

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 386 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today, helps you lead like never before.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm really excited for today's conversation, we have Jeff and Terra Mattson, a couple of leaders who are new to me, but they wrote a fascinating book on shrinking the integrity gap. And that's what we talk about... I don't know about you, nobody I know sets out to fail morally, or destroy their life, or... You just don't do it. How does it happen? And we go there, we go there. They both have a lot of insight, it's a fascinating conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

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Carey Nieuwhof:

Jeff and Terra, she is a therapist, and he is a coach, and they're both involved in ministry. We talk about how to tell if you're heading for a moral failure. Signs of a narcissistic leader, that was just fascinating to me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a little bit of a problem. I had an episode with Erwin McManus a couple years ago, I'll link to in the show notes, that talked about narcissism and leadership, and how platform can be a trap for young leaders. This is all stuff that's really close to my heart, in light of, not only the headlines, but just the damage it does to people, to congregations, to ministry, to families, to dreams that people had for themselves and others.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let me talk about the integrity gap in leadership. Jeff and Terra advocate for healthy leadership, and they are founders of the Living Wholehearted Podcast, and the visionaries behind the global movement, Courageous Girls. They also offer Wholehearted Leadership Cohorts, at [livingwholehearted.com](https://livingwholehearted.com). Jeff's an executive leadership coach, Terra is a licensed therapist, and they're raising two daughters in Oregon. The book is called, *Shrinking the Integrity Gap*, if you're interested, by the way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

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Carey Nieuwhof:

And how's your stress level? I mean, if you want to shrink your integrity gap, you're going to have to get better at listening to yourself. And the Dwell app can help with that. Dwell is an audio Bible app, it's got a very simple mission, to help you get in The Word, and stay in The Word. They've got inspiring voices, Bible translations, original music, and some of the features of the app include listening plans, playlist, and Dwell mode, and you can use that to meditate, memorize, and pray while listening to Scripture. And they've even got a sleep timer built in so, it makes a great gift. You can skip the wrapping, and bless someone with the gift of Dwell, this holiday season. You can go to [dwellapp.io/carey](https://dwellapp.io/carey) and get 20% off an annual or lifetime subscription.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hey leaders, you've almost made it through 2020, isn't that incredible? We have a pretty powerful 2021 lined up for you, and really want to help you bring the best. We're going to do a few little fun things for you, as well, along the way. Just want to let you know, thanks for hanging in with us, we are trying to hang in for you, and we're going to get an incredible kickoff to 2021 going in, I tell you about that at the end.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I also, want to talk to you about how to build your integrity so, I'll do that in the, What I'm Thinking About. But without further ado, here's my conversation with Jeff and Terra Mattson. Jeff and Terra, welcome to the podcast.

Terra Mattson:

Thanks for having us.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, thanks so much, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it's good to be with you. We live in an age where... I don't know whether you would agree with us or not, but I feel like the integrity gap is about as wide as it's ever been.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We have pastors, and business leaders, and politicians, falling all the time. And it always seems to be the same script, you ever noticed that? It's sex, money, or power. And sometimes, it gets a little more creative than that, but why can't we seem to solve this one, in your view?

Terra Mattson:

Well, honestly, it comes down to the bottom line of, we're sinners, right? And we tend to as leaders, sometimes, lose touch with our own humanity, and forget what even brought us into our journey of leadership, and often it's from a place of pain.

Terra Mattson:

And when we haven't processed, or resolved that, it's going to leak at some point. Just the temptations of leadership pull at all of those things you were just talking about: sex, power, money.

Terra Mattson:

Sadly, it is the same script over and over, and we're going to talk about some of those roots today, and what drives that. Our hope is that we can shift that trajectory. Maybe, we can have a new generation of leaders that are actually, living with integrity.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, it won't happen by accident. It's going to happen with intention, it's going to happen through mentors, and that's the only way to reach this, now, largest generation before us of emerging leaders, and leaders that are already in power, and influence, and exerting that in corporations, in ministry settings, everywhere.

Jeff Mattson:

We need people that are walking the talk, and that doesn't mean perfection to come alongside it. And that's what we're about, we're trying to make a dent in that, within our little corner, and with our little influence, whatever God has in mind for us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jeff, you do some executive coaching. Terra, you are a licensed therapist, and counselor, and you come at it from slightly different viewpoints, but... Sorry, not viewpoints, but different perspectives I guess, you could say.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How does a leader know that he or she has an integrity gap? I've heard over the years, and I don't know if this is true or not, but if you're the person who says... I would never have an affair, you're in danger. Is that true? How would I know I have an integrity gap?

Jeff Mattson:

That's a great question. Well, let's define it really quick. There are plenty of books about integrity, and what do we look at it like. Integrity is where we say all of our heart, our mind, our soul, our relationships, are hopefully, moving in a singular, and from our perspective, a God orientated direction, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Not perfect, and it's not an event, you don't just go to a conference and say, "I'm now going to start living with integrity." Or wear a t-shirt, right? No, it's a lifestyle.

Jeff Mattson:

The reality is, is that it's a set of choices that we make every day, all day long, over the course of our life. And there's ebbs and flows. And who has done that perfectly? Only Jesus, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Every one of us has an integrity gap. The gap is the distance between the values that we'd preach, things that we say we're about, and what we believe, and how we live, and what's important to us, and the values we actually live and practice.

Jeff Mattson:

And there's a gap between there, an example might just be... I might say, "of course, I love my wife, I'd take a bullet for her," right? Any husband that loves his wife would say something like that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

There's what I'm espousing, there's what I'm saying, and yet, I might also say at the same time... "I just can't stop yelling at her."

Jeff Mattson:

What is this, right? And it's a noble pursuit, we say, to shrink that baby down as much as possible in this life. No matter what worldview you have, but especially, if you are follower of Christ. You're naming that as something you value, and espouse.

Jeff Mattson:

It is a noble pursuit to shrink that down, we can't do that on our own, we have to do that in relationship with Him, and with each other.

Terra Mattson:

And I'd say the warning signs, is when we're minimizing that, right? When we're saying... "Yeah, so what? I yell at my wife once in a while, we're all sinners, and fall short of glory of God." Yes, that's true, but can I be honest about the fact that, that isn't God's best for me.

Terra Mattson:

Not in shame, and guilt, but in a true sense of humility to say, "that isn't who I want to be, and that's not how I want to treat my wife." Those are the places of vulnerability, is when we dismiss it, we ignore it, and over time, it gets louder and bigger.

Terra Mattson:

There's a lot of warning signs that we'll talk about more, and we talk about 10 particular symptoms, they're not exhaustive, but they are red flags for us to say, "hey, we're in danger if we're not addressing this."

Terra Mattson:

We wrote the book in a way that we could all look at it, and be able to look through, "where am I struggling right now in my life, in my leadership," and then I can hone in on that chapter for a season.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, okay. I would like to go through the 10 signs, because I think that'll be interesting. But let me ask you a question first. A lot of the people who listen to this podcast are in a public role, you're either the pastor at a church, it could be a small church, it's still a public role.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Or a larger church, lots of large megachurch pastors listen to this, executives, CEOs, founders, entrepreneurs, business owners... We all have a public role, we're leaders, right? It's a leadership podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Does that put extra pressure on the integrity gap? Does that make it harder? Any thoughts on that?

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, I can start. I'll just say it does, absolutely. The role of leadership period, is traumatic in and of itself.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it doesn't matter whether you have a public profile or not, it's hard.

Jeff Mattson:

The more influence that you have, the obviously, that... That can increase, in terms of just how are you navigating the challenges that exist there.

Jeff Mattson:

For sure, as leaders, we say that if you have a following, you're a leader. If you're a church pastor, or if you're a Fortune 500 CEO, or you happen to be a parent that works at Starbucks, but you're parenting, you're a leader, if you have a following, that's the fact.

Jeff Mattson:

And how you live and lead matters to everyone in your wake, whether you have one person in your wake, or thousands. We take that seriously, we think that Christ takes that seriously. And if you're a follower of Jesus, and you're in a public role that's not vocational ministry, let's say, you're a business leader, God wants us to take that seriously.

Jeff Mattson:

And the stewardship, every resource that he's given to us, just like he would the church, capital C, or lower case C.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, and I think, the struggle with the more influence we have, is we lose sight of who we are as Jeff and Terra. We start to believe our own press, and the voices become multiplied, everybody critiques us as a leader, right?

Terra Mattson:

The more public you are, the more people think they have a right to tell you who you should be, who you shouldn't be.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

Learning to live with the voice of one, and a few of your safe people, is a discipline that is required to make it in the long haul of leadership. And it's really hard, and we're all vulnerable to it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, because I've found, leadership's complicated so, your day job is not easy, you're solving problems that you get paid to solve, and that often, other people can't solve.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Welcome to leadership. And then you're right, as things get bigger, it feels like, there's an... I have found that I've had to actively resist not wanting to be vulnerable. In other words, it was easy when I was starting out, and things were really small, to go, "hey, I messed up yesterday, or, here's what I did."

Carey Nieuwhof:

And there's this, Lysa Terkeurst, and I have talked about this on this podcast before, but there's almost a pressure to be the master. To say, "hey, 15 years ago, I struggled with X, but now, I don't have any problems," right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that's, first of all, not true... Is there a pressure, the bigger things get, to pretend that things are better, is that normal? What do you guys find?

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, I'll just say that, as humans, we have a tendency for hero worship.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

This is the tendency, right? Leaders can know that, and I'm not saying every leader is knowledgeable, or thinking about that, and likes that, or wants that, or uses that in an appropriate way.

Jeff Mattson:

But the fact is, is that as you grow and influence, and you have more people looking to you, and the tendency is to be placed on a pedestal. And then, as Terra indicated, that we are vulnerable as leaders, because we're human, and we long, all of us, to be known, and to know others... To like that too much.

Jeff Mattson:

And to begin by believing our own press, and isolating. And isolating, why? Because we need to keep up that image, that everyone else that we're working to manage-

Terra Mattson:

A lot of pressure.

Jeff Mattson:

That people have about us. And that, then increases pressure, it's just one of the vulnerabilities that we're-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, social media does not make that easier, does it?

Terra Mattson:

No, absolutely not, and it's been one of the beasts that we've had to be able to rein in, in our own health and wholeness, as leaders ourselves.

Terra Mattson:

It's one of the things that we need to consider as leaders, is the dual relationships. Particularly, in the church, as well. Because when you've got a smaller circle, you can delegate your different hats a little bit more, but all of a sudden, now you are best friends, now you're colleagues, now you're the boss, now you're the world leader systemically, and it's hard to find those safe people, the larger your wake of influence is.

Terra Mattson:

The expectations get pretty high, and I would say, the systemic problem is in the followers too. Followers put too much pressure on leaders, to lose sight of their own humanity as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Just to confess... And I want to come back to some of what you said in a little bit.

Carey Nieuwhof:

To be totally transparent, my wife and I were doing a live Q and A the other night on Zoom, and I was helping her with it. And we went on a half hour early, and it wasn't set up the way I wanted. We almost had this little argument before we're doing a marriage seminar, and I'm like, "wow, this is not cool."

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Carey Nieuwhof:

But it was all me, and I'm like, I thought I had this vision of how it was going to go, and then I didn't like the way that I was approaching things, and I'm like "ughh".

Carey Nieuwhof:

Did I hear that you were in practice, did you say 15 years?

Terra Mattson:

Mm-hmm.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay so, you would have a bit of a pre-digital practice. A lot of sociologists, psychologists, would say around 2012, 2013, that's when things really started to take off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You started 2005 ish?

Terra Mattson:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Was there a difference you saw, 15 years ago, from what you see now in the pressure... Did social media change it a little bit?

Terra Mattson:

Yes, drastically, actually...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Terra Mattson:

The overwhelming sense of, what Jeff's calling, the image. People started getting an idea of their brand, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

What's my brand? Is this in line with how I want to present myself to the world?

Terra Mattson:

Now, I'll confess my own control issues, I'm just like, "hey, Jeff, you can't wear that, because it doesn't mesh with our brand." One sort of issue that couples face when you're going to church on Sunday morning, and you have get over with... Jeff's like...

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're so off brand on Sunday, you know that Jeff? Like, totally.

Jeff Mattson:

Yes, I am.

Terra Mattson:

But when it comes to a larger podcast, or getting a more public role, there's just a lot of that complexity that goes inside our own heads. But I would say, the greatest pull has been also, on our time.

Terra Mattson:

It's been the biggest time sucker for leaders, just in turning into another addiction, and a way to avoid our inner life, and our relationships that matter most to us.

Jeff Mattson:

And what it does to the neural biology, right? I mean, I'm not privy to Terra's counseling sessions over all those 15 years, but I could hear her come, and say, "it's just amazing to me."

Jeff Mattson:

Even just as the spouse, just to recall conversations that we had about just what she was seeing about how people were coming in, numbed out, on the early end of the digital invasion, if you will, we call it.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

What it was doing to a leader's brain, right? And people bringing their technology, their devices, into a counseling session, and being on them, and having her, as a counselor, having to actually, have them put the devices down.

Carey Nieuwhof:

"Can you put that away, we're here to talk about your social media addiction, can you put that away?"

Jeff Mattson:

That's right.

Terra Mattson:

But we think we're too important sometimes, right? That's part of the issues as leaders, the world can't go on without us.

Jeff Mattson:

And the... Yeah...

Terra Mattson:

We can talk about that more in a little bit, but that is part of that dynamic.

Carey Nieuwhof:

"I just got to answer this text, sorry guys, I'll just be back in..." Right, that kind of dynamic?

Jeff Mattson:

That's it, and just the dopamine hits that people were... Even on the early front of it, and where they are now, it's just...

Terra Mattson:

Off the charts.

Jeff Mattson:

It's overwhelming. It's so, the majority of people we see, both in the counseling space, but also in the organizational development business side of things, right?

Jeff Mattson:

And you can get away with few things in business environments, and there's some protocols that are in place in certain environments, that don't allow for those kind of interruptions. It just depends on the culture of the org.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. You talked about some signs. Feel free to walk us through all 10, or pick some of the big ones. I'd like you to read our mail about our integrity gaps.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, one of the biggest ones that actually, is hard for us to connect the dots, but it is the fact that we have unresolved trauma. We've found over the work of 20 years, between ministry, private practice, executive coaching, and working with a lot of high capacity leaders, is that a majority of them have some sort of trauma from their younger years that never was resolved.

Terra Mattson:

Most trauma survivors fall into two camps, we either become victims, and keep getting re-victimized, or we become overachievers, and will never be victimized again. And we become performers, to be able to lay, what we would call, marble on dry rot.

Terra Mattson:

A continued layer of looking good, and making sure that I keep people at bay, and they won't go deeper. That's what I found in my counseling office is, a spouse would bring a well-loved leader into my office, or

children start acting up in their teen years, and mom and dad can't hold them together, and there's these unresolved traumas that need to be addressed.

Terra Mattson:

The truth is, is that every change agent in the world has probably, had a pretty horrific story of some sort.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

And that again, we can push that towards doing poor, bad in the world, or we can really, make a change, because we're not scared of hard. That's part of the results of trauma.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you define trauma? Are you talking about the ACE test? The adverse childhood experience, is it something else? How would you define that?

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, great question. We define it a little more broadly in that, it's anything out of the ordinary. If you weren't suppose to lose your child, and you lose your child. If parents aren't-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like you mean, in a crowd, or something?

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, or to death.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I get it. I didn't know what you meant. Okay.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, marriage falling apart, ending up in addiction, or having a spouse who's an addict. Anything that's out of the ordinary, losing a job. Again, ministry through just the change of economy. A lot of people having to shift their-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Getting fired, getting furloughed, getting laid off... Death.

Terra Mattson:

Anything unexpected. I'm driving to work, and I don't expect to be in a car accident, I get in a car accident, that's traumatic. What happens with the trauma is what turns into post-traumatic stress disorder.

Terra Mattson:

If I'm not finding care, and comfort, and been able to process it, then it will get stored in my body, and cause all kinds of ailments, and different things that will leak out in funky ways.

Jeff Mattson:

Maladaptive coping strategies.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Carey, this is something that's not new to you, is that leaders minimize trauma all the time, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

And actually, what we need to do, is we need to get in touch actually... And it's part of a maladaptive coping strategy to overcome, or achieve. How many times have you heard a leader say, "well, that was my past, and here's what I've done since then." Or, "how can my past be impacting my present? It's not. And I'll show you how it's not," right?

Jeff Mattson:

But yet, that's a huge tell, that they actually, have unresolved trauma, because they leak. We leak. We leak things aren't addressed, and worked through. As Terra described, trauma, the neural science is awesome.

Jeff Mattson:

Just revealing what we've known as followers of Christ about God's design for our brains for so long, it's just... So many cool things are happening right now, and what we know is, is that trauma is stored in the body.

Jeff Mattson:

And it takes... That's why talk therapy sometimes doesn't work, you have to use some other tools that connect to the brain, and that rewiring of the brain, neuroplasticity is possible. It's incredible.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, that's the idea the body keeps the score, right? My wife's reading that book right now, and I'm sure it'll get to me eventually. Apparently, it's quite dense so, maybe, I'll get to page three, and give up, I don't know.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But that whole idea, right, that these vague, undiagnosed... Or sometimes very diagnosed things... Can actually, be anchored in trauma, that mind/body connection.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Here's a question, I don't know if you can answer it or not, but it's because I've thought about this, and if you look over 400 episodes of this show, you'll see evidence of that. Do more overachievers end up in leadership, that people who... Because the way I would phrase when I look, and this is totally amateur opinion so, take it and turn it into your professional stuff, okay?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I would say, when you have trauma, you either implode, or you explode. You implode in that, you succumb to addictions, or... I can't do anything right, and you end up on the margins of life, or you overachieve, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You explode and say, "no, I'm going to succeed, I'm going to make something of myself." You become the, A student, you go on, you become a doctor, you become whatever, you become the CEO, the boss, and you're compensating for that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One works for you, the other works against you. In the end, the unhealthy motivations all work against you. But do you think that leaders are overrepresented in that overachiever as a response to trauma? Or do you see victims in leadership as well, or what do you see?

Terra Mattson:

Oh, that is a great question. I think, that's spot on, and I actually, think we see both.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Terra Mattson:

In leadership, but majority, probably, would be the high capacity leaders are going to be the over-performers. But again, in the definition that we have for leadership, if you've got a following, you're a leader.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

If you're imploding inwardly, you're going to be impacting everybody in your wake. The high capacity leaders, overachiever, over-performers can just schmooze people. They're the ones that landed in my office, and the other counselor said, "you guys are doing awesome, you seem to have life together, why do you even need to be here?"

Terra Mattson:

And we have really strong sniffers, because we look the part. People always think we have it all together, until you really get to know us, and then you go, "they're kinda human too."

Terra Mattson:

But that idea, we have strong sniffers for the overachiever who's been able to fool everybody else, and has the disconnection to their inner victim. The one that has all those voices in there that's saying, you're messing up again, nobody loves you, if they knew... All of those internal voices.

Terra Mattson:

The only one that doesn't have those internal voices are really, the true narcissists who really, are constantly telling themselves they're pretty amazing, in order to protect the little ego.

Terra Mattson:

We can process that a little bit more, but we do see more and more narcissists in leadership today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jeff, what does your sniffer tell you, how do you sniff out an overachiever? Because "I don't go to counseling," this is me in my early 30s: "I don't go to counseling, I send people to counseling, and look at how awesome things are going right now," and then I realize, "you're a train wreck, Nieuwhof... Shut up."

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you smell that out?

Jeff Mattson:

Well, one of the ways is, just by what you just said, right? Arrogance is a chapter that we have in the book as a symptom that leaders are vulnerable to, and we both would be vulnerable to that.

Jeff Mattson:

Every leader, at some point in time, is going to be vulnerable to that mindset of, "my way is the best, or, my thinking is the best, I'm better than everyone else," in their mind.

Jeff Mattson:

They might never say that with their mouths, but motives are the tipping point. If you hear yourself, or you get some feedback from some others, that are beginning to just not get the things that you think that they're saying... That you're saying to them, and transferring information isn't working, and it's becoming a pattern, you might look at a blind spot.

Jeff Mattson:

And begin to evaluate, this is what's so important. We think that within high capacity leaders who are sure, those with the greatest influence on planet Earth right now, they must have at least, two people, that are not reporting to them, that are not where their livelihoods are not attached to it, that are mature, and healthy, and that leader can receive influence from.

Jeff Mattson:

Actually, receive influence from those types of people, in order to stay grounded, to stay in reality. Because every leader is going to be vulnerable to believing, like Terra said, their own press, and to that arrogant mindset.

Jeff Mattson:

The sniffer comes also when leaders isolate. If I see a leader that is isolated, and insulated from other people, and they have a hierarchical organizational structure, which instillates them at the top, and they have their commanders that you have to go through in order to get to them, and you can never get to them, that's definitely, a red flag for us.

Jeff Mattson:

Why is that? That is not the best organizational, best practice model. We're seeing those tiers be deconstructed in the last... Particularly, in the last 15 years. Isolation is another red flag, a sniffer. What else would you say, honey?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I would say, I'll talk about my own. As we were writing this book, Carey, I came face to face with some of own burnout. I was writing the burnout chapter, and I'm talking about all the red flags of... Again, thinking I'm... Especially, in the church at large, leaders who think, "it's up to me, I'm doing good, I'm dying to myself"... I mean, those are the true-

Jeff Mattson:

This is kingdom work.

Terra Mattson:

"This is kingdom work." And we push, push, push, push, push until our bodies break down. And again, things that are being stored in the body are fighting against us.

Terra Mattson:

It was coming out in major irritation, and here I am writing a book on integrity. And I'm like, "I'm the biggest fraud ever." But I had to come face to face with my own humanity to say, "I am doing too much, and I'm going to have to disappoint some people," and that goes against a lot of my lies that I fight to not disappoint anyone.

Terra Mattson:

And to make sure that I can hold it, I can be the strong one. That's oftentimes what I hold, and I know a lot of leaders who are listening can resonate with that. I can be the strong one here.

Terra Mattson:

But in turn, I was hitting a wall, and I needed to do some prevention work. And so, I took a little Sabbatical from working with clients, so that I could really, finish this book, and do it well, and stay married.

Terra Mattson:

I mean, honestly...

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's one of my goals, too, just stay married. Try to be happily married... Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah. But those are some of the things that you have... In order to stay integrous is to say, "okay, where am I right now? And what are the things that are becoming patterns? Okay, I can be irritable once in a while, that's being human."

Terra Mattson:

But when it's a pattern, and I'm really annoyed with my family, continually, I must be being too squeezed outside of my capacity.

Jeff Mattson:

And we've got kids, and kids tell the truth, right? And our soon-to-be 14 year old daughter, and 12 year old daughters are... Here's an area of right. For us to decrease our integrity gap, we want to give the best to those that we love the most.

Jeff Mattson:

That's what we say, I say that about my wife, she says that about me, we say that about our daughters, how are we doing that, right? What we try to do is, we're trying to practice what we preach here, and writing this book is as much for us as it is for anybody else.

Jeff Mattson:

It's a built-in deterrent to do the things that we know what it takes, in order to make it to the long haul. Asking our kids even, "how am I influencing you right now?" Or, "what was this week like in our relationship for you?" Questions like that, and being willing to receive the feedback from them, because we actually, really care about having the kind of relationship that we talk about.

Jeff Mattson:

We don't want to just talk about it, we want to have it. And what they say, means a lot. There's a lot of weight, more weight than outside those concentric circles of priorities, and our relationship with God, our marriage, our kids.

Jeff Mattson:

A lot of things then fall out in different order after that. And we're very much trying to be practitioners of this, and taking it to the streets, and sharing it.

Jeff Mattson:

But really, making sure that we're lending it authentically, and we have people in our lives that are helping us do that, right? Thank you, and shout out to our counselor, Deborah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's awesome. What are some other signs that there might be an integrity gap? You mentioned trauma, you mentioned...

Terra Mattson:

Blind spots.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes, blind spots.

Terra Mattson:

We talked about isolation, leadership itself is isolating. I mean, the more you give up in the tier of leadership, the more isolating it can be, less people can relate...

Carey Nieuwhof:

There is a naturalness to that though, right? And particularly, when things start to scale. When we had 20 people at our church, I was available, and accessible to everyone.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And it's not that hard, right? And I got time left over. It's not that hard. Now, with social media, and then just with this podcast, and the platform of almost two million leaders a month will access our content. And you just get bombarded, how do you not get isolated?

Terra Mattson:

So good. I would say, the key, is who are those two or three people that get your time, and are part of the inner circle-

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're not saying everyone should have it, you're just saying, you can't have nobody have it.

Terra Mattson:

Exactly. And what happens is, you start... I'll just say, in my own journey, as well as walking alongside many leaders, we start to become more mistrusting of people the higher up you get.

Terra Mattson:

"What are they after? Do they really know me? Do they really want me? Are they going to criticize? What do they want from me?" Everybody wants something from me, as a leader.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

Knowing who those two or three people are, they get your time. We get to decide as a leader, who gets the rest of our time, and so, do not give it to the masses.

Terra Mattson:

And I think, there is wisdom, and that goes to the burnout chapter, right? There's wisdom on who gets my time, and how can I make sure that I'm managing my time well.

Terra Mattson:

We talk about survival, we talk about narcissism, we talk about-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What is survival? And then I do want to camp on narcissism.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah. Our tag line for survival is that, needs are a sign of weakness. And it can perpetuate that mindset in and outside the church in leadership all the time.

Jeff Mattson:

And we may even... It's popular right now, to talk about being a vulnerable, or a servant leader. I mean, Robert coined that term in the 70s.

Jeff Mattson:

And yet, it's... There's popularity cycles of words, and phrases that are out there. Living it is a whole other story. We can talk about it, books have been written, but living it...

Jeff Mattson:

Actually, having appropriate vulnerability in your place of leadership, what does that do? When a leader is appropriately vulnerable about what they're feeling... Something that's happened culturally, or that's impacting production, or sales, or whatever it might be.

Jeff Mattson:

When they're vulnerable appropriately to their people, they model that, that's okay. It's okay to be human, it's actually, part of the antidote, if you will, to this vulnerability of survival mechanisms, right?

Jeff Mattson:

Of that, we have a survival mentality. Stepping in towards people, showing them how, and being that authentically, is transformational. It will help others do likewise, and that impacts systems. That impacts homes, that impacts organizations, for profit, non-profit, I don't care where you're at.

Jeff Mattson:

It's powerful. Needs, and having needs, and not having all the solutions, all the time, people don't trust that anymore, right? When leaders come across that way. Appropriate, interdependent relationships is the key. Not co-dependent, not needing air your laundry out all the time, and trying to get your needs met in unhealthy ways... We'd say that, that's the sign of unhealthy leaders.

Jeff Mattson:

Wholehearted leaders aren't trying to get their needs met from other people in unhealthy ways.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you drill down on appropriate vulnerability? I think, we could do a whole episode on that, but I'm just curious. Because you're right, people either under disclose, or they over disclose, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

There is no secret, and everybody hears everything, and you should... That should be at your therapy session, that should not be from the staff meeting, or whatever that happened to be, and then others... It's like, I'm bullet proof, I have no issues, and I'm not vulnerable at all.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Where is appropriate vulnerability?

Terra Mattson:

It's a fine line, and a hard dance, that we probably, tip into each side of those, right, as we're learning how to do that.

Terra Mattson:

The airing out your story that's not yours to tell, I always say, think about if I was telling a story, and being vulnerable, had Jeff and I talked about this story, does he trust that we worked through it, or am I just throwing him under the bus in my vulnerability, and being able to recognize, "have I actually, processed this with my inner circle yet, before I'm doing this publicly, either with my organization, or on social media?"

Terra Mattson:

Which is... The younger generations tend to start there first.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

They're not sharing to the person who actually really knows me really well.

Terra Mattson:

It is actually, more vulnerable to go to my inner circle, and to talk with them, then to put it out on the table with people who don't know me very well.

Terra Mattson:

There is an actual process that we need to go through first, orders and steps, "have I talked to God about this?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

"Have I talked to my inner circle?" And then, I can bring it in to my organization, and modeling that.

Terra Mattson:

I think, the other appropriate vulnerability, is again, normalizing emotions. If we're going through something globally, like we are right now, just being able to acknowledge, this is hard. It's hard for me right now, to go through the holidays in a pandemic.

Terra Mattson:

There's a lot of losses. That's a global humanity piece, versus being like, "I'm fine, no big deal. Why are you making a big deal about this?" That's that hard hearted lack of vulnerability that's unhealthy, and it makes everybody else never want to share anything with you ever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can we talk about narcissism? You're saying it's on the rise, I heard you say that. How do you know you're a narcissist? What...

Jeff Mattson:

A true narcissist will never ask themselves that question.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But wait, but wait, this is probably, about me so, let's continue. No, I'm kidding, that was a bad joke.

Jeff Mattson:

I'll start maybe, by saying that, narcissism is a spectrum, and every leader type, right, might find themselves hopefully, on the softer, earlier side of that spectrum.

Jeff Mattson:

Where we have a tendency to believe our ideas are the best, or our innovations, or our thoughts, or what have you, right? That's a real subtle side, that we just need to be aware of, and address, and have some positive deterrence in our world to keep us from moving further down that spectrum.

Jeff Mattson:

True narcissistic personality disorder, what's being discovered now, is that it's widely undiagnosed, and there's more of those type of leaders in every segment of society, in leadership, than we would ever know. And it's starting to become more known, and people have begun to write about this, and we're taking a stab to address the fact that it's a real issue, both in and outside the church, and our heartbeat, of course, is for inside... Inside the Church, capital C. Wherever it may be found.

Jeff Mattson:

There's predatory behavior, and that's the narcissistic personality disorder, where there's really no empathy, they can not literally, see themselves of having done anything wrong. Their brains are-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No empathy for others, you see yourself as... "Well, there's nothing wrong with me. Okay."

Terra Mattson:

It's always you, it's always going to be you.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, and it really gets locked in between ages... What, two to four.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, they're little two year olds in terms of emotional arrest, yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, and that can get played out, of course, if you're dealing with a... Say, a senior pastor, or a CEO who is in their 50s or 60s, and they've been living in that space, getting their needs met in unhealthy ways, and using everyone around them for all those decades, that is really, really difficult.

Jeff Mattson:

You can look at the wake behind a leader like that and you can see the carnage.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Any other signs that you're a narcissist?

Terra Mattson:

The signs that you're a narcissist? You tend to defend every decision that you ever make. If somebody disagrees with you over time, then you will start to make them out to be the enemy, and you'll see a pattern with narcissistic leaders, that their staff doesn't stick around very long. Or they get booted out, and then they go start over, in a very, completely different community, or sector, to find a new group of people who will think they're amazing.

Terra Mattson:

Most narcissists are pretty charismatic, and know how to woo people into their inner circle, and they attract actually, those victim-type trauma survivors.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Terra Mattson:

And it's a really icky system, and so, we're just trying to speak out to say, "hey, we need to start being a little more thoughtful about who we're putting in places of leadership." Just being wooed by people's charisma, and their talents, it can be really dangerous.

Terra Mattson:

Now, all of us who are leaders... Did you...

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, no, you keep going I'm just really, reacting. This is good, this is good, you're making me think.

Terra Mattson:

All of us have a danger of moving down that continuum, but I would say, the true NPD does not ever ask, am I narcissist?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

And they don't really care, and they use people as a means to an end.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

You'll see this pattern happening, and many who are listening have been in those systems, right? Where that leader can do no wrong, and the people who think they're amazing, are in their inner circle.

Terra Mattson:

But over time, people start to see the true colors, and those people will turn to enemies right away. Healthy, wholehearted leaders, who have a little bit of narcissism in it will hear feedback, are willing to say, "okay, I can grow there, thank you for that." I keep people in my inner circle, and in my outer circle, who are willing to give me honest feedback, and I have to work really hard to not let it impact my identity.

Terra Mattson:

But a narcissist just has a really fragile ego so, they need everybody to think they're amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think we did an interview with Erwin McManus, and we'll link to it in the show notes, but we had a interesting conversation about narcissism, and I don't know, there was an ad, or somewhere else I was reading. But it's like... 30% of CEOs and lead pastors may qualify as narcissists, clinically.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a stupidly high percentage. You said something, and that's what made me react, that was my face a few minutes ago, about selecting... Is there a selection process, when you're interviewing staff? Are there questions you can ask, is there a process you can lead them through, that would help you identify someone who maybe, has highly narcissistic tendencies?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because I agree, they can be very dangerous team members, board members. Whether it's your senior leader, or whether it's somebody on the executive team. That could derail an organization quickly.

Jeff Mattson:

It sure can. We're huge advocates for... And an actually, working with a number of churches, for example, or organizations, but particularly, the churches to help them expand their timelines, and deepen their vetting processes.

Jeff Mattson:

We've tried to do that in our own process here, within our organization, Living Wholehearted, and to have a five tier step of candidacy, that is asking hard questions, and not assuming. We make so many assumptions, and where there's needs, and there are needs everywhere, we try to fill seats so fast.

Jeff Mattson:

And we do so at our own peril, many, many times. Putting people in positions before they're ever ready to handle influence, and authority, and power. And it's not that they can't, it's that they're not ready yet, perhaps. But there are those predatory narcissists that are out there, that are looking to get into access where they can abuse.

Jeff Mattson:

Glen Ball, and Darrell Puls, they wrote a powerful book-

Terra Mattson:

So good.

Jeff Mattson:

And they're literally, on the forefront of this research for church leaders, and the plight of narcissism. Their book is, Let us Prey, P, R, E, Y.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, no...

Jeff Mattson:

And the subtitle is, The Plague of Narcissist Pastors, and What We Can Do About It. We highly recommend it.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

And we leverage some of their research indicating just how big of a problem it is in the church. Actually, and the research came from one denomination up in your territory, in Canada.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Jeff Mattson:

And it's overwhelming how many pastors fell into, and met the criteria for NPD, undiagnosed.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to have to read that book.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, it's a necessary read. The other thing, we tell a story right off the start in our book, about our first ministry experience. Jeff was underneath a pastor who actually, ended up being a professional embezzler in the end.

Terra Mattson:

And one of the things that they didn't do, and foresee... I mean, they gave him the entire rights to the entire church, a small church, in Seattle. But he was the one signing all the checks, and he had 100% control over the church's finances.

Terra Mattson:

His main part of his story was, the past was this past. Lord had forgiven him, and there was no track record, nobody could find out his history. And this church that believed deeply in grace, and forgiveness, accepted his story as is.

Terra Mattson:

It seems so... We don't do that in our organization, but I would say, majority of the process of hiring, particularly, in Christian organizations, we aren't asking people's stories. There are HR, human resources laws in place, that we have to be careful there.

Terra Mattson:

But there is a part of knowing someone's character, knowing why they are working at other places. And a narcissist will be really good at scaling the story that they're always the victim in every situation. I want to hear, what part did they play? How did they grow? What did they learn from that? What did they participate in? And not just singing their praises.

Terra Mattson:

You'll hear that, if someone truly has a record of harming, you'll see a wake in their path, and we have to do due diligence to go check that out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think there's a good... I mean, again, correct me if I'm wrong, but I imagine this plays out over the entire spectrum.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It tends to make the news, or we tend to hear stories, when there's A, someone who lead something large, large company, large church, megachurch, narcissist, or has an affair, or whatever. But this is actually, happening in every size organization, every size community... Is that fair?

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Jeff Mattson:

Correct.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, it's fair.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Every segment of society, you're finding this. That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Just because you're a church of 50, doesn't mean you won't be lead by narcissistic leader, necessarily?

Terra Mattson:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Those that are truly like that are looking for the vulnerable scenarios where they can set up their plan, and they can... They've literally... Are very strategic...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is this a plan? This is intentional?

Jeff Mattson:

That's right.

Terra Mattson:

Very intentional.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow. Okay.

Jeff Mattson:

Very intentional, and they literally, are... What are they doing? They are looking to get their needs met in unhealthy ways, they're going to do that very strategically, because... And have backups to their backups, so that if they're caught, their initial backup will hopefully cover, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Jeff Mattson:

They look for vulnerable people who are going to be less believable, they think, if they testify, or share that they were abused, or whatever, fill in the blank, because they are marginalized in society in general, or what have you.

Jeff Mattson:

They get very strategic about keeping up the appearance, and this happens to be just one of our areas of wheelhouse, and we've worked with those in the predatory, narcissistic spectrum, but mostly their victims.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

And that's who's come through our doors for 20 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The predatory narcissistic personality disorder then, they know they're doing this. This is part of their plan... Okay so, this is premeditated, which also leads to the integrity gap, when you think, okay, this is a person who's likely to take money, or to pursue women, or men... Do these things run together?

Jeff Mattson:

They're all linked, and when you think about the core needs of humans, and how they want to get those needs met in unhealthy ways, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

They're needs weren't met when they were that two to four age range, and whatever their story is, that's the bottom line, is that emotional needs, maybe more, weren't met.

Jeff Mattson:

They had to get those needs met in other ways by themselves, and to insulate and protect their small egos, and to survive, a survival mechanism, they started preying on others to get those needs met. Using others to meet those needs.

Terra Mattson:

And yet, if we think of the spectrum, and I guess, that's the more extreme situations...

Jeff Mattson:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

And they are everywhere. We honestly, see it more, and more, and more and are trying to call attention to it, to say, "hey, we need to work together, to not let these leaders be the ones that keep leading our organizations."

Terra Mattson:

But on the other side, all of us fall in a spectrum of trying to get our God-given needs in unhealthy ways...

Jeff Mattson:

That's right.

Terra Mattson:

And I think, that's one of-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. There's a much more... A much less malevolent side of that too. Whereas, "I'm not necessarily, going to prey on you, but I really need you to like this, and I really need you to tell me that I did a good job."

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's not... There's no offense there, it's just functional, is that what you're saying?

Terra Mattson:

That's exactly, right. And I think, that's a more sobering place for all of us, to just keeping that in check, and making sure, what is the need? "What do I really need, because of my unmet childhood needs? We didn't all become narcissists, but... What am I trying to get need met, and do I need to be liked? Am I trying to find significance? Am I trying to find love, intimacy?"

Terra Mattson:

And then, how do I do that in healthy ways, versus unhealthy ways?

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that's where it becomes more innocent, and less premeditated.

Jeff Mattson:

For sure.

Terra Mattson:  
And unconscious.

Jeff Mattson:  
Paying attention to-

Carey Nieuwhof:  
Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:  
Paying attention to that pull, though, takes it from the unconscious to the conscious. "Why am I feeling this right now? Why did I have such a negative feeling about that conversation I just had with a coworker?"

Jeff Mattson:  
What was that? Where is that? And tracing back, learning to trace it back to... "Am I believing a lie about myself? Am I believing something that isn't true," and weighing that, and getting objective about what's going on inside.

Jeff Mattson:  
Not just in your mind, but in your body even. I didn't even know my triggers, we talked about trauma, and triggers, I didn't know what my triggers were until 10 years ago. Actually, which is so funny... I clench my jaw, and I do this with my hands.

Jeff Mattson:  
And Terra was like, "well I know, you clench your jaw, and you do this with your hands." And that was a trigger for me, when I was beginning to slip into that anxiety space, or stress that would lead to conflict strategy.

Jeff Mattson:  
And knowing that about myself is connected to some trauma stuff that I had to work through, and just make a connection on. Integrating that allows me to catch myself quicker now.

Jeff Mattson:  
And we want to help leaders to learn to notice what's going on in their bodies, right, so that they can do what we call, regulating. That... In the clinical world... Just a great term, regulating.

Jeff Mattson:  
Every adult right now, needs to be working on that, every kid needs to be working on that. And as we do that, we grow, and mature so that, we aren't trying to get our needs met from others in unhealthy ways.

Carey Nieuwhof:  
This is so rich. Any other signs you want to cover?

Terra Mattson:

Well, there's-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Not that all of our mail hasn't been read to some level, so far, but...

Terra Mattson:

I guess, one of the things that we all can relate to, is the guilt and toxic shame...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh yeah, I wanted to talk about shame, and guilt.

Terra Mattson:

Again, the further we get, where our outside life looks really great, and our inner life hasn't been addressed, that gap gets larger, and larger, and we start to feel that shame voice gets louder, and louder.

Terra Mattson:

And it is the Enemy, the Enemy loves to use shame to keep us apart from Gods grace, and his love, and to keep continuing to remind us that we're not worthy. But that is something that is a small, subtle voice, we often shove it aside, but learning how to listen to when a conviction of when I did something wrong, and I need to go make it right, that is a power of our faith, and when it's a... "I can't admit I'm wrong, because I could look like a fool, and you won't love me, or like me, or I'll lose my position."

Terra Mattson:

Guilt and toxic shame is definitely, coming from a unaddressed inner life, and we don't have to live with it, it doesn't have to be a part of our everyday leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can guilt and shame be healthy?

Jeff Mattson:

Good question.

Terra Mattson:

Very good question.

Jeff Mattson:

There's a difference, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, because I'm thinking, if I'm really nasty to a coworker, or my wife, hopefully, I do feel a little bit guilty, and a bit of shame to my behavior, and it leads me to apologize, it leads me to change, it leads me

to repentance, but you're also talking, on the other hand, about just the shame and toxic guilt that isn't helpful. I'm just curious.

Jeff Mattson:

Conviction is another way that a person might feel when they've wronged someone, and we want that, right? And we know that God wants that, and that's His Holy Spirit in us, those that follow Him, and have the Spirit in our lives, right?

Jeff Mattson:

And that's different, that's much more than all of us as humans have, as conscience, it's so much more than that, right? And that is good, and in the Scriptures, we understand that the Spirit's function is to remind us of everything that Jesus has taught us, that means that hopefully we've been reading, and learning, and in those moments we sense that conviction, that healthy guilt, conviction, to go and repair.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Totally different, right, than the toxic shame. Toxic shame is an attack on our identities, right? And this is in the clinical, and the biblical integration here, right? Identity work... Toxic shame says... It's a message like this... "Well, you always do that."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Jeff Mattson:

Or... "How come you can't fix this again? You're always going to be a loser, or a failure," right? And that's the kind of toxic shame, that God just says... "That's going to go, I'm going to help you get rid of that, because what you need to hear, is you need to hear my voice."

Jeff Mattson:

And it's His voice that matters, what He says about Himself, and what he says about us, is the antidote to toxic shame. And the more we believe that, the more we take, and pull the lies that come out, that are tied to our trauma, usually, and we can separate those lies, and start rejecting those lies.

Jeff Mattson:

And the muscles of accepting the identity, and the healthy identity of who we are, is based in who He says we are...

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Becomes stronger, and that's a very practical, every day, kinda challenge.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, really, I just have to summarize, because I want to, not because you didn't say it beautifully. But just that sense of healthy guilt being about our behavior, and toxic shame being about our identity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's so good.

Terra Mattson:

"I did something wrong," versus "I am bad, and I'm never fixable."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Okay, that's such a helpful distinction. Because on the one hand, you can see some people who would say, "well, you shouldn't feel ashamed for anything, that's just who you are." And I'm like... No, there's some stuff I need to own here, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a helpful distinction. I want to circle back to the whole, branding platform thing. There's a lot of young leaders listening here, and as a guy in my 50s, most leaders who listen to this podcast are in their 20s, and 30s, and there's a share of 40 and 50, and older et cetera.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But a lot of young leaders listening here, and I noticed the pressure. When I was in my 20s, there was no social media. I didn't have a brand, we were lucky to figure out how to brand our church, and I mean, that was so... It was the neolithic period, pretty much, of branding, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's that, Jeff?

Jeff Mattson:

The mission statement.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The mission statement, right? Exactly... But I've watched this catch on, and now, couples have logos, and looks, and we're in the era of face filters... There are a few people I follow on Instagram, and I'm like... "I don't know what you actually, look like." Because there's always a filter, there's... It's like... Whoa.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have more wrinkles than I did last year, and I don't always match, and I am fairly comfortable showing my imperfections, but we're moving into a very different world, very quickly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'd love for you to talk about that. Is there an upside?

Jeff Mattson:

Is there an upside?

Terra Mattson:

is there an upside to branding?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, no, is there an upside to that kind of pressure on yourself to project this perfect, public image?

Terra Mattson:

No.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

And actually, I don't think there's an upside. I think, it is part of the destruction on our identity...

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's right.

Terra Mattson:

And our sense of community, and commitment to one another, to say, "I love you, with all of who you are, warts and all."

Terra Mattson:

But the other piece to what you're saying is, I see with the younger generation... And we're in our 40s, we're in between there...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Terra Mattson:

Of what you're talking about. But the idea that there's this vulnerability that you put out, but it's totally opposed...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Opposed vulnerability, that's a great phrase.

Terra Mattson:

You're calling that vulnerability...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Destructive vulnerability.

Terra Mattson:

But I know, it took you five hours to get that picture just right. It's not the true, raw... That's the part that I laugh, is that there's a younger... There's just longing for real, and authenticity, and yet, it still has to come through as a brand, and with beauty.

Terra Mattson:

And it just is becoming so complex, and I think, that pressure... It's difficult to be in social media, and to not get squeezed by all that pressure. I think, we have to be honest with our own vulnerabilities.

Terra Mattson:

I have a tendency towards addictions, meaning, I see it in my family of origin, I see it in myself. I mean, I remember in high school, loving the poker games. And I'm like, I should not go to Vegas, because this is like the real deal.

Terra Mattson:

I really thrive on risk taking in those kinds of ways. I have to be careful, and social media, I can feel the pull. I didn't get on until this last year, not because I didn't think there's a place for it, but I know my vulnerabilities, and the reason I'm on it now, is very different than what I would've been on 10 years ago.

Terra Mattson:

If you can do it, or maybe, there's some protocols that we have to put in place, where we have somebody else do it for us. That's what we did for years, where somebody else is doing our social media.

Terra Mattson:

But the pressure is not healthy, it's killing our souls, and it's killing our relationships... That's my little soapbox there.

Jeff Mattson:

Asking the question, why?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Why am I... Anything, is actually... Let's bring critical thinking back to the human race, please? And if we ask ourselves, and myself included, why? Why am I doing this? And there's a good reason, a purposeful reason that makes good logic sense, or will add good.

Jeff Mattson:

And you could back that up over time, where people... If you were audited, perse, theoretically, that you'd be guilty of seeing a track record of goodness, and of building others up, and of meaningful connection, and...

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Right? Okay, great, then step in. And we're not... We are real fans, and rooting for the generations that are beneath us, right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, me too.

Jeff Mattson:

And we're walking with them, we are not patronizing, we are not laughing... Every generation has its quirks. We want to see this generation, and our kids and those... I mean, right now, millennials are leading our children, right now, our two girls... We've got skin in this game.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

We want to see them thrive. And yet, in order for them to do that, because our offices in confidence are full of that generation, it's the only safe space they have to process, and to say... "I didn't have this modeled to me. How do I engage when I've had letdowns? Or when I was let go in an office scenario, or in a workspace?"

Jeff Mattson:

We were having to help re-parent in many cases, and now, they're parents, and they're also coming in, right, to try to figure out how to do this better for their kids.

Jeff Mattson:

We are rooting for them, we are in there, and we need as many mentors and people as possible, to come alongside in healthy ways, not to say, "hey, we're perfect, follow us." But to say, "in our imperfection, follow us, walk with us together..."

Terra Mattson:

As we follow Christ.

Jeff Mattson:

As we follow Christ, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. No, I'm really grateful for the conversation, and I would say, I'm 100% committed to the next generation, and the generations beyond... I'm a huge fan, not a critic. But I do wonder, having a long pre-digital memory... Just because of when I was born... The platform, and the pressure of leadership is

hard enough, where you feel you need to be one way on stage, but are you really, that way behind stage?

Carey Nieuwhof:

But now, we all have a stage, it's called, our phones. And I'm watching even, the evolution in leaders in their teens and 20s... I see that kind of influence come to them early. I've watched people I've followed for a few years morph, where... Boy, you seemed more real three years ago, and now everything's curated, and branded, and perfect... I don't know, does that kill the soul at some point?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because ultimately, we're still humans, right? This is what I'm trying to drive at. This is very philosophical, but at the end of the day, we're just human beings, who mess up, who are in need of grace. Are we headed to some kind of flash point, or crisis generationally, on that stuff?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because I'm a Gen X, but the 80s were very hyper-techno music, and then the Gen X answer was grunge, right? You got the whole grunge scene out of where you are... Portland, and Seattle, and the whole deal, and it was the opposite of the 80s.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I almost see us going in that direction, music is so hyper produced, everything is so curated, everything is so perfect, and are just going to implode under that pressure?

Carey Nieuwhof:

End of rant, I'd love for you to... See what you say.

Terra Mattson:

I'll let you put in, because I know... You know...

Jeff Mattson:

Go for it.

Terra Mattson:

You have an opinion on this. I think, it's killing our souls, it's also killing our brains. Honestly, we are more ADD technology-induced. We can't pay attention to one another, let alone look each other in the eyes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Terra Mattson:

It's why we wrote this book for this next generation, to say, there are some basic things that still are important, regardless, of the times that have changed.

Terra Mattson:

And character matters more than charisma, and branding. And though, we have created a culture, and it started back in the 60s, and 70s, that's been slow decline to a charisma, and how you present yourself.

Terra Mattson:

What happens when I'm disconnected from you see me to be, and who I really am, it will eventually, leak, and those 20, 30 something's were saying, "you're headed towards a road of moral failure." That is where you're going, and so, you've got to have a united... An integrous life is one that's, where everything is connected.

Terra Mattson:

Who I present myself to be on social media, needs to also match who I present myself to be with my husband.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, "would your spouse recognize you? Would your best friend recognize you, "right?"

Terra Mattson:

That's just the simple message so, it's not, social media, good or bad, it's just... Is there congruency in your life, and integration? Or are you feeling so fragmented? Because we cannot live like that, God didn't design us that way.

Jeff Mattson:

I'll just echo that to say, go back to original design, okay? And we have limits, in our finite bodies, in our finite days, 24 hours a day, no one can add an hour to that...

Terra Mattson:

Oh, yeah...

Jeff Mattson:

And there are limits, and when we learn to operate and love, actually, love the limits, in our lives practically... And every person has different limits, okay? Right? There's some people I can think of in my life, who I would say, for me, being the top five energy of the world, and they wear me out when I just even hear them talk about what they did, in a given, first hour of their day.

Jeff Mattson:

Their limits are different than my limits, but they have limits too, and they need to be aware of their limits, and so do I. Learning to love those limits and create sustainable systems, that allow me to be the best version of who I am, not just who I want you to see me to be, but actually, who I am. And that, that be consistent over time... Because time is the great equalizer, here.

Jeff Mattson:

You cannot fool somebody...

Terra Mattson:

That's true.

Jeff Mattson:

For over lifetimes... Everyone, you can't fool everyone, right? Consistent over time, matching audio, matching the video, people that you would say, that you care about the most that, they would say, that they know who you are, and that you are a work in progress, and you are mostly the same person at home, that you are out on the stage, or in the stadium, or wherever you might be, right?

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Those are very important things.

Terra Mattson:

And if you're not, Carey, there's grace for that. It's the honesty, right? It's just to say, okay, I'm not doing it. Now, I need to take some steps to start shrinking that gap, because it's a heavy burden to live disconnected.

Jeff Mattson:

Oh my gosh, and the energy that you recoup, when you start shrinking your integrity gap, that you can apply to things that really matter. People come alive, you see it in their faces, you see it in them, you hear it in their voice, they're starting to slow down to a tune, not just to get their own needs met, but they're now, interested in you.

Jeff Mattson:

"Tell me more about you, tell me about your day," and it feels like that. That's a feeling that every human wants, they want people to be able to do that for them, and it requires you to be able to do that also.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. And I just want to say to younger leaders listening, we're 100%... And all leaders who are 100%, I am 100%, I know you guys are on your side, and I'm thinking about what Tim Keller often says, that "the Gospel in a nutshell, is fully known, fully loved."

Carey Nieuwhof:

And we think that if we are going to be fully loved, we can't be fully known. And so, I've got to present an image of myself to you, that will make you love me, or I just won't be fully loved. And the truth in Gospel is, no, you're fully known, you're fully loved, and I think, that's where you guys are driving.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We did a really good job, I think, of explaining where the gaps are, and people should get your book. What are a couple of steps that people are like... "Uh-oh, some stuff got identified today, what do I do?" I know this is complicated for me, it's an ongoing multi-year journey... Multi-decade journey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I realize, it's not like... "Just take this pill, you'll be fine in the morning..." What do you do?

Jeff Mattson:

First of all, I just say, "welcome to the club," right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Welcome to the human leader club, right? And those that are working to try to be... Really, to try to be the kinds of leaders that they would want to follow, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

It's also, what do you got, what do you got?

Terra Mattson:

Yeah, I'll put my counselor hat on, and I would just say, "let's start with your story. Do you know your story?" I was classic leader, seen very early on with skills, and gifts, and I was just put on the treadmill, and nobody ever took time to understand my story, nor I know to even talk about my story.

Terra Mattson:

I might tell a moment in time, on something happened, but when do we actually, get to walk through our timeline? In the book, we process, hey, you need to take time to know your story from zero to now, and for those that have lived a long time, it feels a little more exhausting, and that's just the reality of it.

Terra Mattson:

Everything in your story is playing out today, and that is part of understanding your themes, and your lies, and the lessons, and the principles, your convictions... Do you know your story?

Jeff Mattson:

Traumas.

Terra Mattson:

I would say, start there, and you'll probably... I remember doing my timeline in a linear fashion for the first time, and realizing, "oh my goodness, I moved a lot..." Out of the ordinary. Not something I would've called traumatic, but I realize, I was living out of a detached place with people, because I had

learned how to adapt quickly, and all the moves that I had as a young girl, and I started to realize it was a small trauma in my story, and I needed to give some grace to that.

Terra Mattson:

And then I had to learn, how do I actually, stay rooted, and planted, and actually, go deeper in relationships, because I'm really good at making new friends. But past a few years, I don't know what to do past that.

Terra Mattson:

It's things like that in our story, when you listen to it in a linear way. Start with your story, and start with sharing it with a counselor, or a friend, or a spouse, just one other person, and see if you can start to hear the themes, and God shows us a lot of the lies that we tend to lean towards. And some of the beautiful, unique parts of who we are, and we see our limits. We can learn a lot about ourselves, through just understanding our story.

Jeff Mattson:

Yeah, as Terra was saying, doing this in relationship is so key, right? A narcissist won't ever do that. They're not interested unless, they're doing it to actually, try to get you to a certain place that they want to get you to.

Jeff Mattson:

That's why narcissists would pretend to be vulnerable.

Terra Mattson:

Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

Anyway...

Terra Mattson:

Anyway.

Jeff Mattson:

Walk with someone in this process whom you trust. And say, "hey, look, I want to grow, I want to grow in my leadership, I want to become more of the leader that I would follow. I want to be more wholehearted, and I know that you do too, would you do this with me? Would you walk through this work with me? And look at these chapters, and let's identify some vulnerabilities, and let's talk them through."

Jeff Mattson:

That might lead to counseling, right? It doesn't have to...

Terra Mattson:

It doesn't have to... Yeah.

Jeff Mattson:

But there's powerful transformation that takes place in relationship with one other person, where you can agree, right, to be vulnerable, and trust that it's not going to be used against you.

Jeff Mattson:

And then, gosh, when a leader gets this, and models that vulnerability in a healthy way, they want to take that to the people in their spheres of influence, right?

Jeff Mattson:

And especially, right... We love our pastors, Bill and Cathy, they wrote the forward to this, and they just were like... "Gosh, I resonate with chapters three, four, seven, nine, whatever." And to take that to somebody in a relationship, a young, emerging leader, and say... "Look, let me tell you my story, but I also want to hear your story, and let me help you with some spaces that I've identified in these chapters, that might save you some time, heartache, and energy if you're willing to hear that. Would you like to do that with me?"

Jeff Mattson:

It's as simple as that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. It's been a great, great, great journey. And I just hope that this feels like help and hope to leaders listening who feel trapped, I think about how I would've heard this at 35, it would've felt very threatening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But 20 years later, it feels very comforting actually, to have this conversation. People are going to want to learn more. Tell us about the book, where they can find you online, we'd love to know more.

Terra Mattson:

Absolutely. It's called, *Shrinking the Integrity Gap, Between What Leaders Preach and Live*. You can find it anywhere that retailers sell books, if you want to follow, I'm the only one on social media, as you can see, at Terra Mattson, T, E, R, R, A.

Terra Mattson:

You can also follow us at, *Living Wholehearted*, and we have a podcast called, *The Living Wholehearted Podcast*, where we unpack just all of the places that we lead, and our leadership impacts in the home, work, and community.

Terra Mattson:

We'd love to be able to have you join us in this movement to shrink our integrity gap.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Love it. Thank you so much, Jeff and Terra, really appreciate you.

Terra Mattson:

Thank you, Carey.

Jeff Mattson:

Thank you, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really, really enjoyed that conversation, and I hadn't spent any time with Jeff and Terra prior to this so, it was an absolute delight to go all the places we went to.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And yeah, I share their concerns for integrity in leadership, and I just want you to know, that I am as committed to you as a person, as I am to you as a leader. And that's why we try to bring you wide-ranging conversations like this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

In the, What I'm Thinking About segment, which is coming up in just a second, I am going to talk about how to build your integrity. Something that I have given a lot of thought to, and I'll just offer five keys, at least, that have really helped me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then, we've got show notes for you so, if you want more, including some of the links to what we talked about, you can go to [careynieuwhof.com/episode386](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode386).

Carey Nieuwhof:

And coming up next time, we're going to hear from Harris III, another fun conversation. This is someone who traveled the world as a teenage illusionist, making a million dollars by age 21, lost it all by age 22, ran into some cynicism, as a young leader. And then at around, age 30, he learned to recapture wonder, okay?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Don't we all need that heading into a brand new year? Here's an excerpt from what's coming up next.

Harris III:

I had certainly lost the magic. I'd seen the wonders of the world, I'd walked the Great Wall of China, I'd seen the Taj Mahal, I had stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, I'd seen the Pyramids in Egypt, three times on tours in the Middle East, and what took me to those wonders of the world, was my ability to make other people wonder. It was to awaken their wonder.

Harris III:

But yet, I've lost my wonder that permitted me to see the magic. I was ready to quit, and as I'm laying on the couch, I look down at the living room floor, and I see a little nine month old boy, that my wife had given birth to, nine months previously.

Harris III:

And it's not that I hadn't seen Jude, my son, at nine months old, but I'd yet to see the world through his eyes, through his lens. Man, he saw magic everywhere. And I remember having this aha moment of, it's all right here in front of my face. The magic is in the mundane things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then, guess what's happening in 2021? We've got Andy Stanley, Patrick Lencioni, Rob Pelinka, GM of the Lakers, we've got Seth Godin, just confirmed, John Kotter, Craig Groeschel, it's going to be an incredible year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So excited, subscribers, if you subscribe to this, it's free, and then, it automatically shows up. Would love to have you subscribe, if you're a new listener, and to all the new listeners who have joined us in 2020. We're going to have some fun little things we're going to do for you. Just some freebies, it's been a hard year.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're just going to come alongside you. If you haven't yet actioned the Church Leader Toolkit, there is a little bit of time to do that, you can go to [churchleadertoolkit.com](http://churchleadertoolkit.com). Got some other stuff coming for you, as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, it's time for, What I'm Thinking About. This section is brought to you by the Dwell app. You can get the audio Bible app today, by going to [dwellapp.io/carey](http://dwellapp.io/carey), and get 20% off an annual or lifetime subscription. And by Pushpay, and Church Community Builder, who have combined to give you ChurchStaq, which will help you increase connection, and encourage giving. You can go to [pushpay.com/carey](http://pushpay.com/carey), for more on that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you build your integrity? It's one thing to shrink the integrity gap, but how do you build your integrity? That's something I've really, thought about a lot, particularly, since I burned out. Again, I know, I keep coming back to it, it's like my life existed before burnout, and then after burnout.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But when I was in the pit, I realized... "This is how you end up having an affair, this is how you end up doing things." When you get into a really dark place like that, it's not good. What I've done over the last 15 years, is just ask myself some questions, and pursued some disciplines that help.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We all have some level of integrity gap, things we hoped we would do that we didn't do, or things we said we were going to do, that just didn't happen. But here's what I like to do, and step one for me, is just be ruthlessly honest with myself. And I think, that's where you can start.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because of all the lies you tell, the ones you tell yourself are the most deadly. I might say, "I'm doing really great," but I'm not. Or I might say, "my motives are really pure," but they're mixed. And that really... If you're a person who prays, a leader who prays, as I am, that'll add a lot to your confession time, when you realize... I really was not very good in that interaction so, just be ruthlessly honest with yourself. That's step one.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Number two, seek wise counsel. Oh my goodness, the longer I lead, the more I realize, I'm only as good as the people around me. You don't need a lot, but even three or four people who really believe in you, ask them for feedback on your life, that can really help.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Third thing is, stop pleasing people, try instead to honor God. I know that sounds super spiritual, and everything, and what does that actually, mean? But what it does mean is, if you're going to get a thousand voices around you saying, "you should do this, or you should do that."

Carey Nieuwhof:

At the end of the day, I want the people closest to me, to be the people most grateful for me, to have the experience of me. And I also want, too, I really believe, I'm going to have to give an answer to God one day, and I want that to be a good experience.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I really want to try to honor God in what I do, and sometimes, that means playing the long game, taking the high road. Doing the right thing is almost never the easy thing, but it's always the best thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then, a fourth thing you can do is, be appropriately transparent. We all like to pretend that we are something we're not, and I find by admitting my shortcomings, appropriately to counselors, and my wife, and people around me who know me really well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then, also, publicly, right? I think you'll find, I hope you'll find, that I'm fairly transparent in what's going well, or what's not going well, and I think that kind of transparency, it avoids you putting yourself on a pedestal. Because a lot of leaders do that, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's like, "I got this bullet-proof plan to..." No, you don't, you're not bullet-proof. Okay, it's counterintuitive to really, admit your shortcomings, but it's also very transformative. And you don't have to tell everyone what you're struggling with, that can be highly inappropriate, but you do need to tell someone.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then finally, and this is a big one, and I know this is going to sound really weird to some of you, but put yourself first when it comes to personal growth. Leadership requires you to give a lot, give, give, give, give, give, give, but I am selfish when it comes to personal growth. My own time with God in the

morning, going for a run, going for a bike ride, taking care of my health, having enough time to process what is going on around me, both in my work, and also, in my life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that means, I'll often spend multiple hours at this point, alone, processing things, praying through things, going for a run. Even reading books that aren't necessarily, tied to what I'm going to do. That kind of personal growth, taking time off, that is what fills you, and fuels you. Because you can't give what you don't have.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And if I am not spending that time on the front end, I'm going to spend it on the back end, and where will you spend it? Well, you would spend it in rehab, or you would spend it in an intensive counseling, to recover from some bad mistake that you just made.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'd rather put the time in upfront, and say, "okay, I'm going to get really, honest with myself. I'm going to have some good people around me, speaking into my life." I put myself first when it comes to personal growth, which ironically, and this is the counterintuitive twist, makes you better at what you do, publicly, all right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because if I'm preaching from an empty well, if I'm doing this from a place where I'm just exhausted all the time, I'm not going to serve you well. I'm not going to be a good husband, I'm not going to be a good dad, I'm not going to be a good friend.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If your cup is empty, how are you going to fill anyone else's? Those are some things that have helped me, and again, not bullet-proof, don't always get this right, but I find when I do those things well, things tend to go better.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hope this helped you, can't wait for the next episode, thank you so much for listening, and I hope you found this time rich, and that it 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.