

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 357 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. My guest today is JP Pokluda, an expert on reaching young adults. We talk about online preaching, why you would hire a YouTuber to help you preach better online and so much more. And I know you're going to love it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And this episode is brought to you by Lead a Better Team, my brand new course that launches in August of this year. It's coming soon. In the meantime, here's a free download for you. If you text BETTERVALUES to 33777, you will get my Three-Step Guide to Developing Better Value Statements, something that was really hard for me. And this episode is brought to you by BELAY. Text CAREY to 31996 and get your free download of Things to Delegate to Save 15 Hours This Week.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I love BELAY, have worked with them for many, many years and use them many times myself. And it's so good to have JP back on the podcast. JP currently is a lead pastor of Harris Creek Baptist church in Waco, Texas. Prior to that, he was the leader of The Porch in Dallas, Texas, the largest young adult ministry in America. I've been there a couple times. I'll tell you, it's no exaggeration, it's huge.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And he's the author of several books, including Welcome to Adulthood and his latest one, Welcoming the Future Church. And in that book, we touch on it, he inspires ministry leaders to attract and retain younger generations. They are the future of the church and without them, we're all kind of lost. And so we go all over the place. We recorded this episode in the, I think probably first month or two after Coronavirus kind of erupted.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And so we talk about the pivot to online teaching. Which by the way, for the record, I think is here to stay. And we got to get better at talking into a camera or in the case of podcasting, talking into a microphone. What are some keys to that? And he shares some really surprising things I haven't heard anywhere else. So if you don't know JP, you're going to really enjoy this episode.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And man, I got to tell you, have you ever struggled with your team? I know I have at different times and it can be so difficult. I talk to a lot of leaders and you know what they say? I either have to micromanage these people or I need to get a whole new team. And you're frustrated. And sometimes you're frustrated with culture, right? And here's what I believe. I don't believe that people quit jobs.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Most of us who listen to this are employers in one form or another, your team will not quit their job. You know what they'll quit? They will quit managers and cultures. And that's why I created the Lead a Better Team course. Now it's not available, it's coming soon. But I've got something for you today I'd love for you to grab.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a cheat sheet, a short, quick process on how to create cultural values and a stronger team culture. Some signs you need to work on your team's culture. There might be toxic people in your team or organization. Maybe people talk about each other rather than to each other. There's a bit of suspicion or mistrust or staff are perhaps not performing at the level you know they're capable of, or only a few of your team members seem to be bought in and you wish you could clone them, but there's just not enough of them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So if you've had any of those problems, here's what you do. Text BETTERVALUES to 33777. I will give you my Three-Step Guide to Developing Better Value Statements, which is a way of creating a much better culture. So that's a little advance morsel for my new Lead a Better Team. Just text BETTERVALUES to 33777 then next month we'll bring you the whole course. But I'd love for you to get that in the meantime.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And let's talk about time for a moment. I talk to so many leaders who are just slammed. I mean, the crisis has made it crazy. What if you can have another 15 hours this week and next week and the week after? You know what the key is? A lot of that is delegation. There's some things you can probably get someone else to do. Maybe your emails or scheduling or booking travel or planning meetings or your expense reports.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It might sound scary because most organizations, churches, companies are small and that's because leaders struggle with delegation. Well, our friends at BELAY are offering a free download of Things to Delegate to Save 15 Hours This Week. BELAY is revolutionizing productivity with their virtual assistant bookkeeping and social media strategist services for churches, not for profits and businesses alike.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So here's how you get it for free. Text CAREY to 31996 to get your free download of Things to Delegate to Save 15 Hours This Week, you can get it today. Love bringing you free stuff, love bringing you partners like BELAY. So before we get to today's interview with JP Pokluda, I just got to let you know, hey, every once in a while the settings on my microphone, on my computer default to my non-podcasting mic.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And if you're wondering, why does Carey sound so tinny? That's what happened in this interview. Anyway, it was too good an interview not to bring it to you. So if you happen to notice things like that, which I do, my mic quality is not what it normally is during this interview. But I think you're going to love the interview anyway. So without further ado, my conversation with JP Pokluda. JP, welcome back.

JP Pokluda:

Hey man, thanks for having me on Carey. So grateful for you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Great to reconnect. And I'm kind of asking all my guests this, but this'll be on in the summer, but how's life changed for you in the last few months? I mean, as it changed for everybody, but what has been the impact of the disruption on you?

JP Pokluda:

Well, a lot more board games, a lot more walks. I think my dog is tired of going on walks. But professionally, as soon as COVID-19 hit, we gathered everybody in a room and I just addressed the staff face to face. I said, "Hey, this will be the last time we gathered like this for the foreseeable future, I don't know how long." And so we just wrote our mission and we said, "Hey, what is our mission in the midst of a global pandemic," on the board.

JP Pokluda:

And we said, "How can we grow the church spiritually when we can't gather?" And so that's what we began to spin our wheels around. And the way that we do that here in Waco is we have small groups, we call them life groups. And I had just cast a vision in front of the church. I said, "Listen, we are one church with hundreds of campuses around the city and those campuses are your small group."

JP Pokluda:

And I said, "Because we may not be able to gather here soon, and if we can't gather in this building, we're going to keep gathering in those smaller groups." And I said that having no concept of a global pandemic, that wasn't on anyone's radar at the time. And I was just casting vision for the importance of small groups, but lo and behold, that's what we've been doing, is everybody's role on staff pivoted to being what we call a life group shepherd where they're checking on these groups every day, they're calling the leaders, they're praying for them, they're asking what they need.

JP Pokluda:

They're removing confusion, removing barriers and removing obstacles and resourcing those groups. And then on Sunday, we're doing everything. On the weekends, we're doing everything we can to provide excellent content for them to gather around a screen and to watch. And so even after we open this summer, God willing, we're going to continue to ask those who are in a life group to do that for the foreseeable future. And then whoever doesn't have a life group, they can gather here. But yes, it's like how do you shift this 2,000 year old tradition we call church? That's what I've been working on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's interesting too, is in the last year or so you went from a large church in Dallas, Watermark, leading there, really it was the largest young adult ministry in America. 7,000 people ish, who are meeting in different locations. And I was there one Tuesday night when you were leading The Porch. And you hear often people say, "Oh yeah, it's so massive." But you can not get a parking spot for miles.

Carey Nieuwhof:

People were packing that place out, which was incredible. And then you move to a rural community with a very historic church. So I mean, you're leading change, not in the context of Watermark, which was pretty much pivot ready and digital ready but with a far more traditional evangelical church. So can you talk about how ready you were to make the switch to digital when COVID hit?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah, it was so interesting because I had seen something that we needed work really well, and that was just God's kindness to me. But when this hit, we didn't have the cameras we needed. I mean, we didn't have the technology and resources.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like most churches, right?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. And so I was just like, "Okay, what do we need? What does this look like? How can we provide something excellent online when we don't have even the resources to do that?" And so we started creating a list. All right, what do we need to be excellent? And I would watch my kids so we would prerecord the service. And so I sat there on a Sunday morning with my family. And so my kids are 7, 11 and 13. And when their daddy came on, I'm telling stories about them, Carey. And they're nodding off. I mean, they're not paying attention. I mean, they're checking out, they're watching birds out the window.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So the sermon is literally about them and they're falling asleep.

JP Pokluda:

I know. And I'm like, "This story is about you, you got to listen." But what would happen is they would watch YouTubers. If I let them all day long and that's this generation that's coming up, they don't watch TV, they watch YouTubers, they love YouTubers. They would watch Collins Key until the sunset, if I let them. And so I'm like, "What is it about this guy? How is he engaging them so well when I, as a professional communicator can't?"

JP Pokluda:

And so I started interviewing YouTubers. I mean, I was like, "What are the things, the best practices that you do that engages?" And so what we did Carey, which is different than for a lot of people, I know they're doing live streaming services, but what we did is we did a service and then we took it into post production and did a lot of work in post production with things popping up on the screen, animations, things of that nature that we thought would make it more engaging.

JP Pokluda:

We took the camera, we got a mobile setup and we began to go on site. And so like this past week, I was talking about a sunset was in the illustration and we recorded that service at 7:30 PM. So the service started in broad daylight and it ended in pitch darkness. I mean, and you got to see all of the colors behind me as the sun set directly behind me.

JP Pokluda:

And I didn't even really address that. It just kind of went with the message. And so trying to think about those things that will engage the listener and the viewer through a screen is where we began to spend all of our time. And it wasn't expensive things, it was creative things.

JP Pokluda:

So I tried to bring the most creative people that I knew in a room and just say, "All right, what can we do? What should we do? What does it look like to... again, that mission, how do we grow the church spiritually when we cannot gather and be as engaging as possible?" And so that led to some really fun ideas. And so constraints are the birthplace of innovation. And so it was fun to see what to watch those people innovate.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I would love to double click on that and find out a little bit more about what you learned from YouTubers. So you're right. Typically, what happens is whether you're broadcasting live on a Sunday morning with a crowd live, on Sunday morning to camera, or even from your home. We're all kind of like talking heads, it's the 20 to 40 minute monologue, right? Maybe you got a TV, maybe you got some illustrations and that kind of thing. What makes YouTubers different? What did you discover, and how have you changed your messages? You gave us a couple of examples, but I'd love more on that.

JP Pokluda:

Well, let me start by saying, and I don't mean this in any insulting way towards somebody in fact, I mean it as an encouraging way, but if you think about people, pastors who have large TV presence or online presence, they're almost a parody of a person. I mean, they have these big personalities, they're very animated. And it's why people make fun of them because that you can, because they have such distinct character qualities and traits. And so that's true for YouTubers.

JP Pokluda:

I mean, they will get up there. And everybody knows what it's like to watch somebody who's boring. Just kind of the talking head, the wa wa wa, the Charlie Brown teacher, if you will, versus someone who's not boring, someone who's fun to watch. If you were people watching, you would choose this person because they hold your attention. And it's almost like Jim Carrey in a movie, right?

JP Pokluda:

He's an over actor. And so for that reason, he's fun to watch, and people like him are fun to watch. And so that's one thing where the YouTubers nail it. But then with that also, as they say something, if we're going to prerecord something or we're creating something, it doesn't even have to be the weekend service, it could be an equipping video or something along those lines.

JP Pokluda:

We can then take that into post production. And we didn't have somebody who was good at that. And so as I began to think about, "Okay, who do we need to hire in the midst of this?" Because there's a lot of needs. We need a CFO, we're looking for a director of operations, kind of executive pastor, if you will. But I'm like, "We need to put all those hires on hold and we need to find content generators, people who are really good at generating content."

JP Pokluda:

So I called a local YouTuber and I just said, "Hey, will you work for us part time? Can we bring you on on contract, one, to consult with us, but two, to help us to create video resources?" And so I think a lot of what I learned from them, it happens in that post production creation. What does it look like for things to pop up on the screen and to edit and to not just be a talking head in an auditorium, but to go somewhere creative?

JP Pokluda:

And then the other thing they all said to a person Carey, which plays into something else you and I have talked about before, and I'm sure we'll talk about again, is just this idea of you got to be real. You got to be authentic. Don't get up there... When I talk about animation, I'm not talking about anything fake, I'm talking about being absolutely real.

JP Pokluda:

And then even creating opportunities for them to see behind the scene, to show you our process in creating this thing that you're watching and what does it look like for us to brainstorm and to let them in some of the content creation before it's actually created.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So what we'll do is we'll link to one or two of those messages in the show notes that people want to see an actual sample. Is that fair? We can do that?

JP Pokluda:

Sure, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Get the link. So you can go and see it yourself. If I'm drilling down too much, just tell me, we'll move on.

JP Pokluda:

No, ask anything.

Carey Nieuwhof:

This is fascinating. So what were some of the top lessons? Why did they say our usual style is boring, and why we not connecting with your 11-year-old? So you got little things popping up, and I haven't seen the message. So I'm asking, like most listeners, it's like this is really intriguing. So if I hired a YouTuber, what specific changes would they start to make?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've mentioned a few, like be real, take you behind the scenes. What would they do with length? How many cuts would they make? I mean, typically, right? If you look at a three camera setup or a two camera setup, which a lot of churches would have on a Sunday morning, you're not changing camera angles that often. Are they doing handheld? Are they doing single lens? Let's get nerdy here for a second.

JP Pokluda:

And that was so fascinating because old production would say just this idea of having the moving camera and in the worship getting the keys, getting that shot and it really-

Carey Nieuwhof:

The boom arm, right? Isn't that what you call that thing?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah, you're right, exactly. The boom or whatever it is, I don't even know. But with a YouTuber, it's a webcam and they're talking to it. It's like a GoPro. And so it wasn't that we needed more and better and those kinds of things. And honestly, Carey, I'm in the middle of the experiment.

JP Pokluda:

So I'm still learning and still thinking about, because here's things I'm wrestling with and this may be helpful or not. But I think about with a YouTuber, it's like I can say, "Okay, let's go in the Bible," and the Bible can just appear, right? And in my hands, we can do that in editing. But that's a little bit cheesy. And so I haven't pushed the envelope to that point because that's where I'm wrestling?

JP Pokluda:

Is that cheesy? Is that like, okay, I'm not going to watch that, this isn't like some Vegas magic show, this is my Sunday sermon. So how far can we push the envelope? What does that look like? But they all said, "Hey, you need to be authentic. Let them see behind the scenes, let them see you wrestle with things, let them see you set up, let them see the mistakes and some of the outtakes, if you will."

JP Pokluda:

And so those are things that we've done and we continue to consider. I think there is something to length right now. You're not going to want to watch something through a screen, as long as you do in person. I mean, that's been consistent across the board. The post editing, hey, when I say my point, it can show up on the screen in different ways.

JP Pokluda:

It doesn't just have to be in the lower thirds like always like it shows up on IMAG. What does it look like for that to pop up in a creative way? One of the sermons we did, it was the whole sermon was split screen. And so I was on half of the screen and then the things I was saying were popping up on the other half. We've experimented with sitting down just kind of more casual. We've had other people there to make it more conversational.

JP Pokluda:

We've experimented with onset. We've experimented with okay, when I think about that Linchpin illustration, like if I'm talking about a roller coaster, can it be at a theme park? That kind of idea. And so those are all things that we've done and continue to consider every week. Right before you and I jumped on here, I was in a text message like, "Okay, where do we want to be this week?"

JP Pokluda:

And I'll just tell you, we're thinking about shooting the sermon at an airport because it's on decisions and it talks about options and different gates and that sort of thing. So we're trying to find an airport that we can shoot the sermon at.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Isn't that interesting. We had a thing for years, we were double portable church, two campuses, and we would do the week delay. So shoot it at the broadcast location and then play back online and et cetera, after, end with the other location. We're three campuses now, we were before COVID, everybody's a single campus all of a sudden, but we synced up live.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But long story short, in order, you can't do Easter a week late. You can't do Christmas a week late, come December 31st celebrate the birth of Jesus. That just doesn't work. So what we would do is we would do on location shoots. I did an Easter at a graveyard. You mentioned the whole sunset sunrise thing. I did that one for good Friday Easter. It's like good Friday, the sunset, we went to black Easter Sunday, I filmed it over a sunrise.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And all that kind of creative shooting and then we just went back to normal and talking heads, but we did to solve a problem. And what these YouTubers are telling you is, "Oh, that may actually be the future." So curious, does this take you more time now to produce a message, or are you spending double the time you used to record? And when you think of total time, including broadcast time, like Sunday mornings are six, eight hour investment, depending on where you're at, message rehearsal time, if you had to add that all up, is this actually more work?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. The time is reallocated. And so it's different. You're spending less time outside of the service, in the planning and those kinds of things. But some of this is my wiring Carey, I want to say that. But rather I'm like, "Hey, let's just go and try stuff. Okay, we got to do that again. Let's move that shoot."

JP Pokluda:

On Easter, you said this, I almost thought you were messing with me. Because our theme this Easter was grace to gardens. And so we started shooting in a cemetery and then in the middle of the service, we did a song and then you came back and I was in a garden. And so it was that pivot, right? And so we're not trying to trick anybody. We're being obvious with what we're doing.

JP Pokluda:

In fact, this past Sunday the sun was setting behind me. But then when you came back to that last worship song, it was broad daylight. Because we had shot that before and we're not trying to fool you. We're using those kinds of illustrations obviously in an apparent way. And so did I answer your question?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. But so your total time isn't more, but you just have more creative teams on it. And how long is your typical message right now? I mean, we're a couple months into this, this will be broadcast a little bit earlier.

JP Pokluda:

And so on the time, the time allocation, it's shifting. It's just changes where we put the time and you think through, okay, we need to create more time than the typical hour and 15 minutes. That was a normal service in the past and we're shooting it live. Well, now we're giving ourselves a three and a half hour window to shoot that service because we may change set and we may go somewhere else. We're going to do worships, those kinds of things. And a lot of time is spent in post production, in editing. But today the message is 35 minutes, when yesterday it was 45 minutes. By yesterday, I mean pre COVID-19.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. So you've only shaped 10 minutes off. You're not down to 20 or that kind of thing.

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. 15, a TED Talk. We haven't gone there yet, but we're still in the experimental phases. And so we're trying with everything and we're kind of seeing what works and we're surveying them. We're asking questions and we have the big rocks that won't change. We're going to continue to teach the Bible, that won't change. But how we teach it will change.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Now you've got a more traditional church that you're walking into. What has the response of the congregation been, your audience, to the changes they've seen?

JP Pokluda:

Our initial mission statement was we want to grow the body spiritually when we can't gather. And I added that spiritually because I didn't want anyone to think that we were trying to grow and saying, "Hey, we want to grow in numbers when we can't gather." But we've seen that. That's what's really cool, is just even in teaching, I just taught through Acts 2, and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

JP Pokluda:

And in this time when we can't gather, people, they found us. And I'm not talking about just overseas and in different places, while that happens, the people that I'm most excited about are folks locally that we can help assemble into the body. And so we're actually holding membership classes with people who've never been inside our church building, but they're going to join the church in this time. And so that's been really fun to think about, "Hey, how can we recreate that?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Have you gotten any members who've been around a long time who were like, "Excuse me, just a minute. This is not a sermon. What is all this stuff popping in and the quick edits and the setting?" And that kind of thing. Have you heard any of that?

JP Pokluda:

I haven't anyone say this isn't a sermon. This whole thing has been very divisive, right? You have people on both ends of the spectrum. And so there's people from day one, "Like what? We're not gonna meet? This is crazy. Do we not have faith?" And then you have people that are like, "Hey, I'm not going to step back into a building with other humans in it till 2022."

JP Pokluda:

And then you have everyone in between. You have people that if you ask them to show up, they feel like it's a death sentence. And then you have people that would have preferred to never stop. So I get more of those kinds of complaints, but not around how we're doing it. I think if you do something excellently, excellence honors God and inspires people. And so I'm just thinking through, "Hey, how can we inspire people and honor God?" And as long as we're doing that, I think they at least should be content.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One of the things I'm thinking about in just speaking directly to church leaders, but I mean, if you're a business leader you've got application here because all of a sudden your website, your delivery became more important, right? If you're a restaurant it's like takeout just got really, really important and your online ordering system got really important.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want you to think moving forward, and I know we're still in the middle of it. We haven't emerged into a new normal even by the time this airs. But when you think about 2021, assuming that at some point you're going to be able to gather in person again, are you going to reallocate staffing and budget to invest more in online? Or are you making any changes in that area?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah, without a doubt, I don't know how you couldn't. This is a fault line in the history of our world and our industries and our businesses, our economies, and certainly our church, big C church and our churches. And so if we're going to cross this fault line, or when we get on the other side of this fault line, it's not like the internet's going to go away Carey.

JP Pokluda:

I mean, that's here to stay and it's not like the iPhone is going to go away. I mean, it'll be reinvented and it will become something different. And so I would love to. And this is why I get so excited about you, and I don't mean this in just empty flattery. I love the way that you're inspiring people to run ahead. Because as you look at the history of the church, I mean, some of the most beautiful art, the most beautiful music, the most beautiful production was coming from the church.

JP Pokluda:

The church was the Hollywood of days past, it was the New York City. It was the LA of years past. And so I think we can be that again if we begin to think innovatively, "Hey, what does it look like for us to teach people in the most compelling and beautiful way? What are the new songs that need to be written?" And I don't even mean songs literally. It's interesting Carey, because I've released a book in the midst of the Coronavirus, in the midst of an epidemic.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Congratulations on that.

JP Pokluda:

And I had sent to you and other friends just around the world a copy with a letter, and in the first paragraph I said in the movie Ready Player One, there's this lady who attends church by watching through virtual reality goggles. And so I sent friends just a small gift of VR goggles, virtual reality goggles. And I said, "Who knows what the future of the church is going to look like?"

JP Pokluda:

Now this is before this happened. So while that's in transit in the mail, right? Coronavirus comes our way and then churches started... I mean, I was like, "Lord, what are you doing?" It just felt weird. And my friend Propaganda got that and he called me, he's like, "What did you know?" He posted something, he was like-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What is this?

JP Pokluda:

He was like, "What did you..." I was like, "Man, I didn't know anything." And so that may be it, we may attend church virtually. And I don't mean just watching it on a flat screen. I mean, we may put on goggles and turn to our right and left and greet our neighbors. And that may be the future.

JP Pokluda:

I don't pretend to know, but I hope we find out and I hope businesses learn from us. How fun would that be if we're not following the Apples and the Googles and the Teslas, but the Elons are calling us and saying, "Hey, how are you thinking through this? Because I've seen the way you're doing it. I've been really inspired." That's what would bring me joy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I love that line of thinking. I really do. It's interesting. And I mean, I get it. People are in shock, people are reeling. But in the first week or two of the Coronavirus, and I do tend to run ahead, I've been talking about digital church for years as you have, and church online. But all of a sudden people are like, "Why are you so big on this? And what do you mean the future is digital?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

And there are a number of people who left comments that just said, "Well, what if the internet breaks? We can't get into our building now, what if the internet breaks?" And I'm like, "I'm pretty sure they'd figure it out how to fix that. I'm quite certain that the internet would not be down very long." But it's interesting how often church leaders, not just theologically, but just methodologically, have a very conservative approach to life and to things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I know what I know, I can be good in this space. What would you say? Because I've had this conversation with a few leaders. Because you've operated online, but you've also operated in other space. What would you say to leaders who would say, "Look JP, I've spent a decade. We're a very successful church, we know how to do it. And then the methodology broke as a result of the disruption. And I don't know whether I want to learn a new skillset." What would you say to... I just want things to go back to as close as they were before, as close as we can make it in the new normal. What's your word to them?

JP Pokluda:

I'm going to answer that question. And first I'm going to answer the question, what if the internet breaks? To that I would say, who cares? It's not broken today, right? I mean, we have it today, we have to use it. If it breaks tomorrow, if we go back in time, if there's some post-apocalyptic era that we just can't even see right now, fine, we'll adapt to whatever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If we're all on the forest hunting and gathering, then we'll figure it out.

JP Pokluda:

But we have to pivot today with what's available to us today. And so to the person who refuses to innovate, just wants to go back, I would just say it's something that you and I've talked about before. If you're not reaching the future of the church, your church has no future. And that's what I would say to them.

JP Pokluda:

And honestly, I would say, "Hey, find my friend, Carey Nieuwhof. He has a lot of resources on burnout, and I'm concerned that you might be there and not realize it." Because the second we say, "Hey, we no longer want to innovate," something else is going on. We're tired. And I understand, I want to give people permission to be tired right now, to be challenged.

JP Pokluda:

And Carey, one of my first emotions in this was frustration because all my friends were like, "Isn't it great we slowed down and we're going on walks and so I can't go to work?" And I didn't feel that, I felt tired. I mean I was like, "Man, slow down." The second this hit, it felt like I started a 40 yard dash that never stopped. And so it didn't feel like slowed down at all initially, and so I get that.

JP Pokluda:

I understand if you're tired momentarily. But if you get to a place where you say in ministry in general, not just pastors and preachers and teachers, but in ministry in general, if you're like, "Hey, I don't want to innovate anymore," then I think something else is going on and you need help. And I don't mean that in a jab kind of way, I mean that in a sincere like, "Hey, please get help." Because we always have to innovate.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that's a really good word. And I'm concerned some days and I have to watch this in my own life, but don't let your fatigue make your decisions for you. And when fatigue makes my decisions, I do not

make great decisions. And I think that's a good word, and things are always changing. Disruption happens even outside of a year like 2020, people get disrupted all the time, it's just that crisis accelerated it. On that note, anything else I've been asking every leader I can this question, do you see this thing that we're going through as an interruption or a disruption? How do you even view it?

JP Pokluda:

In some ways it's both. And so it's an interruption to what we were doing and I think if I'm tracking with the question, it's a disruption in that there are some things we won't go back to. And it's changed us, the whole fault line, it's a fault line in the church's history.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You use the whole fault line. I love that imagery of a fault line.

JP Pokluda:

And so it shifted. And there are ways that we pivoted. Now, there are things, I really hope, as I said, that I'm going to give somebody a hug again. But there are some things that we're not going back to normal. That's what I said. I wanted to do a series called New Knormal with a K, like we think we knew normal, but we didn't know normal, normal's in front of us. I thought it was good too, my team shot it down, man. I thought it was good. I'm going to tell them Carey Nieuwhof said it was good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Did it get voted down?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah, I got voted down on that one.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think you're a genius, so there you go.

JP Pokluda:

You and my mom are the only two people-

Carey Nieuwhof:

For the record, my new series is called the Rise of the New Normal at Connexus, but I didn't think about the K.

JP Pokluda:

There you go. That will take it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You thought you knew normal. I'll take that.

JP Pokluda:

I love it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's great. Interruption, disruption, any other thoughts on what's changed for you? Let's frame this another way. This isn't happening, but let's just say we turn a light switch on, everything that was possible in February is possible again. Borders are open, you can travel anywhere, let's assume there's a vaccine, Coronavirus disappears. What are some of the permanent fundamental changes that you think have happened in your church as far as you're concerned?

JP Pokluda:

I think from inside the church, from a staff perspective, it is investing in that production, investing in video, investing in social media, investing in online prep platforms, investing in content managers. And so our whiteboard as we think through who are we hiring and our staff and our hierarchy and org chart has shifted.

JP Pokluda:

I think the way that we create resources for life groups will change. I think that post-production mentality on a lot of resources that we create will be a shift. That was nonexistent in the past and that's not going away. I'm really pleased with just the response and engagement on that. Creating opportunities to have conversations online. So Netflix jumped ahead on this with watch a movie with friends. Zoom is obviously doing pretty well right now.

JP Pokluda:

And so what does it look like to create opportunities for people to have conversations online that beyond just commenting on a blog? And so we're thinking through that. Assimilation online Carey. So we kind of drew a line. We think that we can assimilate people into the church virtually but we can't assimilate, or it's not ideal to assimilate people into small groups virtually.

JP Pokluda:

So we think that it's awkward if you show up to people who are now supposed to be like close friends, and the first time you meet them is through a screen, that's difficult. But we do think that we can give them the resources they need to know and understand our church and kind of become a part of it virtually. And so those are things that...

JP Pokluda:

We're asking the question, why is that? Why do we feel that way? What's the difference? And so, again, we're still in the middle of the experiment. But I want to say this. I think this is the perfect time. And I hope every leader is doing this to ask the question what do I need to stop doing that I was doing? What do I need to start doing that I wasn't doing? And what do I need to keep doing that we were doing?

JP Pokluda:

And so I know those aren't new questions. I know that there's nothing aha moment about that. Everyone's heard that before, most leaders have heard that before. But this is the time, we have to do that. And so I gathered with the elders this morning and I said, "What are the things that we don't want to carry into the future?" The things that we've always done that we don't know why we've done them that maybe people before us who've long been dead came up with them, and we don't know their why.

JP Pokluda:

And we've just continued it, but we don't really... Their why is not wrapped around our hearts. Our hearts have not engaged with the why. And we need to ask ourselves, are we willing to put that down? Or is it a sacred cow for us? We are afraid that that's going to disrupt too much of our pattern. Because if anything, we're seeing that we can survive disruption, right?

JP Pokluda:

And that's not a statement of pride. I just mean, listen, I've read the back of the book, the church isn't going anywhere. And so God wins. And so now we're just playing the game in the middle that we've seen the scoreboard and the final score. And so how do we play the game faithfully? And I think technology has to be a part of that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you think your church and you had quite a bit of experience with this when you were co-leading The Porch, but do you think the future church defaults to online? Do you think the larger... I don't know how many people you see, how many people fit in your auditorium on a Sunday morning, your sanctuary?

JP Pokluda:

Well, so we have two campuses. Here we have a thousand and then we have another campus downtown. And so we'll do two services here and then a third one downtown. So-

Carey Nieuwhof:

So how many in person?

JP Pokluda:

2,500.

Carey Nieuwhof:

2,500 on a Sunday morning. But it's a good sized church. But do you imagine in the future that the majority of the people that you'll be reaching will not be in the room with you?

JP Pokluda:

Well, let me answer that a number of ways. In a strange way, I think that's the challenge for me. We're going from a large church out here and in God's grace have developed an online platform that in some ways our online presence has always been bigger than who's there watching, which is something that I've wrestled with and think through like, "Return on time investment, what do we need to be doing?"

JP Pokluda:

That's a whole nother podcast we could talk about. But when Judah Smith did the church home, everyone dogged on him, I'd say everyone. A lot of people were like, "Hey, you can't go to church at home," and now we all have to. And so I think there is something for us to learn from that, but I also don't think... And Carey I hope we never replace human interaction with something of technology.

JP Pokluda:

And so what I mean by that is I think that face to face contact, that physical touch, that will always be necessary in the church. I mean, of course, Hebrews 10:24 and 25, "Do not forsake the gathering together, as some are in the habit of doing, but continue to encourage one another, all the more while you see the day approaching."

JP Pokluda:

And so I know we have a lot of freedom of what that gathering together can look like, but even as we do more and more with technology, I hope we don't stop gathering together. I hope we don't stop breaking bread, I hope we don't stop meeting in homes. And so we have a lot of freedom in how we do church.

JP Pokluda:

And that's why I think every church has to challenge themselves to ask the question, "Do I have sacred cows? Am I holding onto traditions too tightly? Are there things that I think of that define church for me that aren't outlined in the scripture, but they're just what my parents did and my grandparents did and so those are what I'll do and they're what I hope my children will do?" That's kind of crazy. That's not honoring to the Lord. Those are the things I think we have to hold loosely, but where the scripture's firm, we should be firm and where it's flexible, we should be flexible.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's interesting. You were hinting at this, but I'm sure even at The Porch, there were as many or more people watching online than there were in the room.

JP Pokluda:

Right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I think a lot of us were kind of there pre-COVID, but I just wonder on the other side, if that kind of reverts to the default. And not the idea that you're going to have a small percentage of attenders who never show up in person, I think that's got issues, but the idea that I'm out of town this week, or I've got a sick daughter, or we're just going to do home church this week and tune in. I wonder if that'll just become more of the future and if that's okay, we just have to adopt.

JP Pokluda:

It depends on how. I mean, I think anything's okay as long as they're under authority of elders, I would say. Hebrews 13:17, is that right? My address might be off there. But I think as long as we're defining church appropriately, then I think we can have those freedoms. I mean, I'll just speak numbers with you.

JP Pokluda:

So we have 2,500 people that will minister on any given Sunday, but our first week not gathering here, we had 9,000 people tune in, we believe, as best as we can tell. And so I was just like, "Wow, we grew more than 300% just overnight." And how do we think about that? And I'll always say my priority will be the assimilation of the local body.

JP Pokluda:

In 1 Peter 5, I've been charged with, "Shepherd the flock among you." And so I view the person that lives in my neighborhood different than I do the person who's on another continent watching and being encouraged. And I'm glad they're watching and I'm glad they're being encouraged, but I don't feel responsible for their soul, Carey, in a way that I do feel responsible for that person who's here locally, and they're a member of this church. And so I think as long as we continue to consider that, there's a lot of freedom in the how, and we should do what works, where the Bible allows us the freedom to do what works.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a good approach, that's healthy approach. What would be some keys to digital discipleship? If people are going to be toggling in and out of your church, here one week, gone the next, part of a small group, watching online. What are some keys to doing discipleship when they're not in the room?

JP Pokluda:

I think calling them to engage the lost, equip the saints and be empowered for service. And so those are the three things that we spend a lot of time thinking about. And so what does it look like? I mean, that was the first thing when all of this happened and we were sheltering in place. It's like, how do you evangelize? How do you share the gospel right now?

JP Pokluda:

And so we were just like, "Okay, we have to use technology. Text people, you'll call them, FaceTime." But something else we did, Carey, is we put signs in yards and we wrote our cell phones on them and just said, "Hey, do you need help or prayer? Call me." And it had the person's phone number in there. So their neighbors knew that they could call them at any time.

JP Pokluda:

And some amazing stories came from that. I mean, major, incredible stories of life change because of these silly cardboard signs or plastic signs we put in everybody's yards. So we put them here on the curb at the church and said, "Hey, come pick up your sign, write your cell phone number on it, put it in your yard." And so that was one way that we continued to engage the lost and then equip the saints.

JP Pokluda:

I think discipleship online, it looks like as the universities have already shifted to, places like Liberty and I mean, correspondence learning around the world, how do you teach through a screen? And so you do so in some of the ways we covered it just in a way that engages people and using post-production to your advantage and then empower members for service.

JP Pokluda:

I mean, that's the one where I think we have to continue to give people opportunities. Virtually we give them the opportunities, but then they can go and physically serve and that's going to require them being present, I would think at least

Carey Nieuwhof:

Editorial comment, I absolutely love how your definition of discipleship includes evangelism. Thank you for that.

JP Pokluda:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And it doesn't happen enough in the church. So you got a brand new book called Welcoming the Future Church. It sounds like we're already having that conversation in part, because like you said, it was a semi-prophetic release right around the beginning of the disruption. What are some keys to influencing, reaching, discipling the next generation?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You got a few in your book, you talk about being real, teaching the whole truth, et cetera. Can you walk us through some of the keys? Because you've had just tremendous success fruit in influencing that next generation so I'd love you to walk us through some of those ideas and keys.

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. I mean, just as we walked through that book, I mean, the first chapter is something you and I've talked about before is just the importance of authenticity and transparency and so being real. I mean, at some point in the church history, this was lost and I don't know why pastors get up there and think they have to have it all together.

JP Pokluda:

And I think the comparison game, social media puts that pressure, but the people that the future most resonate with are those who are honest and authentic. They'll talk about the fight they just got into with their spouse. They'll talk about their struggles with sexual sin, or they'll talk about their temptations. They'll talk about the ways that they struggle with materialism or whatever that is. And they're not trying to hide it and put on this facade that the illustrations are actually coming from that.

JP Pokluda:

And people lean in and they say, "Oh my goodness, this person's like me." No one wants to follow someone who walks a foot above the ground and is perfect, unless that person is Jesus, but even he didn't walk a foot above the ground. And so what does it look like for us to be real? And last time you and I had a conversation I went back and it was episode 236. I mean, you are getting after it.

JP Pokluda:

But I just talked about how one time I had looked at an image on Instagram that I shouldn't have, being a recovering porn addict. And it was initially an accident, but I lingered too long and it was sinful, it was a decision, it was a choice, it was a willful disobedience. And then I was preaching. And before I was just convicted of that.

JP Pokluda:

And so before the sermon, before I said anything about what I was teaching, I just confessed that. I said, "Guys, I want you to know yesterday I made a terrible choice to linger at an image on social media of a woman that I'm not married to. And I'm so sorry, I'm grieved. And I sinned against God, and will you guys forgive?" And I prayed, and then I moved on to the sermon. I preached the sermon and it was the

longest line I've ever had of people wanting to meet. And they just said, "I've never heard a pastor say that."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I remember that story of all the things we talked about and I think about that often, and I think how rare that is. Powerful story. Walk us through the tension, JP, because you're right. There are some pastors who are like, "I struggled with a temptation when I was 18." It's like, "Yeah, but you're 48." So stories from 30 years ago, that's great.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We all struggled with it, but we still struggle with it. Where is the line between what to share and what not to share, or how much to share, or the right audience? Because I always believe you shouldn't keep secrets. But usually what would happen if you're not keeping secrets is there's a couple of people who know, and the people who should know know, but how do you know when you can share that more publicly?

JP Pokluda:

I heard somebody say something once, I'm going to say this upfront, that I don't think this is right. So I think this is wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure.

JP Pokluda:

And they said there are some things you share with some people, there's some things you'll share with everyone and then there's some things you share with no one. And I remember thinking, "Gosh, I don't know." I'm like, "God, I need a chapter and verse with that. I'm not sure where the Lord would say that." And you fast forward the tape, and he was exposed. He had been caught in moral failure a few months after that.

JP Pokluda:

And it was defining in my growth as a minister, because initially when I heard him say that I wanted to believe it, but it felt inconsistent with the word. And then it was really affirming to me how that's not true and that's really dangerous. And so Carey, there's parts of my youthful naivety that I just think I don't want to manage anything.

JP Pokluda:

And so I got to a place in my life where if there's anything in my life, I'm willing to tell anybody, and I don't care who knows. Now I will say in regards to platforms, it can be dangerous because this one thing where everyone wants to reach out and you can drown the ship when you're struggling a little bit, and I can understand how guys would manage that. But I still think air to the side of, if I think, should I tell them, I just tell them, and if I make a mistake, God's going to sort that out.

JP Pokluda:

I tell them in faith. And so anything that does not come from faith is sin. And so I'll just air to the side of acting in faith and saying, "All right, I'll tell anybody anything. I just don't want to manage information." And that makes me not the best person to entrust secrets to, and I know that.

JP Pokluda:

Because I don't want to put things in a particular file in my head where it's like, "Okay, that's the file. I can't open up with certain groups of people." I want to air to the side of complete transparency. And so that's my flavor of leadership. That's my opinion, most of what the scripture says when it says, be children of the light. And so that's the side that I air to. And there are people who I respect that would say that's dangerous and that's okay. We can agree to disagree.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why does that resonate so well with young adults?

JP Pokluda:

Because they're so sick of anything fake and all they know for a lot of them, sadly, Carey is fake church. That experience where it's like, "Hey, we're going to go in here and let's act like we have it together. And like we weren't fighting in the car on the way here and love each other and let's present like we're the perfect family. Because we don't want the Smiths to know we're not the perfect family because we're in competition with them. We got to keep up with the Joneses. So let's go."

JP Pokluda:

And they're burnt out on that, man. And it's satanic, it's not scriptural, it's unbiblical and I think it grieves the heart of God. And God has nothing to hide. There's nothing about the character of God that he would want to keep from us. And he's not a God of confusion. And so if I've been made in the imago dei, if I've been made in the image of God, then what am I trying to hide from people? Certainly nothing good.

JP Pokluda:

And in my own life and in my own journey, a lot of healing that I've experienced has come from exposing sin. And so I pray often, every week I pray, God mercifully expose my sin. If there's something I can't see, would you mercifully expose it? And it's going to be exposed man, one way or another, either in life or in death, it's going to be exposed. And we've seen it time and time again. And so I just, Lord mercifully exposed my sin.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What would you say to leaders who are afraid that if they're more vulnerable, authentic, real, people are going to lose respect for them?

JP Pokluda:

They will. They're going to lose respect for you, but a lot more are going to respect you. And so people who are terrified of being authentic and vulnerable and transparent are going to lose respect for you because you challenged them to be something they're terrified to be.

JP Pokluda:

But people who are filled with the spirit and people who are following Christ, they're going to be drawn to you because I know Jesus was incredibly transparent and honest and authentic, the most authentic person that's ever walked the planet earth. And so if we want to be Christ-like, we're going to be authentic and the right people will be drawn to you.

JP Pokluda:

And every leadership decision you make, you're choosing your problems. That's the reality. In anything you do, anything you say, I resolve to be this, or I resolve to do this, you're choosing your problems. And I really like the set of problems that come with being completely transparent.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a good word, that's a really good word. What are some other keys to really connecting with the future church, welcoming them, getting to really make a connection with the next generation?

JP Pokluda:

I would say, in leading them in general, the how is so much more important than the what, Carey. And so in generations past, you could just tell somebody what to do and out of a work ethic and just kind of blind obedience, they would do it. With Gen Z and Gen Y, Millennials, the Generation Z coming up on the scene, they need to know the why.

JP Pokluda:

And so if you're impatient as a leader, if you kind of have this attitude of, "Hey, you don't need to know the why, just do what I say." You're not going to inspire them, and I don't think you're going to reach them as a minister. And so I think you have to spend a lot of time on the why. Let me just give you an example what this looks like.

JP Pokluda:

There's two kinds of leaders. If I have a task that we have to do, let's just say we've got to go in the parking lot and pick up trash. There's a leader that's going to be more tactical and practical, pragmatic, if you will. "Hey guys, there's trash in the parking lot, my guess is 786 pieces. There's 700 of us. If we each pick up around 120 pieces, we should be good. Let's give ourselves this much time, walk up, when you see a piece of trash, pick it up."

JP Pokluda:

He's saying what to do, right? And even how to do it. But then there's another kind of leader, he gathers everyone and says, "Hey guys, we're going to change the world today. And we're going to make it a better place. And there's some visitors that are going to come on our property tomorrow, that if they came on the day, they'd be turned off and they wouldn't return and we'd hinder the gospel."

JP Pokluda:

But because they're going to come on tomorrow because of what we're about to do, they're going to be endeared to Christ and our place is going to look a little bit more like the kingdom, and we're going to go out there. And the way that we're going to change the world today is we're going to beautify our place. We're going to make it more beautiful. We're going to bring Shalom, we're going to bring the kingdom.

We're going to bring peace. And the way that we're going to do that is we're going to pick up trash." And people want to run through a wall.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They pick up trash right now.

JP Pokluda:

They want to run through a wall and that's so important, just inspiring the next generation is going to be so important in our efforts to lead them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I can see leaders pushing back right now. And as an older Gen X, I got the, "Hey, there's garbage on the ground. Pick it up." But what would you say to leaders who are like, "Really? We got to keep motivating people? We have to like, you're going to change the world. Isn't that the problem with the next generation?"

JP Pokluda:

No, you don't have to. I mean, you can let your organization die. You don't have to. And it's just like I said, if you're not reaching the future of the church, your church doesn't have a future. And so I've had the same pushback. I mean, as a reminder, I taught at a seminary and I told that story about being authentic before the message.

JP Pokluda:

And I had pastors say, "Hey, you can't do that. You can't use that word in a mixed gender audience talking about pornography. You need to present to be holy." And I wept, Carey, over them. And I mean, respectfully, because these are people I'm sure have done a work of God and I'm thankful for, but I wept over them because I just thought, "You will not reach them."

JP Pokluda:

And so no, every decision we make is a decision to reach them or not. And some people will not have the patience to reach them. And that's the reality. You're going to say, "No, I will not change my methods. They need to do it because I said so." And that's great. You keep interviewing them, keep going through the cost of turnover, right? Keep going through the cost of attrition.

JP Pokluda:

And eventually you might find a young person who will do it because you said so, right? And it doesn't matter if you think they should or not. And you're going to just pay a really expensive price in an effort to find them, or you can learn a new way, which is inspiring them. And the choice is yours.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let's talk about work. You and I have messaged back and forth on that on multiple occasions and it's something close to my heart. But there are some significant changes in how the next generation approaches work. And I realized one of them early on was like, "Hey, I want to work from a coffee shop. Hey, what's this idea about 8:00 to 4:00?" It was our joke, 8:00 to 4:00 doesn't work anymore. All of a sudden COVID, the disruption working from home, losing access to offices, businesses, unemployment

changes everything. But looking at the more meta trends, what are some of the differences that the next generation has and how they think about an approach and like to work?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. I mean, you, you pick up on them as well as anybody. I mean, just the creativity, the flexibility, workplace environment, fringe benefits, all of that. Well, I think the heart of our dialogue was, I would just say there's some businesses that you can't change the time of those businesses, right? I mean, they're still going to need 8:00 to 5:00 employees.

JP Pokluda:

There's some industries out there that will still need people to work overnight, and we can't get to a place we are like, "Okay, there's no genZers that are willing to work overnight. And so this industry must die." And so that's where I would start with is the why. Here's why it's important that we do this. And I think if they can get on board with your why, they will be willing to meet your what and your how and your when in this case.

JP Pokluda:

And so that would be my big heart behind that message, is the next generation is willing to do a lot if you will spend the time on the inspiration and the why. And if you can flex and create a more flexible work environment and show up when you can or we're going to work shorter hours or whatever that is, if you can do that, then great, more power to you. But I just want to acknowledge there's industries out there that can't do that. And it's not just that I don't want to, pilots have to fly planes at all hours, and these kinds of things have to happen.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you're running a manufacturing firm and you have three shifts, I get that, right? You have the midnight shift, you've got other essential services. And even the late shift at Starbucks, it's like you're going to be closing and you're going to be opening at 5:30 in the morning.

JP Pokluda:

And so there is an aspect of sometimes re-parenting that has to happen. And what I mean by that because that's a loaded term and I'm an advocate for Gen Z and Millennials and Gen X. But what I mean by that is sometimes there is a, "Hey, these are the fundamentals. And I understand that you're not used to being somewhere on time. Here it's going to be paramount that you show up on time. This is what time you have to show up. I need you to do this and here is why this matters. Let me spend some time on the why."

JP Pokluda:

Where there's going to be people out there that feel like, "Hey, I shouldn't have to do that." I'm like, "Well, you know what? If you do, I think you're going to get a return on that investment." Because what I see in this generation is they want to do something bigger than themselves. They're not lazy. They will work hard, but the why really matters.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So the why really matters. And part of it, I mean, the way I think about it sometimes because I've done my share of re-parenting over the years, JP and not just obviously my own kids, but just team members and that kind of stuff, is it that they didn't really get the life skills? You look at what's happened during lockdown and all of a sudden people had to rediscover or discover for the first time how to cook. They don't have a life skills. It's like, "Nobody ever held me accountable. If I skipped a class, I skipped a class. If I didn't do the assignment, the teacher gave me an A anyway." Is it stuff like that?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. It's some of that. I mean, that's an aspect of it. I mean, they're not doing something because they never learned that it was important. I mean, that's where I would start that. And so that's what I mean by re-parenting, is it's just to stop and say, "Hey, let me share with you why this is important." Everything goes back to the why I think in leading that generation and inspiring them is just to take the time to go slow.

JP Pokluda:

Like they say, go slow in the turns. I would say, go slow in the whys and make sure that they're on board with you, that their heart's engaged and they're nodding their head. And then you say, "Okay, great." And my hunch is that's going to be a faster track to them showing up on time than your ultimatum. And that's what's going to baffle the next generation, is your ultimatum, it's not going to work because it's not going to inspire them. So you're just going to see a lot of attrition.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Any worst practices, some things for leaders and managers that you're like, "Yeah, whatever you do, don't do this with younger leaders."

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. I think that's one of them. What I just said is that take it or leave it because I said so ultimatum. That leader's going to struggle to reach the future. Making fun of them is not going to help you. I mean, I think seeing the good in anybody just generally as a leader is a good practice. But particularly as you generalize that to an entire generation, that's a best practice, understanding the strengths that you're getting with the generation and not just focusing on the weaknesses, boring them.

JP Pokluda:

And so I understand that some work is boring and not all work needs to be fun, but also where you can remove drudgery. As a believer, for any Christian that's listening, I would just say, you should remove drudgery. And that's a part of displaying the kingdom-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What does that look like, removing drudgery?

JP Pokluda:

I think it's that every now and then running that, what do I need to stop doing? What do I need to start doing? And what do I need to keep doing? And in the stop doing, do I have paperwork that's just mundane? Am I having people fill out paperwork just because we always have, but it's not necessary? Here's a pet peeve of mine. When I go to the doctor, I get so frustrated that I have to fill out a page and

then I turn the page and it's the same information. And then I turn another page, it's the same information. I have to fill out all of this paperwork.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Here's my phone number and address, right?

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. I'm just like, "Why do I have to keep writing down my address? Can these not talk to each other?" And so it's just like, if somebody should come up with something that streamlines this process a little bit, and so that's just us and the essence of innovation. Anytime we can streamline something, we don't want to make someone do difficult things and do things that they don't enjoy just as a punishment, if you will, or just because. Wherever we can make our workplace fun and engaging, we should. Now where you can't, you don't have to. Where people need to fill out paperwork, they need to fill out paperwork.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now that's really good. JP, anything else you want to share?

JP Pokluda:

I shared it earlier, but I'll elaborate and just say a big thanks to you. And I think the resources that you're creating that God in his grace is allowing you to create, are changing the world and impacting and shaping the minds of thinkers. And I'm very encouraged at who you're influencing, Carey. And I would just say, keep on.

JP Pokluda:

And then I would just commend your listeners that they've chosen someone who is a great thinker of our day and someone who attracts great thinkers of our day and present company excluded. And so I'm thankful for you. And then just on topic, I would say, be willing to pivot. I would just challenge everyone to audit their sacred cows and their blind spots.

JP Pokluda:

And the most dangerous thing about my blind spots is I can't see them. And so I have to have smart people around me that are not just smart, but they're bold and courageous and honest, and they'll tell me, "Hey, you've got a blind spot. The emperor has no clothes on." And so I celebrate the courageous leaders around me when they stand up to their boss, and I commend them and sometimes promote them because of it.

JP Pokluda:

Because I don't want to surround myself with "yes" men and women. I want to surround myself with people who will be honest with me. That's really, really valuable to me and co-leaders and co-laborers. And so to anybody who's listening that's efforting to lead people, make sure you are surrounded with people that will point out your blind spots. Because we all have blind spots today, all of us, every single person and we can't see them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Totally agreed. Those are very kind words. Thank you so much, JP. And I got to say, I've always found our conversations very stimulating. You made me think about a lot of things today and I appreciate your writing and your contribution. The book is called Welcoming the Future Church. It's available everywhere books are sold. And if people want to track you down online, what's the easiest place?

JP Pokluda:

So, @JPokluda, Pokluda's my last name, on Instagram, Twitter. HarrisCreek.org is our church website. And then I do a podcast as well called The Becoming Something Podcast, which is for young adults. And so would love for anyone to listen to that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Awesome, awesome. JP, once again, thank you so much.

JP Pokluda:

Thank you so much, brother. Appreciate you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that was a fascinating conversation. And if you want more, we have show notes and we've got transcripts. I'm a transcript guy. Sometimes if I listen to a show, I will sometimes pay to have someone transcribe it because I like it so much. Well, you never have to do that with this show because we do it for you. We just want to help you. And so you can go to [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode357](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode357).

Carey Nieuwhof:

Transcripts are there for free. The offers from our partners are there for free, some show notes with some highlights and quotables are there. And well, we'd love to serve you that way. We got a fresh episode coming up next week, and I am talking to my good friend, Sam Collier. Sam's back and we have a powerful, personal conversation to talk about, well, what it's like growing up black in America in the 90s and the 2000s. And some of the things he shares, it's kind of like really? Yeah, really. And well, we talk about a lot of other things too, and here's an excerpt.

Sam Collier:

We are living in the results of those systems set up in the 1930s and 40s and 50s and 60s. We're living in the result of what those systems set up for America to be. And so what it looks like now is, well, 80% of the CEOs of the largest companies in our world are white or let's just call America, are white. 20%, even maybe lower, 15% are minority. You start to go, "Okay. Now how did that happen?" And then what it looks like is, "Okay, well, we got to hire for this company." Well, how do people hire? They hire out of their immediate circle.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So that's the next time on the podcast. Also coming up, Levi Lusko, Bryan Miles, Adrian Gostick, Danielle Strickland, Jon Tyson, Nik Wallenda from the daredevil family. Cool. Gordon MacDonald, Angela Santomero who created Blue's Clues, and so much more. We also have Lecrae coming up. It's going to be a really, really fun lineup. Subscribers, you know you get that stuff all for free.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And now it's time for What I'm Thinking About. We do this at the end of every episode, and I want to talk to you today about the new workplace. And what I want to talk to you about is how you get real accountability from your team. So this segment is brought to you by my new course called Lead a Better Team. It's not available yet, but here's what you can get.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You can get my cheat sheet on how to create an amazing cultural value system and cultural values by texting the words, BETTERVALUES, all one phrase, BETTERVALUES to 33777. You'll get my Three-Step Guide to Developing Better Value Statements for free. And by BELAY, you can text CAREY to 31996, CAREY to 31996 to get your free download of Things to Delegate to Save 15 Hours This Week.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That two minutes to text that probably is going to save you 15 hours. I would do that. So a lot of people are frustrated with their teams, and I think the workplace has changed. And what 2020 has done is brought a lot of change that was happening in the next decade, super, super fast. And that's why we thought it was time to release my new Lead a Better Team course.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And what I want to talk to you about is a frustration that I've had for a long, long time with team members, took me years to figure out, and I've been able to help lots of leaders figure this one out, and I want to share it with you. How do you get real accountability with your team? Well, the problem is for a lot of us, we manage process, not outcomes. And think about the old workplace, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

The old workplace was well, "Show up at 8:00. Don't be late. Stay til 4:00. Don't goof off. Don't take extra lunch time." And you think about all of that, guess what that is? That's process management. Well, "How many sick days did you have?" Right? And it's like, "Oh, you've one too many. You're bad." Meanwhile, somebody could be there the entire time and accomplish nothing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's why The Office was such a funny show, right? It's like we've all been in workplaces where everybody just sits around and not much gets done. And of course, you don't want to lead a team like that. So how do you do that? And then throw this complication into it. Now you've got a team working remotely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I mean, if you think that this is a little blip in the work radar where everyone's going to go back to offices, that's not going to happen. I mean, massive corporations are switching to remote work, churches are switching to remote work. And if you're like, "No, no, no. I want everyone back in the office one day." Maybe you do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But that is going to make you lose out on some incredible staff members who are saying, "I just need more flexibility because the flexible workplace, I think, is the future workplace." In fact, I just hired someone from my team who said what she really wanted was remote work. This is a desirable thing to

have. So what most of us are going to end up with in the future, I have a 100% virtual team, but most of us are going to have a hybrid team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, how do you get real accountability when you can't even see people anymore? And so I want to share this principle with you, and we unpack a lot more in the Lead Better Team course. But it's simply this, that you need as a boss, I need as a leader, real actual accountability on what team members are supposed to do by giving them freedom on how to do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So that's a pretty simple idea, but it can be really difficult. Because what it means is I've got to create a clear metric system for accountability. And sometimes that's difficult. For a lot of us in leadership, what do we do? We're like, "Well, what you need is more. More people, more results, more kids, more people, more money." I don't know, you just need more, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's not actually measurable. And so you need some measurable, clear goals, and then you got to do what Michael Scott always hated doing, hold people accountable and say, "Together we agreed that by December 31st, we were going to shoot for X number of people in groups. So this many people at our services or this many new clients," if you're in business.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And we either hit it, we exceeded it or we dropped it. So what can I do to help? And, oh man, I'll tell you a lot of leaders don't want to go there. Talk to Patrick Lencioni about it, even Fortune 500 companies. It's like leaders don't want to hold people accountable. When you do, you will see results. Now what a lot of us do instead, because we don't want to hold people accountable to results is we hold people accountable to process. And it's like, "Well, they showed up. They didn't have too many sick days. Must be okay."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't care about when people start work. I don't actually know as I'm recording this, how many of my team are working right now, and it's 9:10 in the morning. I don't know because I don't really care. If they want to start at 10:00, they can start at 10:00. If they want to start at 5:00 AM, they can start at 5:00 AM. As I joke with my team, "If you want to work at 3:00 o'clock in the morning standing on your head, I don't care."

Carey Nieuwhof:

"Be there for the meetings, deliver on your goals, and I'm going to give you a lot of freedom. So if you want to go to your son's soccer game, go, just get your work done. If you want to go for a bike ride in the middle of the day, go, just get your work done." And when you've got real accountability on that, I'll tell you, freedom and autonomy are the currency of the next generation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So if you want a team to really crush their goals and you want to see what the future workplace is like, try this. Real accountability on what people are supposed to do, freedom on how to do it. And most

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people do the opposite. So I hope that's helpful. If you want more, including how to create an irresistible culture, you can simply text the words BETTERVALUES, just all one word, BETTERVALUES, to 33777.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I will send you a free teaching and cheat sheet on well, a kind of a fun way to create a really cool cultural value system, figure out what they are and implement that in your workplace. Because people don't quit jobs, they quit bosses, and they quit cultures. And if you give them that kind of freedom and autonomy I talked about, you're going to have people around for a lot longer.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So look for the Lead a Better Team course next month. You can get all things over at CareyNieuwhof.com. And in the meantime, text BETTERVALUES to 33777. Thanks so much for listening, guys. I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before

Announcer:

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