody fishing or crabbing. Then I usually go, we call it water logging, and a water logging is this. When a log, you know those big booms in Canada that tug boat? Well, a big Cedar stems will get waterlogged. They'll drop out the bottom. They'll stay under water for a couple days, and then they go vertical, and only the top four inches is above the water. But it could be a hundred feet long down below the water. You do not want to hit that with a boat. So, I get the binoculars out and I look for seagulls. All you need to find is one seagull sitting on top ...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Perched on the log.

Bob Goff:

Yes. Now, there is \$30,000 of wood in a hundred foot cedar log. I'm like, I'm going to send somebody kid to Harvard on that. I find the log and then I run out with my boat, and sometimes the log is only two inches around. I'm like, "Drats!" But sometimes it's three feet around. What I do is I spike it and I draw it, bring it back to shore, no boats get hit, and I got a big piece of cedar sitting on the shore. What I want us to do is to do a little bit of that, scanning that in your life, sometimes you'll only see four inches of something above the surface. You'll see some insecurity, you'll see some loneliness. You'll see a manifestation of that. This is what you're doing, this nutty thing you're doing is because there's an underlying something going on about a hundred feet of that.

Bob Goff:

What I want us to do is just figure out where the birds are. What they'll do is they're going to land, there'll be little markers in your life. You'll start seeing some things, and you go like, "Man, I think we need to do a little water logging here." That's how I spend the mornings. Then, in the rest of the day, I'm usually writing and just tickling kids, hanging out. That's been really great, and always working on projects. I love projects. This lodge burned to the ground, which was a bummer, but we rebuilt it, and it took 210 weeks to build ... I bought 150 foot crane. Oh, Carey, you have got to go. Talk about rope swing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Bob Goff:

With a body cast and enough insurance. We stacked all the logs and we're done.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's incredible. Congratulations.

Bob Goff:

But think, for somebody who's listening, it was a career, it was a relationship, it was something in a faith community, it was a betrayal, and it felt like it all burned down. You can either stare at the ashes or you



can get busy, and just say, "Let me build something equally beautiful." Let me just say, "I'm not going to have these setbacks be campsites." What I want to do is have a setback, learn from it, but get busy, and to say, once I don't. You're not medicating your anxiety by that, but you just say, "Why was it important enough for me to spend ..." I spent 26 of the 61 years I've been alive building and rebuilding that lodge. They say like, "Why would you spend half your life doing and doing again?" That would be an indicator of something that's a big enough ambition that's worth all that time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. You know the other thing that's really special? I haven't been there. We look forward to one day perhaps being there. But when we were at your 60th birthday party last year, and it was a great gathering, a night I'll remember for the rest of my life. But sweet Maria had the new table that was going to the lodge set up, and everyone at the party was encouraged to take a sharpie and write their names and an encouraging word underneath that table. At the very heart of that is people, which I think ultimately is a legacy you leave. Right?

Bob Goff:

I think that's the thing that's going to last. Say we're like praying for you, and what we're really doing is, sweet Maria and I, are lying on our backs underneath the table, looking at the names of people that have intersected our lives and what we've learned from them. I think that would be a great, whether your table is something that you got at a yard sale or you got at a fancy store, wouldn't matter. But just when people come over, it's what they did in Acts 2 and 4, it said they broke bread together and they had things in common. Having that moment where everybody's names, and we've good guys, bad guys, and undecided. We've had some people on the no fly list up there. I can get them into Canada, and they'll sign their names next to people that are sitting in high positions.

Bob Goff:

But we don't have them in the room at the same time, but one of the things that I want us to do is to find these things in common. Sometimes it's just as simple as a hope and a name. We'll just look at your names and just remember friendships. I think we get to recreate that. That's slowing down. That's quieting the space down, just letting the kelp drop away. It's like actually resting at night, just not your eyes closed.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There are so many stories in Dream Big, and it's an incredible book, a classic you, and yet, there's a framework as well. Part of what I love about you is, every time I think, "Oh, I'm visionary," and then I hang out with you, or read something you wrote, or watch something you did, and I'm like, "Oh no, I'm not. I'm not at all." You just kind of expand the balloon, and you're like, "Oh, it could be so much bigger." But you've got a framework too for dreaming big. This is a series of workshops you've done, that you're now sharing in a more popular form through the book. If someone says, "Bob, you know what? I just don't dream, or I dream too small." Could you walk us through some keys to dreaming bigger?

Bob Goff:

One of the things, I'd go again as a student. I'm a student of everything. Did you know when you go to land in an airport, you have to ask permission, like it's a thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, if you're a pilot, you have to ask permission.

Bob Goff:

Yeah, so when I talk to the tower, I'm so intimidated because I think I'll mess up stuff, so I always say I'm a student pilot, and then they're nice to you. I'd be like a student data, or student husband, student whatever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Student driver, be nice.

Bob Goff:

Yes. Student lawyer. You could have a tag over you that you all can ... but one of the things is to actually go as a student to these things, and we've done them for the department of labor, but we've also, get this, we invited 170 Afghan leaders to meet us in Kabul, Afghanistan to go through this. You know how many showed up? 170. It was so creepy. The first day went awesome. You know what happened the second day? We got raided by the Afghan Secret Police because they heard that there's 170 leaders here. It was going great right up until the time it wasn't. One of the things that I want us to do wherever your background is, a student, a teacher, a student teacher, a musician, whatever, is to say, what are your ambitions?

Bob Goff:

Just to identify what is it. What do you want? Then to say, "Why do I want it?" Because if you wanted to be popular, let's say, "I want to be popular." Just like, "Well, first of all, let's drill down on that to whom like, what's popular enough? Do you want to be popular to stranger? Do you want to be famous with your family? What are you looking for?" Then just ask yourself, "Why do I want it?" Because it'll uncover, say like, "I want to be popular because I'm actually terribly insecure." Say like, "I'm looking for applause." If you want applause, join the circus. But if you say, "I want more faith," then join Jesus. Join the poor, join people who are in their suffering, find people with kelp around their keel, and don't tell them what to do. Remind them who they are. You are a Wayfair. You're going to sail across this ocean. Is there anything I can do to help you get there?

Bob Goff:

Go Timothy on it. Take a genuine interest in their welfare, and you'll actually uncover some of your ambitions. So, know what you want, why you want it, and then importantly, decide what you're going to do about it. There it is. Instead of making it brain candy, like, "I want to build a dam and give fresh water to a million people." That's awesome, but if you don't have \$100 billion, you ain't building a big dam. But you could go to Home Depot, and for six bucks you could get a faucet. You could give one person fresh water, and then double down. Just go to people, next year, next week, whatever, but to find something, an action, like to just do it. It's not because God needs your help. I ask him every day if he needs my help, and he gives me the same answer, "No." He needs my heart.

Bob Goff:

To say, "What do I want, where is that coming from?" Then, "Why do I want it?" And then decide the action plan. There's a gathering they do in London, and they get a bunch of people in a place. I knew I was going to be there. It was May 16th of last year. I wrote to the Queen, and I said, "I'm going to be in

London on the 16th. If you're in London on the 16th, let's have tea." One of her ladies in waiting wrote back to me, she said the Queen is terribly sorry she can't meet with you. I'm sure it just tore her all up. But here's the deal, for a dollar in postage and one envelope, I'm talking to Buckingham Palace. That would be the difference between having ambitions. That's not a life ambition, but that was something happening in the moment.

Bob Goff:

I would say, get in contact, know where you're going to be and say, "Hey, can we make something interesting?" Find somebody across the street who needs a baby monitor so you can listen in at there ... it'd be creepy if you didn't let them know. So you could just be helpful to your neighbor. There's something beautiful about that. I think our ambitions come in small, medium and large, so have a little of each. Again, knowing that God isn't comparing this. Keep your eyes on your own paper.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Bob, people have got to get the book. It's inspiring. It's mind bending. Every time we have a conversation, I feel like I'm on a roller coaster, and I never know what hill is coming next, and what twist, and what turn, and what corkscrew. It's just riveting. Here's where I want to close. What's one question you wish people would ask you that no one asks you?

Bob Goff:

Oh, I think it wouldn't be just, "How you do it," or "What are you up to," but, "Who do you see yourself becoming this year? Forward looking, tell me about the next version, if it's really true that we're new creations every day." I met new Bob six or seven hours ago. He woke up, and I'm like, "Okay, new Bob." I've spent 61 years being old, Bob, but somebody said, "Tell me the guy that you're becoming in the next year. Tell me about who he wants to ..."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Who are you becoming in the next year?

Bob Goff:

Grandpa.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is happening now. Isn't it?

Bob Goff:

Yeah, that's been my ambition since junior high. I hadn't even gone out on a date. I didn't even know what girls were, but I saw what my grandparents did in my life, and I knew I want that. Instead of giving the world more information, I think I want to give the world more examples. I knew I wanted to be a grandpa because I knew how my grandpa made me feel. It happened, my daughter had a beautiful little son, and he knows one word, apple. An apple is an apple, but I'm also an apple. Sweet Maria is an apple. Everything's an apple, because it's the only word he knows. I think sometimes what gets us wrapped around the axles, we just don't know new words. I want to find newer words to describe familiar ideas.

Bob Goff:

If we can do that in our faith, and faith is important to you. Find another way to describe something. Dig a little bit deeper, change the camera angle on it. I think what you'll discover is more about your faith, more about what you really think. If I told sweet Maria, like, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you," she'd be like, "Dude." That would be so, "I'm over that." Be like, so it would be better to give her a daisy that had three petals, to say, this is just another way of me showing you that I love you. She isn't wowed by a defective daisy, she's inspired because somebody took the time to find a new way to express an otherwise familiar idea. That's the guy I hope I'm turning into. I want to continue to find ways to express that in.

Bob Goff:

I just know that we're in this thing together, Carey. Who flies from Canada to San Diego to surprise a guy on his birthday? Those kinds of expressions of love was just over the top. I want to make those kind of memories for other people this year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Tell me about your grandfather.

Bob Goff:

Oh, he was a fireman. He worked in San Francisco on the docks, and he worked the graveyard shift for 45 years, but get this, he never put out a fire. I don't even know if he knew how to. But you know what he knew? He knew how to love me well. My grandmother was the same way. She never got a driver's license, had a three-wheeled bicycle she drove her in town in. Every year, they would surprise me with something else. One year, I got a room in their house. They said, "This is your room." What was unique about that is, every time they use the room, for any reason, they walked inside, they put a nickel in a drawer and they called it room rent.

Bob Goff:

I felt so honored. When I'd go over to their house, I'd run upstairs to see how many nickels were in the drawer. It wasn't about the cash. It was about them acknowledging this is my room, and they remembered me, and they paid me room rent. Now fast forwarded here, at our house, Maria is like slipping \$10 bills. I'm like, "Stop it." But what I would do is I'd take all my nickels, we'd go to Disneyland once a year and I would buy my grandmother rock candy. It's like ...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Bob Goff:

Yeah. Like a gateway drug to diabetes, but it was this rock candy, and she would take this rock candy, she'd put one in her mouth, and I say, "It's candy." She's like, "I know what candy looks like. This is a rock." I'd go like, "No, no, no, no, try it, try it." She'd put it in her mouth and she'd act as surprised as she was the year before. She said, "This isn't a rock, it's candy." She made me believe I was the most amazing, the splendiferous creative guy ever in the whole world. I think that's the role that I want to play with this little kid that can only say the word apple. I want to make him know that he is the most creative, amazing kid ever. His vocabulary's small, but he's nonetheless, we're going to ... already start paying him room rent.

Bob Goff:

We have a crib upstairs, and when Maria and I go in, we put little nickels in there. If we can pass on those traditions, if we can value other people in that way, that's the guy I want to be.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know why we flew down to celebrate your birthday? Well, largely, we love you, but sweet Maria invited us, and that is the best. I think that's what this book is. In so many ways, that's the role you played in my life. It's an invitation to something bigger, it's an invitation to dream, it's an invitation to do all of that. Bob, on behalf of all leaders who know and love you, thank you, you're gift.

Bob Goff:

Oh, man. So grateful to be in worldwide family of friends. I just hope, if you're listening and something resonated that Carey had to say, or if you were thinking something along the way that you'll find a wide spot in the road, write yourself a note, but then actually do it, actually make the call, send the text, do the thing, do something that would be courageous for you, and then just watch what happens. God will do something really surprising with that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If they want to know more, book's available everywhere, but if they want all things that you're doing these days, where can they find you online?

Bob Goff:

Yeah. I had a hidden website, it's called BobGoff.com. I make it really sneaky, which is actually my email address as well. One of the things that I hope that people will do, particularly in this difficult time, if you do need a friend, if you need something that we wouldn't be going this thing alone. I just want to make sure that we acknowledge the people that would be listening to this might be going through a difficult patch. Just know you got friends, you had Carey, you got me. You can phone me. My phone number's in the back of every single book I've ever sold, which is pretty nutty. But one of the things that I want us to do is to stay connected to one another. Thank you for making this podcast a way for us to stay connected. I'm one of your listeners, I'm the subscriber.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Bob. You're one of the good ones. What a joy, thank you so much, and it certainly will not be the last time. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Told you. That was a tour de force. Was that not? Did we not go all over the universe in that interview? Like I said to Bob, man, every time I get together with him, I think, "I just do not dream big enough." His new book is out, it's out today. You can pick it up, and I'm sure it'll be on a bestseller list by the time this thing airs. Of course, if you want more, we have transcripts. You can get all of that at [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode349](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode349). Hey, I'm doing a What I'm Thinking About, segment. I was thinking about, "What do I want to talk about?" Bob stretches me every single time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I remember the first interview I did with him long before Love Does comes out, and it was before I was doing this podcast. I thought, "I've never heard a guy like this. This is incredible". What is it that great leaders do that others don't? I'm going to share that with you in just a moment toward the end of the podcast. In the meantime, I want to share with you what's coming up. This is one of those episodes we've put on hold in the spring because of Coronavirus, and now it's back. Ryan Hawk is someone I really admire. We get asked, pretty much every week, sometimes every day. It's like, "How do I start out in podcasting, in life, in leadership? Like, I don't have any influence. I don't know anybody. How do I build the career I want?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ryan Hawk is a master at that. He has interviewed some of the top names in leadership, including Jim Collins, Seth Godin, Liz Wiseman, General Stanley McChrystal, and he started with nothing. We talk all about that and so much more. Here's an excerpt.

Ryan Hawk:

Sharing first of all, some honest flattery, so honest something kind about them with specificity. That shows that I've taken the time to learn about them. "I like you because of X." "Carey, I like you because you're the combination of a pastor, attorney and podcaster and course creator, and you've written books and they have impacted me in this way," whatever it may be. It shows, at least, I've, at minimum, I read your bio, I have an understanding of what you do, and maybe take it a step further as to why that's impacted me in a positive way. Then I will shoot for some sort of uncommon commonality. If it was you and me, Carey, we're both podcasters. We both care about leadership. We both care about helping people, something along those lines.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. That's next week on the podcast, we got Ryan Hawk. Also coming up, subscribers you know, you get this automatically. Levi Lusko is going to be on a few times this summer. We've had a number of life giving conversations, so I'm like, "Yeah, let's just put them on there." Nona Jones, Henry Cloud, Jo Saxton, Dharius Daniels, Sam Collier, Danielle Strickland and so many more, and I've got like this long interview with Gordon MacDonald coming up this September. I only listen to the podcasts that I subscribe to. So make sure you subscribe and you can do that for free. If you haven't yet subscribed to Lead to Win with Michael Hyatt and Megan Hyatt Miller, I would encourage you to do that right now. They're great podcast. It will help you win in life and win at work. Check out the brand new offer from ServeHQ. Get a free, no obligation 14-day trial.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Keep your church together when you can't be together using their software. You can do that at [ServeHQ.church](#), and start your free trial today. Okay, now onto What I'm Thinking About. Well, I get together with Bob, and I'm like, "What makes him so amazing?" Again, having interviewed hundreds and hundreds of leaders, I sat down and wrote some of the qualities and characteristics that I see repeating again and again. I think most, if not, all of these are true of Bob. Number one, talk less, listen more. Bob's a great listener. He listens to people. He listens to, well, all kinds of people. When I'm in the presence of a really great leader, for example, Ravi Zacharias who passed away a few months ago, I just could not believe how much he listened and how much he just took an interest in me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You would think that leaders just talk, and talk, and talk, and talk. No, but they really care about you, and you never learn when your mouth is open. Listen. If you want to become a great leader, talk less, listen more. I find when you listen longer than most people listen, you hear things most people never hear. To me, a good interview is when I talk a little less and listen a lot more. Okay, number two, what do other great things leaders do? Ask questions instead of giving answers. I've seen this in Bob. He asks just incredible questions, and questions will break down your paradigms and your assumptions. Great leaders just rush to a question far more often than they rush to an answer. Number three, great leaders often stay quiet about themselves.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They don't walk in the room. I had to work so hard in this interview to get Bob to talk about his law practice. You probably noticed that, right? He's just doesn't want to talk about it. He'll talk about other people, he'll talk about his neighbor, he'll talk about sweet Maria, he'll talk about his kids, he'll talk about Afghanistan, but they stay quiet about themselves. I see so many leaders who are leading so much less online talking about themselves all the time. I just find when you meet a leader who tells you how great they are, they usually aren't. Great leaders honor others, not themselves. Okay, so fourth characteristic of great leaders that I've seen in common in all the conversations I've had. They connect instead of climb.

Carey Nieuwhof:

A lot of people talk about, "How do I climb the ladder? How do I get to where I want to go next?" Well, people like Bob, they just connect and it doesn't matter. They don't care about your title. They're just interested in you. I think you've heard this maybe, because I've interviewed Bob several times in many different formats, including on this show, but I've been sitting with him either in the green room or on the front row getting ready to speak at an event, a live event. When he puts his phone number in a book, he takes like up to a hundred phone calls a day, and he's just like, "Hi, who's this? Oh yeah, Sam. Great to meet you, Sam. Yeah, hey, I'm just about to go on stage. Can we talk a little later?" He actually takes those phone calls. I'm like, I don't even know how he does that. But anyway, he really connects with people and he cares about people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Just think about that, connecting rather than climbing. The final characteristic, and this is huge. This is so true of Bob, contribute rather than criticize. Contribute rather than criticize. We were chatting before we flipped the mic on. He said, he has thoughts that are not very encouraging, but he lets them stay in his head and he tries not to let them slip out on social media or into his discourse with other people. I find that criticizing versus contributing is almost binary. If you look at social media, you look at how a lot of leaders live, they just criticize, criticize, criticize. You can't build yourself up, I'll tell you, by tearing other people down. When you're ready to criticize, flip it and say, how can I contribute instead?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Maybe that's buying a \$7 monitor and making a difference in someone's life as Bob talked about. Anyway, those are some principles. I'll tell you, this was fun. This was like trying to tame a stallion, which is impossible, but so great. I look forward to many, many more years of great conversations with my friend, Bob Goff. Hope you enjoyed this one. Thank you so much. We're back with a fresh episode next time, and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

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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.