

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 362 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Today's episode is brought to you by Lead a Better Team, my brand new course on how to get better results. Maybe you don't need a new team. You just need to make your team better. Show you exactly how to do that. Go to leadabetterteam.com. Introductory pricing expires tomorrow, and that's if you're listening on release day. If you want to figure out who your online audience actually is, Gloo Insights will do that. Go to glooinsights.com/carey. I want to say, when I say, "Hey everybody," it's like there's a lot of everybody. Man, oh man. I'll tell you, there are more people showing up to this podcast all the time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you're a new leader, maybe you're a young leader, you're a church leader, marketplace leader, or just someone who's really committed to self-improvement, really glad that you're here. I love being able to do this with you. We try to bring you just some world class leaders, some of whom you will know, like today's guest, Danielle Strickland and others you may never have heard of. When I was in law school, we used to do this case study method. You just have to read hundreds of pages of cases and try to figure out what it means. That's a little bit like the format.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think by interviewing world-class leaders, you get an insight into the behind the scenes. I try to ask the questions you would ask if you were at lunch or dinner with them. Today's guest, actually, we did this podcast right after my wife and I had dinner with Danielle and her husband at our place. This was from a long time ago. It feels like another world. I think we recorded this in February, and it was one of the episodes that we pushed forward once COVID hit later in the spring.

Carey Nieuwhof:

She'd just come back from Germany where COVID was present, and then later got COVID. I did not, but anyway, she's all recovered. Her latest book is called Better Together, and she is an advocate. What does Danielle do? She's established justice departments, done church plants. She's launched global anti-trafficking initiative. She created new initiatives to mobilize people toward a transformational spiritual life. She's the founder of Amplify Peace, the Women Speaker Collective, Brave Global, and Infinitum.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We talk all about that and more, plus her new book called Better Together: How Women and Men Can Heal the Divide and Work Together to Transform the Future. We tackled some really tough questions, and it was a fun, fun, fun conversation. We bring that to you today. Hey, I've got a brand new course. The pricing is introductory for another 24 hours or so. If you're listening to this podcast on launch day, it's called Lead a Better Team. If you've ever felt like you need a new team, because you're just so frustrated with your current team or you're like, "They're good, but they're not great," you need Lead a Better Team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What it will do is it'll give you a number of opportunities. I will show you how to deepen employee engagement and how to get a results-based system. Church leaders, we're terrible at this. We don't actually prioritize results. Sometimes, marketplace leaders aren't very good at it, or they're really good at results, but not good at people. What if you could do both? Lead a Better Team will help you get results, transform your team culture, and see your employees engage deeply.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Whether your team is five people, 50 or 500, you get the best pricing through August 26, by going to leadabetterteam.com. When we come back at the end of the podcast, I'm going to talk to you about something I talk about in the course, which is how your workflow system is hurting your productivity. We'll talk about that too. Then, as we all know, every church is online. COVID-19 has really disrupted how people relate with each other, but that also complicates things. A lot of leaders have lost visibility into who's engaging with their church and how they can serve them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Even if you're reopened, which about 60% of churches are, you know that not everybody is back. How can you actually figure out who is watching online? If you want clarity on your online audience, you can take action right now, and then you can actually message the people who are watching directly, because you can figure out who they are. If you want to figure that out, go to glooinsights.com/carey. Check out the amazing technology they have available for you today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're going to dive into my conversation with Danielle Strickland. I just want to say to all of you who are brand new, just so you know, there will be transcripts. We'll give you the show note link after the interview is done. If you are new, please subscribe and share it with your friends and let Danielle know that you really appreciated this conversation. Without further ado, the conversation I had a long time ago, almost pre-COVID with Danielle Strickland. Happy to bring it to you now. Danielle, welcome back to the podcast.

Danielle Strickland:

Hey, so great to be here. Thanks for having me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're actually at our house, and your husband, Steve, is here.

Danielle Strickland:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're going to have dinner after we do this, right?

Danielle Strickland:

Exciting. I don't know what I'm most excited about, dinner or the podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a Big Green Egg, and those rib eyes.

Danielle Strickland:

It's dinner.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I haven't had that steak before, so we'll have to see how that works out. I had them cut it, just for you guys, because you drove up all the way from Toronto.

Danielle Strickland:

We are honored.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Catch us up to where you are, because you were Los Angeles based, California based. Right?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then, you came back to Toronto.

Danielle Strickland:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

When? Three years ago?

Danielle Strickland:

Two and a half.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Two and a half, so 2018.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. How's the repatriation gone?

Danielle Strickland:

Fantastic. We love it. I love Toronto. Toronto is the most diverse city in the world. Lots of people don't know that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is it really legit? Everyone says that.

Danielle Strickland:

It's legit, the most diverse city in the world for population. What I love about Toronto is that it's diverse, but also that people love it. They love that it's diverse. It's a fun celebration of diversity a little bit.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's a clean New York, kind of. Right?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I was in New York and I forgot. It was right downtown in Manhattan.

Danielle Strickland:

There's a lot garbage on the street.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There was a lot of garbage on the street. People always, when they come to Toronto, it's like, "It's so clean," and I'm like, "No, there's a piece of trash over there." Then it's like, "Yeah, it's a nice city."

Danielle Strickland:

We're loving it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're all over the world. What exactly are you doing these days? Being an author/speaker?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. Author/speaker, and then I also mobilize. I've co-founded a few movements that I'm really passionate about. Some spirituality ...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Did you hear how casual that was? "I co-founded a few movements." No, but this is legit. This is real, so tell us what you're doing.

Danielle Strickland:

Things that I love doing, actually. Real natural things that come to me as important, living a life of depth. I really want to live a life that's not just wide, but also deep. I've been part of a group of folks that have been practicing a spiritual practice called Infinitum, which is a way of life. What I affectionately call an open order. We view our life through three postures; surrender, generosity and mission. It helps us keep

Jesus at the center of our thought, our practice, our attitudes, our relationships. It's been a real game changer for me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why the name Infinitum?

Danielle Strickland:

We wanted to make it really difficult for people to find.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Does it have to do with that idea of-

Danielle Strickland:

Because if you're not serious about it, you can't do it. No, I'm just-

Carey Nieuwhof:

... infinity? Is it related to-

Danielle Strickland:

It's Latin for boundless.

Carey Nieuwhof:

For what?

Danielle Strickland:

Boundless.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Boundless. Okay, great.

Danielle Strickland:

It's Latin for boundless. That's what we wanted to live, is boundless life. Ephesians 3 is from the Bible, Paul talking about, "I'm praying that you would be rooted and established in love, but then you'd be able to grasp just how wide and high and long the love of God is." The image that I felt like the Lord gave to me was deep and wide at the same time. These go together.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We were talking before we started recording that you want to experience, or you want to experiment with different immersive experiences rather than the talking head or teach, teach, teach.

Danielle Strickland:

Look, our heads are bigger than our bodies. Actually, I once had this picture when I was praying, and I had this picture of this stick man with this massive egg head. Every time the stick man would go to

move, the head would fall over and it couldn't move anywhere. I felt like it is like the church. Definitely the Western church where our heads are so much bigger than our bodies. I felt like it's time to buff up. It's time to actually work out and practice all of the things that we know, just put them into some practice. For us, it's almost like a hit training.

Danielle Strickland:

How can we help you with some hit workouts? Maybe it's just 20 minutes a day, but we think these practices will make a real difference in the way that you live your faith. I know there's a lot of head knowledge going on. If belief was the recipe, what we knew would actually change the way that we live, we would be changed already. Clearly, the only knowledge that matters is applied knowledge, I think is how it's said.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. You were just in Wales doing this kind of adventure thing that was spiritual with Infinitum.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. It was immersive encounters, we call them. We're trying to create ways in which people can learn how to immerse themselves and encounter God. Less talking more action, more activities, like more reflection, more de-brief, more journey, more movement. We were out hiking in these mountains and the hail. It was awesome. It was great fun.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's an attempt to grow closer to God.

Danielle Strickland:

It's an attempt to grow closer to God and to each other, into genuine lives of depth to make Jesus the center of our lives. A few years ago, a bunch of us were around the table asking ourselves, "Do we actually follow Jesus? Or did we just decide to do that 20 years ago, and now we just kind of work our lives out around this one belief system? Or today, am I actually following Jesus? How would we know the difference?" Just all these questions led to some of our best practices to keep our faith alive and vibrant and deep and true.

Danielle Strickland:

We decided to, just around the table, a group of friends for a whole year, just practice these practices, these ideas of daily, weekly, monthly rhythms, and see if it matter in our lives. We got together a year later and we were all like, "Game changer. I've never been more in love with Jesus. I've never been more excited about my faith. I've never been more open to what God's doing in the world."

Carey Nieuwhof:

What have been some of the changes that have made that happen? Because I think you're reading a lot of people's mail. I ask myself that question, "Am I really following Jesus?" People are, "Look at the difference you're making." I'm like, "Yeah, but I don't know how I feel." It's an interesting question.

Danielle Strickland:

For me, some of the daily tweaks have been the most surprising. Every day, I do this posture prayer. I call it posture prayer. I use my body and I make this confession. I'll hold my fists up, and I'll say, "I confess that my natural human posture is to fight for myself and then make something happen." Then, I'll say, "But I choose to hold my hands up in a posture of surrender," and I'll hold my hands up in a posture of surrender. "This actually is not about me and I'm going to surrender it to Jesus today, all these things I'm trying to make happen."

Danielle Strickland:

Then I'll hold my hands out in front of me and fists and say, "My natural posture is to take, to keep, to hold, to hang on, but I'm going to choose a posture of generosity," and I'll open my hands up. This was a big game changer for me in understanding that generosity is reciprocal. This is not just about digging in deeper and giving more. It's about also receiving more and I'm a way better giver than I am a receiver.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Talk more about that.

Danielle Strickland:

I just think it's harder to receive, because you have to admit you need. You have to humble yourself to receive. It's a power issue. Isn't in the end generosity. I'd rather fix ... I spent my whole life working for The Salvation Army, helping people-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No kidding.

Danielle Strickland:

... but to be helped, that's a whole other thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sorry. You just said that's a power? Generosity is a power move?

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've never heard that. This is great.

Danielle Strickland:

If generosity is not reciprocal, it's just you being in control.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to drill down on this, because generosity really interests me. Generosity means you need to receive from the person you gave to, or you just need to be in a receiving posture generally in life or both?

Danielle Strickland:

Maybe both. Depends on the person. This was this helpful to me, even when I would serve people who were maybe economically poor than me, but then received from them as well. Learning to receive and not just give was a discipline and was a helpful practice for me. In a daily basis, I'll hold my hands out and go, "Here's what I need for today, God," which I think is interesting, because all of the things I really need for today are actually available. Think about what you need.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's hard to admit you need something.

Danielle Strickland:

Right. I usually say you know, like, "I need patience by 8:00 AM, at least," because I have three boys-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Three boys.

Danielle Strickland:

... so I can come out, but also vision, wisdom, insight, provision, sanity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You accumulate enough skills over time that you don't really need to be reliant for that all the time. Is that fair?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. Unless you're conduit, unless you're constantly giving away what you receive. That's the second part of the prayer is, "Freely I receive, and now freely I give," which was how Jesus sent the disciples out. That was the instruction, to give freely what they had received freely. That was the instruction for the disciples. When they did that, they saw a lot of things happen that were amazing. I feel like that's still the recipe. Nothing's really changed, freely give what you've freely received, which is why when Jesus ever talks about forgiveness and stuff, he's always like, "You should probably forgive-"

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you by nature love-

Danielle Strickland:

"... because you've been forgiven." It's reciprocal. I'm not going to forgive, because I'm amazing at forgiveness. I'm going to forgive, because I've been forgiven. This is, "I've received this, so I'm going to extend it as a posture of generosity."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's really interesting, because I think leaders ... Many, not all, but some, and I'll put myself in this camp, try to hang on and accumulate.

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely. That's what we're taught. We're taught that. Then, we're also taught on the flip side to be really super spiritual means just to give it away too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You have nothing. You gave it all way.

Danielle Strickland:

Right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Welcome to my tent in the wilderness.

Danielle Strickland:

That's Paul saying, "I could give everything. I could be burned at the stake, but if I'm not receiving love, I'm nothing." Even just this idea that everything's reciprocal. The last posture is a posture of mission. I cross my arms in front of me and I say, "My natural posture is to critique, to spectate to say, 'It's not my problem,' to create distance from things I can't change." Then I open my hands up like in an embrace, and I just say, "To the lost, to the least, to the hard things, to those in the other side of the planet that don't have enough to eat, and also to my own spouse and my children at home, here I am. I'm available."

Danielle Strickland:

That's what I call living an others-focused life. Just doing those three postures every day has changed the way that I view everything that happens every day. Because what will happen is I also do this thing at night where I try to reflect on my day through those lenses too. Where was I surrendered? Where was I generous? Where was I others-focused? As I reflect, I notice, "I missed it here. I missed it here. Here was an opportunity to be generous, and I mistook it." You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I do.

Danielle Strickland:

It's just completely changed. Now, in the day I'll be like, "This is going to be one of those moments later that I'm going to hope I respond to well." As in, surrendered, generous, others-focused person.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The posturing is different. The physical movement makes the prayer more real for you?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. I was just in the mountains in Wales. I was with a guy who runs a big imagery marketing company, and he says he begins his day at work in his office with his door closed. He just holds his hands up in the air, and he says, "I surrender this business to you and all the things that happen to God today." Then, he holds his hands open and he says, "God, I need patience and I need all these. I need kindness. I need

these things, and then I'm going to give that away today. I'm going to be this person today." Then, same with the mission thing.

Danielle Strickland:

Then, I met this other guy, who's a leadership coach. He was on the mountain too. He said he meets with a guy that's in charge of all the human trafficking cases. He's a prosecutor in the UK, and under his desk at work, he has a little picture of these hand postures that we use for Infinitum. He said, every case he gets, he sets on his desk and he just prays, "I surrender this case to God, and I'm praying God that you would give me what I need. That I would be as generous with what I've received in dealing with this case justly. That I would be focused on others through what happens in this case."

Danielle Strickland:

Every case he gets, he puts through the lens of this posture and he said, it's completely changed his work.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's deeply challenging. Is it still an app that you can-

Danielle Strickland:

It's an app. It's a website, infinitumlife.com and there's also an app called Infinitum. Everything's free. They're just really practices that we think seem small and you think, "Does that really matter?" But in my own experience, it matters a lot. Changes a lot of things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've been experimenting, because we can all live in our own head with God, "Show me how I can help someone today." On the one hand, we're helping tens of thousands of leaders every day by broadcasting, but I mean like, "No, for real, a person, a human being." It's amazing on the days I remember to pray that, it's funny how it will happen at the grocery store or walking down the road. Like I can think of, we were somewhere in a hotel. I had a chance to actually minister to this couple that was sitting by the side of the pool. I'm like, "If I hadn't prayed that, I don't think I would have seen that."

Danielle Strickland:

Right. It's intentionality. Then, I think there's also a whole lot to be said about neuroscience and using your body and praying together and how that actually creates a way deeper connection.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You look at different spiritual traditions, whether that's Eastern religions meditation, Buddhism, yoga, that kind of thing. You look at Judaism, there was a very mind-body connection, prayer-body connection.

Danielle Strickland:

You're always eating, touching, smelling, lifting-

Carey Nieuwhof:

And Christians. You're right.

Danielle Strickland:

... [crosstalk 00:18:51] hands up. It was like Christians that made prayer boring.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's the stick man and the giant head.

Danielle Strickland:

Right, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's exactly what we've done to it. Everybody else is like, "No, that's not how it works." That's cool.

Danielle Strickland:

We're not trying to shrink our heads. We're trying to grow our bodies.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's fair.

Danielle Strickland:

We're trying to grow into our heads.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There is shrunken head Christianity. That's a whole other podcast for a whole other day.

Danielle Strickland:

Right. We're going to catch up to our heads. That's what we're doing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're doing that. I'm glad we camped out on that. That's very challenging and encouraging to hear. Also, tell us about some of the other initiatives, the other things you've founded.

Danielle Strickland:

Near to my heart, Brave Global is mobilizing communities to reach vulnerable girls before they're trafficked. These are girls like 10 to 14, just right in the age range of recruitment by exploiters. We just had this thought when we came across a study in America, that 70 to 80% of trafficking victims that were born in America, from America, came from the foster care system.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh boy.

Danielle Strickland:

That's what we thought at first like, "Could this get worse?" Then we realized, "Wait a minute, every single one of those girls has a name and a file and a caseworker. We know where they are." So we thought, "Just a second. If exploiters can target vulnerable girls for trafficking, why couldn't the church, the redeemed, communities actually identify vulnerable girls for something better?" We're trying to get there first. We just did one in Toronto, actually, just last Saturday. 120 girls survivors coming, telling their stories, self-defense classes, like an MMA fighter there giving them some ...

Danielle Strickland:

I think one of the best pieces of advice all the MMA fighters come to Brave say is that your first line of self-defense is not physical.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Really?

Danielle Strickland:

Your first line is self-defense, if you take a self-defense, and this is just free, your first line of self-defense is verbal. You speak, you make noise, you yell, you scream. I'll never forget being at Mariners Church in LA, and this MMA fighter telling her own story of sexual abuse as a young child. Then, not even speaking about it for 10 years, and then speaking about it to a counselor. She said, when she was taking martial arts training and self-defense she realized, "This is my first line of self-defense, actually being able to speak up and use your voice and talk."

Danielle Strickland:

So she just said, "I want you to repeat after me." There are a thousand girls at that event, and she just said, I want you, "Stop touching me." Like a thousand girls are like, "Stop touching me." Then she's like, "I don't like this. I don't like this. Get your hands off my friend. Get your ..." Just all these phrases you can say at a party. Things you can do. Then, everyone of course gets a hotline number. Just actually equipping girls with even words to say, to express your own ability to defend yourself. It's incredible. Absolutely incredible.

Carey Nieuwhof:

This is a bit of a rabbit trail, but not too much. How did you think of getting an MMA fighter to train girls? Those are two different worlds that don't often line up.

Danielle Strickland:

I've been doing anti-trafficking work for like over 20 years, and just eventually got this beautiful God-led strategy to get to the girls first. There was a local church in Long Beach. Noemi Chavez is the leader there, and just incredible advocate and pastor preacher. Her and I got together. She had just locally started this conference for girls. When I went to that local conference for girls in the Long Beach, in the hood there, I realized, "There's something here. There's a recipe here that every church needs to know they can be part of a solution for a generation."

Danielle Strickland:

We just really looked at, "What are the things that happen to girls between 10 and 14 that we could push back against?" Being sexually harassed, assaulted, abused is number one. That's the number one

things that happens to girls that pushes them towards exploitation. We were like, "What can we do to combat that?" Self-defense seemed to be a no brainer.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How logical. Wow. Wow. Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

I didn't make the connection between voice and defense quite-

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's really interesting.

Danielle Strickland:

... but it actually did, because this whole area of the Me Too movement and women in general and the rates of sexual harassment and abuse that are so high. There was about 200 volunteers at this event in Mariners Church when she first said, "This is your first line of self-defense," and started teaching these phrases. I looked around, and these 200 women volunteers are weeping. Wow. Not all of them, but many of them came to me afterwards and just said, "If only I had then known that at 10." They would've went dozens and dozens and dozens of years without telling anybody or knowing how to actually fight back against this thing that's happening to you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

Powerful.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's brave, and again, that's huge.

Danielle Strickland:

Brave Global. Going everywhere these days, it's awesome. If anyone's ever interested, braveglobal.org.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure. We'll link to it. I promise. It'll be there. Brave Global. Google Danielle's name. You'll find it. Then, I don't want to limit it, but we're going to talk about Women Speaker Collective-

Danielle Strickland:

Women Speaker Collective.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Are there other thing? Three is enough, but that's just fine.

Danielle Strickland:

There's one other thing. It's called the Amplify Peace.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's right. I knew there was one.

Danielle Strickland:

It's about mobilizing the peacemakers and specifically female peacemakers around the planet. All the studies, the research, the UN says that if women are peacemakers and brought into a peacemaking process around the world, that the rates of peace go way up over 60% higher for-

Carey Nieuwhof:

If women make peace.

Danielle Strickland:

If women are a part of the peacemaking process. Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

It's fascinating.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have to ask you, because I want to dive into Women Speaker Collective and then your new book, but that's not easy. Most people, and it's a lot of leaders, tens of thousands of leaders listening to this, they're like, "I have trouble with one. I'm leading one thing. Not sure I'm doing it well." Do you want to talk about how you manage all of this? Because every time we talk, you're ... You got back from multiple countries this week and you're off to Florida next week. You drove up from Toronto. Tell me, how do you keep all of these balls in the air? You're a mom of three boys and happily married and the whole deal.

Danielle Strickland:

I never said I did it well. I think you said that. I actually do think ... The number one question I get from people is about balance. I always said, "I stopped aiming for balance many, many years ago."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hear, hear.

Danielle Strickland:

I looked for balance people doing anything good in the world. I couldn't find many. What I did start looking for where rhythms, and really trying to do healthier rhythms and practices. Back to the Infinitum conversation, a deep life. There are some things that I just put in my schedule for my own self. Once a month, anyone that works with me is invited to a prayer day and we try to practice a day of silence once

a month together. Sometimes it's led, sometimes it's just us, but where we just spend a whole day just exercising the opposite muscle than I normally do, which is talking. We just try to listen.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's anyone who works with you in these organizations just comes together.

Danielle Strickland:

Anyone that can, that can make it to Toronto. The other things ... I'm not the CEO of Brave Global. That's Miley. I'm not the main leader of Amplify Peace. That's Lisa, and the basis of operations for Amplify Peace is in Arizona. We kicked it off together, and I'm still part of the journey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're more like a founder/starter/launcher?

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Great. How do you do that? A lot of people have trouble. There's a lot of control freak leaders. How do you find these women who lead these organizations for you? How do you release them? How do you make sure vision doesn't get messed up in the process?

Danielle Strickland:

These ones are fairly new ones. I'll keep you posted. Also, I would say that I'm not sure that I found them. I think we found each other. I think it's about paying attention to what God's calling you to do. When you meet people that you would have a heart connection and they would have some skills and abilities and also a similar calling to you, that you begin to share that calling, then that calling becomes into some strategic ideas. I would say that I am well-practiced in releasing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You don't seem to me like someone who manages the details.

Danielle Strickland:

That's partly, I'm not wired that way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I was going to say, some of that must be personality.

Danielle Strickland:

I'm not wired that way, and then I think also, I really learned early on from this speaking thing. Ruth Haley Barton calls it the ministry of absence, that there is actually a surrendering that happens when you're not always present that is actually healthy. I noticed this in church planting where wherever I would leave, someone would fill the space. I would have a home group, and I was the leader of the

home group. If I'm there, I'm going to fill the space, because I'm a leader. So, I'm going to do, but when I'm not there, someone else tries to fill the space.

Danielle Strickland:

It was one of the best strategies that we could find to actually identify future leaders is for me not to be in the room.

Carey Nieuwhof:

See who rises.

Danielle Strickland:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Interesting.

Danielle Strickland:

Because if there's no space, no one's coming to it. In the end, I realized this is actually a really strategic way of finding leaders, is to just not be there and see who ends up leading. Actually, some of them would be surprised themselves by their own ... They wouldn't have called themselves leaders, but they rose to the occasion. Then, it turned out actually, they have some really good gifts.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've never heard that articulated that way. That is really smart.

Danielle Strickland:

We call that the ministry of absence.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Disappear. See what happens.

Danielle Strickland:

I do it a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. That's great. That's great. Why do you stay involved and engaged with these organizations then?

Danielle Strickland:

I love them all. I wouldn't even call them organizations. I just-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Movements.

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Danielle Strickland:

They're callings. What does it ... Frederick Buechner says, "When deep need meets your gift, it equals a calling."

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's a name you don't hear enough of anymore, Frederick Buechner. Oh man.

Danielle Strickland:

Frederick Buechner. That guy, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is he still living? Do you know? No, he died a while ago. I don't know. The Google will help with that.

Danielle Strickland:

I know he's still living in me, because I still reread his books a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof:

A preacher who was-

Danielle Strickland:

What's this book? Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale. I used to read that every year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

Just it was such a ministry to me, that book.

Carey Nieuwhof:

His Christmas messages. His Christmas sermons are incredible. Let's talk Women Speaker Collective.

Danielle Strickland:

Women Speaker Collective. It's a-

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's only two years old? My wife was at the first one.

Danielle Strickland:

I want to say year and a half.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That young. Wow. Last time you were on the podcast, we broke down your communication skills. I stand by what I said then. You're one of the best communicators I've ever heard in my life.

Danielle Strickland:

Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Regardless of gender, just fantastic at what you do. Brilliant at storytelling, brilliant at noticing and a delivery that is so calm. I don't know what it feels like on the inside, but on the outside, it's rapturous. What I do, I hear a million communicators and it takes a little bit to keep me engaged.

Danielle Strickland:

It means a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know how that feels, right? You know how that feels.

Danielle Strickland:

I'm always aiming for the camera guy, because I know if I can get the camera guy, I got everyone in the room.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, you look for the most cynical person.

Danielle Strickland:

This is their job, to just get the shot. They couldn't care less what's happening. If I can get them to not get the shot, that's the best, is if I can distract the camera guy, that's my favorite.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm never going to see the camera guy the same. That's great.

Danielle Strickland:

That's what I'm going for.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You do a great job at it, but you decided ... Tell me the impetus behind the Women Speaker Collective.

Danielle Strickland:

I just saw not a lot of women on main stages, especially talking to mixed audiences, and I started asking, "Why. Where are the women? What's happening?" I decided I didn't want to be an exception to the rule. I wanted to change the rules of the game. I started to think, "What is the game and why isn't it changing?" I went through a whole season where I just challenged, shamed conference organizers. "Where are they in that?" They'd be like, "We don't know." I'd be like, "You should know."

Danielle Strickland:

Then, I just felt, shame, fear, guilt, that never really motivates anyone in the end. It's always a bad strategy. I felt God just say to me, "Why don't you just help instead of just criticize?" I thought, "Well, how can I help?" I started to identify what the gaps were between what I wanted to see happen, which would be just a shared leadership from the platform, from leadership boardrooms and what was actually currently happening. I realized that there was a couple of things.

Danielle Strickland:

One, there was a lack of awareness and knowledge from the conference organizers about where women speakers were. Then, on the women's speaker side of things, there was a lack of confidence in training to get them where they needed to be. There was work that needed to be done on both.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They didn't get enough reps. Some of that is reps and training, right?

Danielle Strickland:

A lot of it is reps and training. Even, I would have a conference organizer say to me, "Can you give me the name of a woman who can knock it out of the park?" I'd be like, "You have a lot of men who are hitting second base."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sorry, that's funny.

Danielle Strickland:

"So, why does it have to be a woman who's knocking it out of the park?" Not everybody on the team needs to be a home run hitter. This is just like, I'm not a super baseball fan, but I know that you hit people who can get it to second base. They're part of the strategy of the team, which is why you have all these speakers here going first base, second base, because you know you can rely on them to move the ball forward. We're moving this team forward. I said, "I can give you a lot of women who can hit one base, who can hit two base, and then I know a few women who can hit out of the park." You should have-

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is changing the rules.

Danielle Strickland:

You should have all of those women on this team. There should be a shared ... Just even that idea that, "If I'm going to have a woman, she's going to have to be this exceptional." Then the pressure that puts on women, because every woman that does get an opportunity ... Imagine the pressure, the whole weight of the future of women are on your shoulders. No pressure. Because then if a woman tries it and doesn't hit out of the park, everyone was like, "We tried women, and it didn't work." I was like, "You try a lot of men-"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Exactly.

Danielle Strickland:

" and they don't work either, but you don't think of not inviting men back to this conference."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's really fair. You've hit your share of many home runs. Some grand slam walk offs in your time speaking, but I'm sure you know as a world class communicator, they're not all home runs. I get up there sometimes, I'm like, "Well, that was a bunt. That's what that was." You're right. That's a-

Danielle Strickland:

Foul, foul. Start again. Give me another chance.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's right. You're struck out. Look at that.

Danielle Strickland:

That's awesome.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's really good. Let's go to the question into a question. Why do you think we're so unfair to women? Or let's talk about categories, because men, and I'm a white male, so I definitely fit the category of overrepresented on the platform. People would say, "We need an African American speaker or a Latino speaker, Hispanic speaker, or a woman," or whatever that happens to be.

Danielle Strickland:

Pick anyone that's not white and male.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Pick anyone that's not a white and male, anyone who's doesn't look like me, and we're like, "We had a Hispanic once, and we had a woman once, and ..."

Danielle Strickland:

It's the same thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why do we do this?

Danielle Strickland:

It's a dominant cultural problem. There's blinders, there's perceptions, there's prejudice, there's a thing called patriarchy. A male view of the world, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Danielle Strickland:

If you are a male viewing the world, you don't notice it. It's just literally like big fish. It says to the little fish, "How's the water?" The fish are like, "What water?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's water?

Danielle Strickland:

I think a lot of the things that we're living in ... You notice this, the Me Too Movement was great. There's 19 million women hashtagged within a month, like Me Too. It wasn't like it was new. It wasn't like for hundreds of years, women haven't been abused or harassed as a regular occurrence. One in three girls will be harassed in their lifetime sexually. This is every family. This is every family. Part of it is the silence around has made it difficult to really understand. That's partly the good news of it being exposed is us going, "This is a reality for one in three girls. This is going to happen."

Danielle Strickland:

You just go, "This isn't good water," and you didn't even notice the water for the longest time. I call patriarchy very similar to sin. It's like gravity. It's just where the road goes, if you're not paying attention. It's just where the weight is. All the weight's going to go towards a male dominated view. There's a whole bunch of reasons why. Dominant culture you know, generations of views of women that have been inferior, that have been enforced through attitudes and behaviors and boardrooms are all male. I think we have a real problem with leadership development, because we're afraid of women, especially in this culture.

Danielle Strickland:

We don't develop or identify women. You have men mentoring men, and you have all the top male leaders are male. If all the top male leaders are mentoring men, guess what happens?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You just perpetuate the system.

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely. Something has to change the system. Even if it's just awareness like, "There's water, and it's not that healthy. We should probably try to fix it." Partly, what I'm trying to do is really identify and confront the fear, because a culture of fear never helps anybody. I feel like we're living in a lot of fear right now around women and men.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you talk about that, the fear?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. I think fear is the currency of oppression. I always understood that fear is how you get caught in oppression. When you get afraid and you're becoming afraid, then you cap power and you come under a spirit of oppression. It wasn't until I studied Exodus, and I remember Exodus Chapter 1 where it described Pharaoh's beginning of his oppression against the Israelites. It said, because Pharaoh was afraid of the Israelites, he oppressed them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Danielle Strickland:

That's when I started realizing that if fear is your motivator, regardless of what you do or you don't do, if fear is motivating you, you will either be oppressed or you'll be an oppressor, because fear is the currency of oppression. That changed the game for me on fear, because then I started understanding that we cannot be motivated by fear if we're going to break the cycle of oppression on both ends.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What did fear feel like for you?

Danielle Strickland:

In this specific [crosstalk 00:37:25]?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like between men and women, or even trying to be a female communicator who felt you had a message to get out into the world or whatever ...

Danielle Strickland:

I think between women and men, there's Wall Street ... There was an article about Wall Street's memo after the Me Too Movement that just basically said, "No more women allowed."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I missed that. Really?

Danielle Strickland:

They wrote a memo for all of Wall Street, which in Christian circles is just called the Billy Graham rule. We've been practicing that since 1948.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, because you talk about that. All right.

Danielle Strickland:

I just talk about how when you're fear-based, when you're viewing difference, regardless of what the difference is, whether it's gender difference or race difference or background difference or class difference, when you view difference through the lens of fear, it becomes a threat. If you view difference through the lens of faith, it's an opportunity. Because actually, if you understand that

difference is not just a thing about someone different than you, like a woman or a man category or a different race, but difference is actually at the heart of humanity, we're all different from each other.

Danielle Strickland:

There are some places I'm at where I have way more in common with the woman in the room, because I'm a woman and we share some things. But there's other places where I have way more in common with the men in the room, because share different backgrounds and experiences. It's less about our gender difference and just more that humans are different. Just where things like the Enneagram really help us here, where we actually learn that we're different in the way we think and the way we operate. It has less to do with gender and more to do with just human.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've got to share your number now.

Danielle Strickland:

I'm a 7/8, right down the middle.

Carey Nieuwhof:

7/8, okay.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, right down the middle.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Interesting. 7 Wing 8?

Danielle Strickland:

It's a 49/51.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's fair.

Danielle Strickland:

It's literally right down the middle.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm an 8/7.

Danielle Strickland:

Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's me. Depends on the hour. I might be a lot of fun or I might be totally intimidating.

Danielle Strickland:

"Let's get some stuff done."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Exactly. Let's talk about the Billy Graham rule, because this is something I have thought about a lot and it's something I've generally practiced over the years. Only recently have loosened up a little bit, because I've been challenged as a leader exactly over what you talked about, that I will mentor male leaders one-on-one. Let's back up. What is a Billy Graham rule? Just for leaders who are listening. Particularly people from the marketplace may not know.

Danielle Strickland:

The Billy Graham rule, and to refer to it derogatory is weird, because Billy Graham doesn't deserve it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because Billy Graham's awesome. He's awesome.

Danielle Strickland:

He's awesome. Let's just say that right now. We love Billy Graham.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It protected his ministry over decades in some way.

Danielle Strickland:

He made a rule during his contemporaries' crashing and burning. He was a traveling evangelist in 1948, everybody. Repeat after me, 1948. There's a few other things you might need to know about what women could and couldn't do in 1948 in general culture. They couldn't own a credit card. They couldn't run a marathon. There was no co-ed Ivy League schools. The dominant culture in which Billy Graham made this rule, the dominant culture ... Forget about the Southern Baptist culture, which we can talk about another version of this rule, but on like steroids, but he was not making a rule to work with female leaders.

Danielle Strickland:

There were no female leaders. It wasn't like there were contemporary peers of Billy Graham that were female. That wasn't the rule he was doing. He was watching his contemporaries fall to power, money and sex. So, he made three rules.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The big three.

Danielle Strickland:

He made three rules, and one of them was never to be alone with a woman without his wife, in a room with a woman ever. The second one was he would cap his salary at \$15,000 a year. The third one was that all of the organization of the Billy Graham Association would help him determine what he would say yes and no to, and put some rules and structure and accountability in his life. He made those rules to

work with what was happening. I often tell people who practice the Billy Graham rule today, "I think you should be at least consistent and cap your salary at 15,000 a year."

Danielle Strickland:

Then when they protest, I'm like, "Tell me more about why that's not appropriate, and then let's have that conversation about why that's not appropriate in all of those three areas, perhaps."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I got challenged by a great leader who we don't work together anymore, but we're still friends. She just said, "It's not fair, because you'll meet alone with guys and male leaders, and they seem to get an edge." I thought, "She has a point. She has a really good point." On the other hand, I wanted my life to be a life of integrity and our marriage to be fair. That doesn't mean just because you're alone with someone, that you're automatically going to do something inappropriate. Talk about how you would reinterpret those dynamics for today.

Danielle Strickland:

First of all, I just think it's not okay to view difference through a lens of fear. When you set up a rule that protects you from women, what are you saying about women? Just take a second. You're viewing women as a threat or a temptation. That's how you're viewing every woman. I'll often say, "Fill in the blank on the Billy Graham rule with any other thing. Just fill in African American. I'm never going to be alone with an African American." How does it feel? It's insane, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. That's-

Danielle Strickland:

Actually, you're like, "How could we possibly say that?" We can't say that. Whether or not we practice that, that's a whole other thing. This is the difference between ... I know tons of leaders who are like, "I practice the Billy Graham ..." It's like this badge of honor and integrity. You're like, "Wow, you're saying out loud that every woman, you need to be protected from, because she's either a threat or a temptation, which is a lie." Also, just for the record, if you're a Jesus follower here, you'll know that Jesus never followed the Billy Graham rule.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's true.

Danielle Strickland:

You might want to pick your leader. Who are you going to follow, Jesus or Billy? As much as I love Billy, I'm following Jesus. Jesus, even in a culture way more infused with patriarchy, did not practice that rule. He broke that rule regularly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you have any boundaries then in your own leadership travels or personal relationships that you follow?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. I think integrity is a good idea. I think transparency is a really good idea. I think authenticity is a really good idea. I think team is a really good idea. I think one-on-one mentoring is a little overrated, to tell you the truth. I think teams are a really great idea, and that we should figure out how to do that a lot more. I'm a big fan for personal integrity and accountability. In my own life, back to this Infitum practice, I daily pray. I weekly connect with an accountability person, and I monthly challenge my own personal faith.

Danielle Strickland:

I say like, "Live a deep, beautiful life," because here's the other thing about the Billy Graham rule. Tons of people have been practicing it since 1948. That's a lot of years. It doesn't seem to be helping.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There are lots of people who behind-

Danielle Strickland:

The harassment, the abuse, the sexual scandals. That's not working. Even this idea of the perception is what we're actually fighting, when I actually think we should fight deeper than perception. We should fight our actually own personal integrity, and how we do that is not living our lives from a culture of fear.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that's a really good point. I'm going to get this slightly ... It's a paraphrase, but I did hear along the way over the last few years, and I think it's a good point, there is no law or accountability or board structure that can save you from bad character. In other words, I might have all the systems in place with a board and accountability partner. I never meet alone with a woman. I've capped my salary. You pick it. If I want to do a bad thing, I will find my way around the system. You agree?

Danielle Strickland:

Yes, of course. The other thing I say without it being just a moral outrage problem, but 68% of all men admit to viewing porn once a week. It was really interesting about the connection between porn and power and patriarchy. There's just fascinating connections in that, if you're the dominant narrative of pornography, regardless of what kind of pornography, the dominant narrative is one of conquest. Male dominance, and then female, "I like it that way."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is that complicity or ...

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, or just this fake idea of submission, like "I want to be dominated." You think about, back to this neurological, what you view regularly. You're regularly viewing a narrative that women can't wait to be dominated. That actually their deepest desire is to be dominated and humiliated actually, frankly, in most pornography. I don't think we've really fully understood how this has shaped culture and fed a patriarchal abuse and harassment, and even just a misconception of power when it comes to male-

female relationships. Here's, what's terrifying is some of the fastest growing pornography victims, so people that are addicted to pornography, are young females.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You mean being the subject of pornography or users of pornography?

Danielle Strickland:

Users of pornography.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

Think about this. This is what's shaping your thoughts of how men and women relate to each other.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Got it.

Danielle Strickland:

Got it?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Danielle Strickland:

This is toxic. This is so toxic, because-

Carey Nieuwhof:

In other words, the very young women who are the victim of it are also users and perpetuating the system.

Danielle Strickland:

Yes, absolutely. This our main dominant way, men and women are learning to relate to each other is pornography. I think eventually, you've just got to go, "Whoa, this isn't good for us. This isn't good for our marriages. This isn't good for our workplace. This isn't good for our lives." Something needs to be talked about and talked about, about this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think about this as a pastor. I've been at this a few decades, and it's not like I've never looked at porn, but it's not a regular struggle of mine. I don't know. Thank God. It's not. I've got other areas of struggle, but porn isn't one of them. What do you do about this? Because some of the stats are now like 90% of males or have looked at porn, or 98. It's almost like saying, "Who's seen the sky lately?" We're almost at that level of, it's ubiquitous now. What would have passed as pornography 25 years ago is now just mainstream ads, mainstream television or movies, that kind of thing. How would you speak into that?

Danielle Strickland:

I think we have to identify, number one, that it's a problem. I think we have to start speaking about it. I think we need way more regular conversations that get us out of shame, fear, guilt, which cycles of ... I would say-

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you break that down? Because that is the thing, it's always shame, fear, guilt.

Danielle Strickland:

Somebody has to talk. Literally, men need to talk. They need to start telling the truth about what's going on. There's a friend of mine, Bruxy Cavey, at The Meeting House. He did a series on men and women or women in the church. Fantastic series on his podcast called Her Story. In the final one, he was talking about how this segregation is this model that we have for church.

Danielle Strickland:

We're always segregating the church, because we're afraid of each other and specifically women and men. He was challenging this idea that we would segregate each other. How is that going to help us? How will we ever learn to relate to each other as friends, colleagues, if we're always segregating each other? It is such a great critique of what we do in the church. It's fascinating. Somebody pushed back and said, "Surely, there are some times where segregation is the only answer, like in small accountability groups, for example, when we're talking about pornography or stuff like that."

Danielle Strickland:

Bruxy was like, "It's really interesting. I was thinking a lot about this, and I was thinking about the difference between having a group of men talk about their addiction to pornography or their temptations and pornography or whatever this is. Then, a group of mixed company where women are present, where men are talking about pornography." He said, "I wonder how much more powerful the accountability would be if you were accountable to the very people that are suffering, because of what it is that you're participating in."

Danielle Strickland:

He's like, "This is a fascinating thing that I'm struggling with this constant habit of objectifying women, and I'm going to talk about it to other men without any women." It was the first time I ever ... Because actually, as somebody who was pushing back, I was like, "Maybe he has a point there. That is a bit weird," but then as he actually started thinking it through, I was like, "That's a fascinating idea that we would segregate our own habit of objectification."

Danielle Strickland:

How much more healing and more powerful and more possible it might be for that accountability to matter if the people who suffer as a result are actually there. It's crazy, but it's also powerful. So powerful.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I am listening. The thing that's probably helped me the most is just seeing the image of God in people. Seeing the image of God in women and a man and in other people and in other races and people who

are not white. Back to the earlier part of the conversation, and I owe that to a number of friends in theology. Reggie Joiner harps on that a lot. When you really see the image of God in someone, it's really, really hard to treat them certain ways.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, because objectification is the opposite of humanizing people. It is dehumanizing people. Anything that objectifies people dehumanizes them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That can be money, that can be status, that can be power, that can be sex. It can be any of those things. We've started to drill down on the problem, but your book isn't just about the problem. You're trying to break down the shame, fear, guilt thing. Talk about the way forward. Your book's called Better Together, right?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've got it right here. Let me see How Women and Men, because I love the subtitle, Can Heal the Divide and Work Together to Transform the Future. This isn't like, "Everybody feel bad about it. You've done a bad job." Start painting the way forward for us, because I think you're right. It's not just a church problem. It's a cultural problem.

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's everywhere.

Danielle Strickland:

Here's the thing. Like, I actually believe that the good news to this generation has really known conflict in a way that's almost unprecedented in the globe today, like conflict everywhere. I think the good news looks like reconciliation. Like when Paul says the ministry of reconciliation is the gospel. The good news is the ministry of reconciliation. These are the same thing. I'm always like, "You want a message that's going to be relevant? You want to actually show a demonstration of what good news is? Live a reconciled life. Be reconciled."

Danielle Strickland:

"Figure out how to move out of a fear of difference to seeing difference as opportunity that would lead us to mutuality, which is interconnectedness, which is working together, which is collaborating together, which is dreaming together, which is where we're no longer afraid of each other. Where we actually can see each other as co-laborers in this beautiful stewarding of the world." That's what good news looks like. That's what it looks like. I feel like for me, this is maybe one of the greatest demonstrations of the power of the gospel in the time in which we're living is reconciliation.

Danielle Strickland:

I think between men and women, it's because it's everywhere. This was also one of the early signs of the early church was the fact that the divisions were removed. They were removed, and it was like a sign and a wonder. Women and men in that time, in Palestine. It was crazy. That's nuts.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can we talk about that for a second? Because sometimes I think he gets underplayed and sometimes ... I don't know that it gets overplayed, because I'm not an ancient historian. Can you just, for people who may not be familiar with the first century context, just what it was like before Christianity spread and then what some of the ... We have the verse, "There's neither male nor female, slave or free-"

Danielle Strickland:

In Galatians.

Carey Nieuwhof:

In Galatians. We know that stuff, but we live in a world where the church was pushing for women to get the vote. Many would argue that church has been oppressive, but the church has actually been responsible for a lot of the egalitarian thrust in culture. Can you take us back, from what you know, to the first century and the radical difference the early church made?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. The radical difference wasn't made through lobbying. It was made through demonstrating it in real life. I think that's also a really important distinction is that the good news is something you live. Not just something you tell. This was a day and age where rabbis, so these are Jewish leaders, would get up in the morning and thank God they weren't born a woman or a Gentile. This was, being born a woman was considered blameworthy. Like it was a sin.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Always seen that in China in the 20th century. It's changing a little bit now-

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... but it was like, "Abort that baby."

Danielle Strickland:

Absolutely. Actually, I've talked to multiple people who are still ... They were born in countries where, because they were female, they were beaten, they were hid, they were stuck in places where they couldn't be seen, because they were so disappointed. Their parents were literally so disappointed they were girls. You just think, "What on earth? Where does that even come from?" Anyway, it's that kind of in Rome, of course, the occupier, the divisions between people were at an all time high. Classism, racism, sexism, all of the -isms. I feel, kind of like today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Feels like today.

Danielle Strickland:

The demonstration of the church in that time was to not give into those divisions. We will not do that. We're actually going to do something different. Jesus of course personifying this in the way that he treated everybody, seeing the sacred through all the disguises; rich, poor, beggar, healthy, unhealthy, Gentile, Jew, women. This was really strategic. Jesus, the way that he spoke to women and talked to women and empowered women and sent women even as apostles. "Go tell the disciples." Literally, an apostolic-

Carey Nieuwhof:

The first witnesses.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, female.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Which if you were writing a fake story.

Danielle Strickland:

In a time and age where they had no credibility under the law. He's obviously doing something on purpose. You wouldn't accidentally do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm not trying to take this into an area that's not your expertise, that's certainly not mine, but this idea of husband, but one wife. That was a pretty radical statement from what I understand in the first century that, "I'm going to be loyal to this one woman for life."

Danielle Strickland:

Not just loyal, but love. That was crazy town, because they were property. This was a value thing. This was like a setup for money and power and privilege. This wasn't an actual relationship. Paul's instructions for husbands to love their wives as they love themselves was so cataclysmic crazy. If you were a Roman hearing that, you would be like, "This is nuts. What?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's insane.

Danielle Strickland:

It's insane.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because a lot of marriage was about power and position and provision and that kind of thing. But this idea that the radical love that God has put into our hearts is something that now informs our relationship.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, and that your love of God would be seen through that love for each other. That's the Christian. That is the image of God being displayed. That is the ministry of reconciliation. This is the power of the gospel demonstrated through our relationships. How we actually relate to one another is a demonstration of the gospel or not. I think it's really important to understand that. At the center of this book is the ministry of reconciliation. It's the cross. I suggest that everything's either pushing towards a better future through the cross or it's pulling back away from a better future.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've got that interesting diagram between pull-back to the past or push-forward to the future. The future-

Danielle Strickland:

You're always doing one of those things. For me, that was a really interesting thing. I'm either pushing forward with this cross message, with this gospel, or I'm pulling back from it. I think that's important for you to realize as a leader. Every leader needs to realize they're either moving forward or they're pulling back in the gospel.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you've got fear versus action, segregation versus proximity, patriarchy versus clarity, et cetera, et cetera. Can you drill down a little bit more on the push-pull?

Danielle Strickland:

All this really came to ... I was in Rwanda with World Relief, and I was sitting in this village called the Transformation Village. There are these centers in Rwanda, which suffered that genocide 20 years ago where we all just were ... Over a million people were killed in 40 days. It was crazy, massacred. I was sitting in this Transformation Village, which are these examples Rwanda has used to say, "We're going to rebuild the country. We're never going to let this happen again."

Danielle Strickland:

They've used this thing called One People. You're not allowed to be a tribe. You're just Rwanda now. There's no tribes anymore.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's no Hutu, Tutsi.

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah. There's no divisions anymore. "We're no longer going to live this way." What they did was they looked for people that would live reconciliation in real life in these transformation villages, so they could say, "This is what it looks like." We visited one of these transformation villages and we met Grace who lives there and her neighbor, John. Grace tells us about the massacre of her family. She's the only

survivor. Just about her own trauma and her own journey of getting to forgiveness as a way of coping, just living, because otherwise she would just want to off her self every single day.

Danielle Strickland:

She talked about how forgiveness was one of the ways that unlocked healing in her life. We're just like, "That's awesome. Great." Then she's like, "Now, I want to introduce you to my neighbor. My neighbor is John." She literally reaches over and grabs his hand tenderly. He says, "John is also the man who killed my family."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Danielle Strickland:

I'm like three feet from them, and I'm just like, "No, no, that's not a thing. You can't. You've just taken this thing way too far." You know? Then, John begins to tell his story through tears. Every time he would not be able to speak, she would just reach over and pat his hand. At one point, she just said, "I'm so glad you're here, John. I'm so glad you're here." John talked about being part of this massacre, killing her family. Being caught up in this thing that happened, and then just being so filled with self-loathing and hiding. 150 prisoners they had, Rwanda, and he was one of those prisoners.

Danielle Strickland:

He talked about every morning he would get up and just want to off himself and wondered why he was alive. Then, some Rwandan Christians went into visit and minister to prisoners, all of these people that had massacred their family and said, "You can be forgiven. This isn't the end. This isn't the last act. There's an act bigger than this. It's called a resurrection and Jesus is the King of that act." Anyway, he received Jesus and he was like, "Maybe I could be forgiven."

Danielle Strickland:

Then, they were like, "Anyone that wants to make restitution, willing to tell the truth about what happened and wants to serve Rwanda and rebuild the country, we'll reduce your who sentenced by half if you're willing to be part of this project." He was like, "I don't think I deserve it. I think I probably should die, but I really do want to rebuild this country and I want to make things right." So, he put up his hand for the project. They moved them into this Transformation Village, Grace and John. Gave him a plot of land with a pile of bricks in the middle and said, "Build a new life." So then they started ... We're like, "What? How?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Unbelievable.

Danielle Strickland:

Totally. I'm just, "I can touch you, but I still can't believe this is happening." They just said, "Every day, we would meet at the brick pile." She said, "The first thing we did was we separated our property, so we wouldn't have to see each other, because I was filled with fear and he was filled with loathing and shame. So every time we met each other, this fear and the shame and loathing would come in." He said,

"We tried not to make eye contact, and we just went about building our own houses on our own plot of land, but we kept meeting at the brick pile."

Danielle Strickland:

Grace said, "I found there were things I couldn't do, and I would have to eventually ask John for his help. John would not only help me, but every time I would take a break, he would come over and he would work on my house and he would do things. Every time we met," she said, "eventually we started looking at each other in the eye and now we're like the best of friends and I'm his family. Then my family's gone, and I'm his family. We've decided to live a reconciled life." There's not a dry eye in the place. Our mouths are dropped. We're just like, "Now, forgiveness just became something that I need to do more of."

Danielle Strickland:

Also, you realize, "Whoa, this message, it's power." Then when Paul says, "This is the ministry of reconciliation and it is the good news," you're like, "It really is the good news. It's other worldly. This was a sign and a wonder that there's a way of life that's different. We do not have to be stuck in these perpetual victimization. Just, we can be free and that the world's desperate for this." I think between women and men, this is the most important message of all. It's time to live a different way. You don't have to live this way anymore.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's here you're pointing in the book, and you're trying to-

Danielle Strickland:

We're not enemies. We're not enemies. You're not an enemy of mine, because you're a man. You are a gifted, beautiful human being. You're good. You were made good. You're sacred, and so am I. We were actually made, we were designed for collaboration, Genesis. Before the fall, we were designed to co-steward the world together.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, you talk about getting beyond the blame, shame, all of that?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You tell a story early in the book, because you speak at Willow Creek on a regular basis. Right after all the allegations came out during the Me Too Movement and the horrible stories started pouring out of there, you went into Willow Creek to speak and you took a lot of criticism for that, because we live in a "Cancel" culture. We live in a "Banished to the edge of the universe, never to be spoken of again" culture, and one where you make ... Why did you go?

Danielle Strickland:

I felt called to go. I felt like God said, "Someone needs to speak here, and actually what needs to be spoken here is a message of hope, possibility, and not dismissal." That's the message of reconciliation.

You cannot have reconciliation without forgiveness on one hand and then repentance and restoration on another.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Correct, correct.

Danielle Strickland:

There's no repentance and no restoration, there's actually no reconciliation. Make no mistake, but that actually that reconciliation is the heart of God. That this is a better story that we're writing together, and we're supposed to write it together. We cannot just fill this void with more fear. We can't do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Point us toward a few steps we can do. I love the hope. I will hang on to that story, because it's a story that sounds otherworldly. It really sounds like, "One day when we die, that's probably what heaven will be like. That's great. Awesome," and yet exactly the kingdom is a realized kingdom.

Danielle Strickland:

Walter Brueggemann helped us here, and this is my first chapter sort of like, if you can't imagine it, you're never going to get it. The church's literally called to help the world imagine a better one. We're supposed to be the city on a hill, the light of the world.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It feels like it's getting worse. It feels like on social, it's so polarized, Danielle, and you know that.

Danielle Strickland:

I know.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Everybody just ... I call them Twitter mobs. You're jumping on each other. How do we break this down? Give us a couple of tangible steps. Here's an example, because this will be very real. Talk to church leaders or business leaders who have practiced that Billy Graham rule, so to speak, or just like, "I'm never going to meet with a woman directly," who are in that pattern. What would you say to them?

Danielle Strickland:

Change your mind and then change your practice. One, change your mind. I think phenomenal leaders use their power to empower other people. If the dominant question you're asking is, "How can I protect myself?" You're asking the wrong question. It's a terrible leadership question. "How can I protect myself?" It's bad. It's going to lead to terrible things. What I would say is, "How can I empower people?" Ask a different question. "How do I help people? How do I help other people? How do I help people who don't have as much power as me?" That's the ultimate leadership question.

Danielle Strickland:

That's the ultimate Jesus' leadership question is, "How do I use my power to empower other people, and particularly people who don't have power?" I would say, one, change your mind and then I'd say change

your practice. I would suggest that you intentionally begin to listen. I use this with Amplify Peace, and how to change our minds and cultures and lives. One is, listen to voices you don't normally hear. Find them. If you're around a leadership table and there's no women there, go find the women and ask them why they're not there. You'll discover some things that you never noticed before about why they're not there. It's fascinating.

Danielle Strickland:

HSBC did this with their banking system, and they realized that they were spending copious amounts of money, trying to find new senior managers, because they were losing all their managers. Then, somebody had the idea, "We should go find our old managers and find why we lost them." They called up all the old managers. Turns, a vast majority of them were female who were having children and the banking nine to five realities and the lack of support for parental leave and all these things were in the way. They just were like, "Fine, no bank. I'd rather raise my kids in the healthy way."

Danielle Strickland:

Then, after they listened, they identified some of the problems. They started to learn that there were other ways to do things. They began to learn from other companies. "It's a digital age. Our banking hours' fixed now." Is this the best thing even for their clientele? They started realizing there was way more flexibility that was going to not only make things better for women, but make things better for everybody. They learned these new ways of doing things, flexible hours, workplace practices, day-cares at work, all sorts of things that they learned. Then, they just lived differently.

Danielle Strickland:

They implement, implement, implement, implement. Now, they're one of the leading companies of the world to work for. They understand that diversity now instead of just being a practice of discipline, because it's better. They realize it's actually in their best interest. I'd say the same thing for every church leader. This is not just something that you have to do, because it's the better thing to do, although it is that. If it's just conviction that'll get you there, then by all means, use conviction. But I'm going to say, it's probably your best opportunity you've ever seen to do things differently. Everyone will benefit, everyone. The whole world.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I would agree. To get right back to a rule that I practiced for many years, just out of what I thought was integrity, Toni and I, we're going to have dinner in a few minutes, but I'm on the road a lot and she's got her own podcast now. She has her studio upstairs and her cohost is a male. Now, he happens to have been a family friend for 18 years. She's like, "What do you think about me and Rob recording when you're on the road?" I'm like, "I trust Rob. I trust you. I'm not worried about it. If Rose is cool, I'm cool," his wife. I really don't worry about it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think our marriage is just fine and strong enough for all that stuff. I would just say to leaders, you want to rethink it. You want to make sure your spouse's on the same page, you have a strong marriage, that kind of thing. There are definitely some systemic barriers, and the same goes with leadership development as well.

Danielle Strickland:

Great leadership ratio that all the research says, "If you want to change the culture of a team, there's a thing called a 30% quota." Lots of times what will happen is people will react and say, "We need a woman on the board, so let's just grab a woman on the board." That's tokenism. Often, that backfires. Even if you get the right woman, if she's the only one, it's called the only syndrome, it's like, she's always the dissenting voice. She's always the exception. She's always being left out. 30% actually will change the culture of the team.

Danielle Strickland:

That's when you'll experience your best culture shift, 30%. 30% quota, I say that a lot. Aim for 30% quota. Find those women, identify those women, resource those women, deploy those women, and you'll find that that makes a massive difference to the culture of a team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fascinating. Anything else, Danielle? We covered a lot.

Danielle Strickland:

I feel like we did. No. The only thing I would say is that I do end with hope. I think this is a really hopeful message. Also, I'm the mother of three boys, so I refuse to give into the cynical despairing culture that says men are bad. It's not true in my experience. My husband's amazing. I know so many men who have been amazing and empowering and generous and kind and good. All three of my boys are not destined to grow up as harassers or jerks. There's no question in my mind. We've got to change this. You have to change the narrative and it's time. I'm full of hope for the future.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've got one more question for you. I meant to ask this earlier. It can be very easy, particularly you're Enneagram 8, so justice-oriented and your whole life moves in that direction. Part of justice, and you can see this in the cultural narrative and it's something you've hinted at in multiple conversations, including this one, that you've had to get past. That anger, shame. "I'll just guilt these people into change." How have you pivoted on that, personally?

Danielle Strickland:

Literally, in this specific area, I tuck my son Moses in to bed at night. I say to him, "Who made you?" Moses looks at me with this big grin. He's like, the epitome of joy, and he says, "God made me." I say, "He sure did, honey. How did he make you?" He looks at me and he says, "He made me good." I say, "He made you fearfully. He made you wonderfully. He knit you together. He designed every day for you. He made you good. I agree." Then, I realized that I agree with that about everyone. Everyone. Underneath all of the oppression, all of the cycles, all of the sin, all of the suffering, all of the injustice, all of the systemic, all of the patriarchy, all of the misogyny.

Danielle Strickland:

If you strip it all away, there is the sacred image of God etched inside of every single human person. That's what we're after. Let's let that shine. Let's let that shine. I just choose to believe it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You want to live in Rwanda, right? That beautiful, beautiful vision of reconciliation and hope.

Danielle Strickland:

Let's make every church a transformation village. Let's do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Danielle, that's great. Where can people find you these days? We're talking podcast. You have one. You might relaunch it?

Danielle Strickland:

I sure do. daniellestrickland.com. Find me there. You can find all the things on there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The books, Amazon, everywhere books are sold-

Danielle Strickland:

Everywhere.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's called Better Together.

Danielle Strickland:

Audible, all that jazz.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's out now?

Danielle Strickland:

Yeah, that's out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right. Danielle, once again, what a joy.

Danielle Strickland:

Thanks, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thanks. Well, that was super refreshing, honest, challenging, and as always with Danielle, inspiring. I love those in-person conversations. We don't get enough of them, and this one happened right here in my home studio after a delicious Big Green Egg dinner. That was an awful lot of fun too. I spent some time again with Danielle. We have show notes for you guys. You can head on over to careynieuwhof.com/episode362. They are there along with some quotes and some other things that you can share. Remember, today's episode is brought to you by Lead a Better Team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you want, not maybe a new team, because you dream about that as a leader, but a better team, like how do you make the actual people you have better? Go to leadabetterteam.com and get some introductory pricing before it expires. It's brought to you by Gloo Insights. If you want to actually know who is watching online, go to glooinsights.com/carey. On the next episode, we have Jon Tyson coming up. This was a rich conversation, man. Last time he was on the show, I just felt like it could've been a three hour conversation. We did it again or he did it again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We talk about all kinds of things. Like, what is the church missing if you rush back to normal too fast? He's got some deep insights. Here's an excerpt.

Jon Tyson:

The thing that I think is so sad ... There's so many ways I could respond, but I think the thing that's so sad is I feel like in our quest for normalcy, we didn't learn any of the great lessons we needed to learn. I feel like as a whole, we missed them. This could have been an absolute revolution. Everybody was like, "Is this the beginning of a move of God? Look how many people are crying out to God." I was like, "God is so gracious. He will respond to panic prayers. He often sends things to get us through."

Jon Tyson:

When it all just sort of like, "I think we're going to be okay," all those 24/7 prayer meetings just faded off. All the big efforts to sort of drifted back to ... Then the question became, "How soon could we reopen?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is coming up next episode on the podcast. Now, it's time for What I'm Thinking About. What I'm Thinking About is your team. I've got this brand new course called Lead a Better Team. You might be saying, "What kinds of things are in the course?" I want to give you a little excerpt, and I want to talk to you about your workflow system. So often, it's the things we don't think about that really hold back our team. What I try to do ... It's a nine-unit course, online, on demand, is I try to show you, "Here's some hidden things that maybe you haven't thought about as a leader that you can fix."

Carey Nieuwhof:

One of them is workflow system. You know, if you didn't really lead a remote team prior to COVID, you hit a brick wall with this thing probably in week one. Because so much of office culture, when it comes to productivity, is about informal and inefficient systems. What happens is you try to get a project done and it's cool to be able to talk to people outside of the meeting or in the lunch room or wherever, but so much of your communication happens. Now, I've led in-person teams and virtual teams. Right now, I lead a hundred percent virtual team and I realized, "Wow, we need a workflow system."

Carey Nieuwhof:

You know what the default is in most offices? Is people just talking to each other casually, and then sometimes you just send an email. Email is an incredibly inefficient way. What I show you how to do in Lead a Better Team is to create what I call a workflow system. You should design one. I'm going to share mine. All right? You don't have to do this, but if you want to, this has helped us become so much more

efficient and effective, because clarifying how you do things will make everyone better at the things that you do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What we do is we use email as a last resort. In fact, our staff are not allowed to email each other. You're like, "What?" Now, if we're interacting with an outside client, let's say there's a podcast partner, and I've got to talk to my team and that partner at the same time, yes, we'll use email, but we don't. What we try to do, and I'm going to walk you through this system. Again, you don't need this system. You just need a system and a system that works for you. We try to hold a lot of things for weekly one-on-one meetings. Everyone has a direct report. I've got three right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm just like, "Hey, just hang on to that for a weekly meeting." We spend usually about a half hour together once a week. I show you exactly how to transform your weekly one-on-one meetings, by the way, with a whole unit on that in Lead a Better Team, and I just say, "Keep a list." If it's not super urgent ... It's amazing how few things are super urgent. You get a text, it's like, "Hey, what should I do about this?" It's like, "You didn't need to answer that right now," but it just interrupted you. If it can wait, wait to the weekly one-on-one meeting, and just have an efficient system to park issues, so you don't lose track of them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ours is Asana. I just have an Asana with all of my staff members as a separate task. If I've got something, "I've got talk to Jacquelyn about this," or "I have to talk to Erin about this," or "I need to talk to Sam about that," I just write it in their file, and I keep it. Then, we discuss it during their weekly meeting. They do the same for me. That solves a lot of the day-to-day clatter that is distracting. Number two, you have a weekly team meeting. We do a video call. We do all of our calls via video, and most team things can wait again, until if you're having a weekly meeting. It's not that hard. Then, you've got to figure out a messaging system.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What we do, if it needs a same day or next day response, but it's not super urgent, "I don't need this, this very second," we use Slack. Now, you don't have to use Slack, but this replaces email. Our team's all on Slack. We have a couple of outside people who work pretty closely with us on Slack too. If I'm like, "I need to hear from Sarah by the end of the day," or "I need to hear from Lauren by the end of the day," then I'll just Slack them. Then, that takes care of everything. You get to Slack when you have the time. Now, again, you could use that like within two hours, but we just say, "Hey, by the end of the day, make sure he gets to Slack." That works for a lot of stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then if it becomes urgent, like, "No, I'm at a stonewall, because I can't do this until I know the information," that's when you text people. We're like, "Hey, yeah. If it can't wait for Slack, if it's got to be done sooner, shoot me a text." I will occasionally look at my texts and then I get back to people. Then, if it's really important or complicated or urgent, phone call or video call. Important as in, "This really can't wait." When my staff sees my number come up on their call display, they know, "I need you right now." That's the signal. It's a nuclear option.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then, if it's really complicated or it involves conflict, which is relatively rare on our team, but let's say it does, then it's a phone call or a video call. Then email, once again, you see how little is dependent on email? It's only for interaction with outside clients, not people on your direct team. That's my system, but I promise you, when you get a thousand distractions a day, it is your workflow system. In *Lead a Better Team*, I will walk you through that in much more detail and give you the questions in the application guide to create the workflow system that works for your team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

When you get that moving, whether you lead a virtual team, a remote team, a hybrid team where you have some people who are distanced and some people who are in the office, you're going to have a universal system that works really, really well. You can tweak it. Slack may not be around forever. We might not find it helpful forever, or you might say, "No, let's use texts for different things," or "We'll use email for different things," but my goodness, I'll tell you, you can die in the land of reply-alls. You can die in the land of "I've got 17 texts I've got to answer."

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you just decide, "Here's how we're going to communicate. This is going to be our workflow system." My goodness, you will get so much more efficient and so much more effective. Obviously, leading a better team is about a lot more than that, but I've got about half the course where I show you how to deepen employee engagement by transforming your weekly one-on-one meetings by eliminating toxic culture. Also, I show you how you can create value statements. That took me years to figure out. I show you the shortcut, and then we talk in the second part of the course about moving to results-based leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've got a number of units on that, and then some pro tips on leading virtual or hybrid teams, or how do you even decide whether someone needs to be in the office or not? What if they want to work from home? What if they want flexible hours? All of that. All of that and more is available for introductory pricing right now at leadabetterteam.com. If you're listening outside of the launch window, don't worry. *Lead a Better Team* is going to be there. We would love to get that in your hand.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Head on over to leadabetterteam.com before it's too late. We would love to help you do that, because the cost of turnover is so expensive. The cost of inefficiency is so expensive. What if you don't need a new team? What if you just need a better team? Go to leadabetterteam.com. You can learn more now. Hope that was helpful. We're back next time with a fresh episode. Can't wait for you to hear the conversation with Jon Tyson. In the meantime, 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.