

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 405 of the podcast. It's Carey here, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Man, I am pumped for this episode. This is a fun one. We have Adam Grant on the podcast today and he is somebody I have been learning from for years. It's been amazing to connect with him and this is a different kind of interview. So stay tuned. I'll tell you more about it. This episode is brought to you by Pro Media Fire. You can get help with your social media management and digital growth and get 10% off for life at Promediafire.com/Carey. And by GloopConnect, you can go to GloopConnect.church/Carey, that's C-A-R-E-Y, to grow your digital outreach campaigns and get free access to my four-part course available only there called Click to Connect. It's all about the new digital world that we are in.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I am so thrilled to have Adam Grant on the podcast today. We ended up going in some really surprising places. So normally what I do is I try to be quiet and just interview the guest and let the guest talk. And this turned into a very different conversation. I think halfway through you'll think, are these guys at dinner? And that's what it really felt like, we even talked about that. Adam is so open and so curious, he almost ended up interviewing me. And we ended up talking about preaching and apologetics for the 21st century. We talk about how conspiracy theories take hold, and he shows you how to get out of your echo chamber. He has a brilliant book. It'll be on my top leadership recommends list next year. Well, right now, it's called Think Again. And it just, the day after we recorded this, it hit the New York Times Bestseller list.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Adam is an Organizational Psychologist at Wharton where he has been the top rated professor for seven straight years. He is the number one New York Times Bestselling Author of four books that have sold millions of copies and been translated into 35 languages. In addition to Think Again, which I highly recommend, you should pick up Give and Take, Originals, Option B, and Power Moves. They have been recognized as among the year's best books by Amazon, The Financial Times, Harvard Business Review, and the Wall Street Journal. And his work has been praised by JJ Abrams, Richard Branson, Bill and Melinda Gates, Malcolm Gladwell, and so many others.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We talk about how the power of knowing what you don't know. Adam's TED Talks have been viewed more than 20 million times. He has an amazing podcast, a Ted Podcast called WorkLife with Adam Grant. And he has been recognized as one of the world's 10 most influential management thinkers. He's on Fortune's 40 Under 40 list. Oprah's SuperSoul 100, and is a World Economic Forum Global Leader. He's also a professor who has had numerous scientific achievement awards. And he writes for the New York Times.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Okay. That's a long bio. Adam it's such a joy that you would spend some time with us. And I found this conversation hyper stimulating. I hope you will too. It goes in all kinds of interesting places and thanks to our partners for this podcast too. It's people like Pro Media Fire and GloopConnect that bring this to you every single week.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Are you looking to grow your online campus? Well, you got two choices in 2021 when it comes to digital. You or a team member can do all the work to keep up with strategy and social media, or you can hire Pro Media Fire and get an entire team of experts to keep up with the trends to help you grow online. The choice is yours. So bury yourself in work or get a team to help you thrive. With Pro Media Fire, you save time and you grow online while your digital team does all the work.

Carey Nieuwhof:

As a listener to this podcast, you're going to get 10% off for life. If you do this, go to Promediafire.com/Carey. That's Promediafire.com/Carey. And speaking of the online world, if you're like most pastors, your outreach strategy probably looks nothing like it did a year ago. You may be investing in marketing and outreach now, it could be like Google Ads, or direct mail, or door hangers, and maybe even Facebook ads. So digital is your number one outreach channel, but how can you get the right message to the right people? So that's why GloopConnect was created. Doesn't require any additional staff, and here's how it works. They run professional felt needs based ads on Facebook, Instagram, and other digital channels. They pool funds from donors and churches to create cooperative campaigns in your city. And in Kansas City, churches saw a 21% increase in new people, connecting with churches for the first time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So Easter is almost here and what are you doing for digital outreach? Well, in select cities, you can now get GloopConnect free for the first year. That's a \$1,700 value. If you're curious whether your city is covered by that. And if you qualify for free head on over to GloopConnect that's [G-L-O-O connect.church/Carey](https://GloopConnect.church/Carey). I'll say that one more time. GloopConnect, G-L-O-O, GloopConnect.church/Carey, C-A-R-E-Y. To learn more as a bonus. When you sign up, you'll get my free Click to Connect course inside GloopConnect. It is only there. It's a four-part video course. It's a \$250 value. So make sure you check that out. Well, without further ado, I am thrilled to bring you a wide ranging, fascinating conversation with the one and only Adam Grant.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Adam, what a thrill to have you on the podcast. Welcome.

Adam Grant:

The thrill is all mine, Carey, I'm delighted to be here and I can't wait to see where this conversation takes us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, I agree with Seth Goden that this is a book that you should buy four copies of, one for you and three to give away. So congratulations. I was joking with you that it was hard for me to get my regular work done because normally you prep for an interview or whatever, but I could not put the book down and

best diagrams and charts of any book I've ever read. So really funny, you have a great sense of humor, you must have enjoyed writing it.

Adam Grant:

Thank you. I had a blast writing it and the charts and diagrams, I have the privilege of collaborating with Matt Shirley, who is my favorite account on Instagram because every day he posts a hilarious chart and I found myself sharing a bunch of them one day and I thought, you know what? That's what's missing from this book. I need some visual humor. And I reached out to him cold and he said, "I'd love to work with you on this." And then the rest was history.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, it was really good because there's some actual scientific charts. And then there's some jokes, which is really funny and cartoons. If people like me, don't like to read books without pictures, now there's pictures. So thank you, really well done. How do you select the subjects for your book? This is number four and there seems to be, I heard you say in your interview with JJ Abrams, that there was no overarching thread and now you're sort of rethinking that, pardon the pun. But I'd love to know how you decided on Originals, Give and Take because it's all research-based so there's a lot of investment there.

Adam Grant:

Yeah, I don't think I had a very disciplined process when I started, I took questions that I was interested in and for me interest meant that I would go to bed at night thinking about them. I would make my friends and family members talk to me about some of the research because I was just so fascinated by some of the questions. And then I think I filtered a little bit from all the things I was interested in to what's important. And also where do I have something different to say? And I think if you just take the Venn diagram of interesting, important, and novel, I think that's been my heuristic for deciding what I want to study and write about. And I didn't realize it until recently that there is a common thread across all my books, which is, I am trying to prove, and I think the evidence now is overwhelming that you don't have to choose between character and success.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Say more about that. That's fascinating to me.

Adam Grant:

I mean, I think it's something I've seen year after year with my students at Wharton, they'll say things like... One of the reasons I wrote Give and Take was I had students saying, "Well, I'm going to achieve as much success as I can and make as much money as possible. So then I can give back." No, actually-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Your soul's gone by that point.

Adam Grant:

Yeah, good luck with that. I don't know how you're going to sleep at night, but I know a lot of successful people who were givers from the start and they weren't doing it with money. They were generous with their knowledge, with their time, with their connections in introducing people. And let's figure out how

you can combine that virtue of generosity with your own ambitions. And I think that's been a lens that I've been excited of that ever since is to say, "Okay, there may be ways in which in this case, I think, Think Again is very much about the virtue of humility."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Adam Grant:

And how a lot of people think you have to be confident to the point of arrogant or narcissistic in order to achieve great things. And my goal in this book is to get you to rethink that if you believe that. But Carey, I know you don't believe that so you don't have to do any rethinking on that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we've spent a lot of time talking about that, the link between... My theory for years has been that your character is actually the cap on your capacity, because you look at how many super smart, wicked smart people are out there, gifted, talented, and yet they're 30 years into their field and they end up having some kind of moral collapse or whatever, and that this isn't even in the church space, this could be in the business space, political space, and they're down in flames. And I think that's a noble calling.

Adam Grant:

I think so too. And you put that so beautifully. I think that becomes more true as people advance more in their careers because, if you just want to be an individual superstar, it's possible that with the right combination of hard work, talent, and luck, you can achieve something yourself. But the more powerful you become, the more your success depends on making other people successful. And it's really hard to do that if you are a selfish taker, or if you are a narcissistic leader, and I've really taken issue lately with this idea of separate spheres that so many people like to talk about.

Adam Grant:

So people will, whether it's a CEO, or a political candidate, people will say, "Hey, you know what? I don't care what they do in their personal life. I'm interested in their professional competence." And that's never made any sense to me because I don't think that we walk into the office and suddenly become a completely different person. And sure enough, there was a study that came out recently showing that men who cheat on their wives are also more likely to cheat on their taxes, and they're more likely to cheat when it comes to their company's finances.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fascinating.

Adam Grant:

You don't get to say, "I have integrity at work, but I'm a terrible person at home."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well I'm so glad you went into the cultural dimensions of this because I read the book with interest, had a hard time putting it down and I'm like, "This is really good on the individual level." But then the third part of your book, I think it was part three, went into the whole cultural milieu, sort of the political

debate. And you didn't really go into politics, but you talked about really contentious issues too. And that has been a dominant line that we've heard over the last particularly 10 years. It's like, well, I don't care who you sleep with. As long as you pass these laws, appoint these judges, as long as you lower my taxes, or you pad the bottom line and my stocks go up, then I'm cool with you. And you're saying, that's a bust.

Adam Grant:

I think in the long run, if that's our philosophy, we're all going to lose because we're not really thinking about the character and competence of the people we elevated into positions of leadership. And I would venture a guess that those qualities are pretty important.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, and you're an organizational psychologist you teach at Wharton. You've been the top rated teacher there for years now. I think it's seven years as we record this. I would love to know because in the young leaders I talked to, there is this desire for ethical business. I'm having a dinner at my place in May with a guy who just did a business school at a university here in Canada. He established it. And one of the things we talked about at dinner last time we were together was, hey, what are we going to do about ethical investing, et cetera, et cetera. What changes are you seeing in the next generation of business leaders? Do you see that cutthroat eighties Wall Street greed, or what are you seeing?

Adam Grant:

No, I think my students are fed up with Gordon Gekko. Let's leave that guy in the movies a couple decades ago. I think there... It's interesting. I think part of this is because we've started to see really something that we should have seen all along, because economists always talk about externalities. The negative externalities associated with unbridled shareholder capitalism. And so if you talk to any one of my MBA students or undergrads at Wharton, one of the first things they'll bring up is the idea that we need to be about stakeholders, not shareholders, that you can't claim, that people are the most important resource in your company, because people are your company. And that we need to think about, obviously serving the people that we lead, that servant leadership is important, that we need to care about customers in our community.

Adam Grant:

And I think that's great news. I think part of the reason that that's getting amplified though, is not just generational. It's actually a silver lining of the series of recessions that we've had. There's some research by Emily Bianchi, which looks at what the state of the economy is when you start your career. So if you finish school and take your first job, are we in a boom or a bust? And it turns out that leaders who started their careers during a recession actually pay their employees more generously and they're less likely to cheat.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fascinating.

Adam Grant:

Which I thought it was so interesting. And Emily's argument is that when you start your career knowing how difficult it can be to get a job that that creates a sense of noblesse oblige, that this sense of

responsibility, as opposed to entitlement, then it's something you carry with you throughout your career. And I have to wonder if we're now going to see a generation of leaders in part, because of this awful pandemic we've had to live through, who do feel a greater sense of responsibility than their predecessors did.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fascinating. We're 400 episodes into this show now. And one of the things I've noticed with entrepreneurs who have gone on to do really, really well, led very big companies, et cetera, so many of them have heartbreak stories growing up. Poverty, being picked on, whatever it was. And they turn out to be the most generous people. You would think they would be stingy, but in fact, they're actually generous. That's fascinating. Okay. I'm tempted to talk about Originals, but I really want to dive into this book because I think it's that meaty it needs to occupy at least an hour, if not more. You open the book with this idea, a preacher, a prosecutor, and a politician, and a scientist walk into your mind. So I'm kind of three of those, almost, a preacher and a prosecutor. I was more on the defense side in my brief time in law. And I was actually involved in politics. I'm apolitical now, but in my teen years and early twenties, I was almost that. So I'm almost like three strikes I'm out. So...

Adam Grant:

Wait a minute, Carey, I knew you were a preacher. I knew you had a law background, politics too. This is the trifecta.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It is. It is. There you go. That was going to be my thing. I was going to be involved in politics. And then I got disillusioned quickly in my early twenties and kind of stepped back. And then when I got a call into ministry, I'm like apolitical, apolitical, apolitical. So sort of been where I am over the last 30 years, but fascinating. So what is wrong with our preachers, our politicians, and our prosecutors, as far as the mindset for thinking again goes.

Adam Grant:

I think you just hit the critical distinction, which is, I don't want to say there's anything wrong with these professions. I think the danger is that these professions sometimes take over our minds and prevent us from thinking again. And I'm guilty of all of them, especially the prosecutor, but let's walk through the three.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah. Tell us about preachers because you do have tens of thousands of preachers listening to this. So speak to us because this is what we do. We're schooled in the art of persuasion and I've found that evangelism, which is something I'm very passionate about has changed over the years. And I think you're onto something.

Adam Grant:

Oh, interesting. I'm very curious to hear how you react to this. So the original idea came from my colleague, Phil Tetlock, who observed that when we do a lot of our thinking and decision-making, we kind of operate like we're preachers, prosecutors, and politicians. So when you're thinking like a preacher, you've got a set of, of sacred beliefs and you think your job is to spread those and proselytize.

And a prosecutor I think in some ways is the opposite. I'm trying to win an argument. And that means I have to make sure that you are wrong. And then a politician I think is fundamentally about trying to get the approval of a certain audience.

Adam Grant:

And that might mean that I'm doing a lot of campaigning and lobbying and maybe flattering you to try to curry favor somehow. And Carey, I think that the danger of all of these is that they can stand in the way of rethinking. Because if I am a preacher or a prosecutor, I'm sure I'm right and you're wrong. And that means I will not change my mind. You might need to change yours, but I'm good. I've already found the truth.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is the goal. Yep. I guess of a preacher. That's how a lot of us think. Yep.

Adam Grant:

And then as a politician, the worry is that I'm not pursuing the truth if I changed my mind, I'm just doing it to fit into my tribe. And so I'm not actually pursuing a higher principle of integrity to find out what might be real or what might be right. So let's start with the preacher, because you are a preacher by calling, where do you come down on this? Do you also worry? I think there's... Let me just say one other thing, sorry, that I should have said earlier, which is I can see the value of talking like a preacher in order to inspire people. Where I get worried is when people are always thinking like preachers and sort of taking everything as a matter of faith, as opposed to... I guess, as opposed to holding some doubt. So help me make sense of that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well you make a really, really good point. I mean, I think there's always... I would say as I've gotten older, I've become more open-minded, which is probably going to generate a lot of letters and angry things. It's like, "wait a minute, you're supposed to be more convinced," et cetera, et cetera. But here's what I've discovered, now I'm Canadian. So I live North of Toronto. I would say that we are more post-Christian than a lot of American culture, depending the coast, go to California, Seattle, it's pretty post-Christian. But middle America, you're pretty much in the Bible belt, still. At least if you're dealing with baby boomers and older gen X-ers, I would say, and I'd love to... Because I think you make a really good point that everybody needs to pay attention to, because to some extent your book is about the art of persuasion in the context of rethinking, you talk a lot about that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And what I've found is there's always a minority group that is attracted to certainty and black and white. In other words, you're always going to find those people. You can find them on the internet, find them in the church. And there are churches built on, I have a monopoly on the truth, blah, blah, blah, blah. So here's what I've discovered. Half of the people who attend our church, and I've handed it off to the next generation now a few years ago, but half the people who attend our church that didn't use to attend church. And that kind of certainty is actually repulsive to them. That what they have discovered, what I discover is that when I give intelligence to an atheist argument or to an agnostic argument, it actually gains me credibility. You talk about it in here, but steel man versus strong man.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So it's pretty easy to set up the straw man or straw woman and knock them down. But if I take the best argument of my opponent and actually honor it and say, "You know what, that's a really good point. That is a really good point. And intelligent people think a very different way. However, have you considered X?" I've learned as a preacher that that... But that's kind of where you go in your book, but that whole idea of "Adam, let me give you 15 reasons you're wrong," that that's a bit dated.

Adam Grant:

It is. I love the way you just articulated that because I think what you're doing at a fundamental level is you are establishing that although your job is in that circumstance to be a preacher, that you're willing to think more scientifically, you're interested in exploring different ideas. As opposed to just sort of selling your answers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I think that's true. I mean, I think atheists have a lot of good points. I think agnostics have a lot of good points. Being... I don't know. There's a lot we don't know. There are a few things about Christianity for myself that I'm like, I just can't walk away from that. I'm having a really hard time. Maybe you can help me, but I just can't walk away from some of the core things. And I find that kind of... And the other thing, I've taught this for years to preachers, but it's assume intelligence not background. And often a lot of the time, if you listen to preaching and I don't know how much preaching you've been exposed to in your life, certainly the stereotypes, but a lot of preaching assumes that you're stupid and I'm smart. And I think like if anybody was to treat me that way, I would be offended. I'd just love for you to comment on it because you do have a lot of preachers listening right now.

Adam Grant:

Yeah, it's funny, I've made the same mistake as a teacher. Where I've thought, okay, my job as a psychologist by training my job is to understand the mind and behavior and apply it to leadership and organizations. And I thought when I started my career that I was here to enlighten my students, essentially about-

Carey Nieuwhof:

They're dumb, you're smart. Yeah.

Adam Grant:

Yeah, although I think I would have said, "I have a lot of knowledge that they don't."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Correct.

Adam Grant:

And that knowledge is grounded in rigorous evidence. And I want to make sure that they have access to it. And over time I started to get very disillusioned with myself because I was failing to practice what I teach. I was basically treating evidence as gospel. As opposed to saying, "You know what? I brought you the best randomized controlled experiment on effective leadership that I could, but it was done with one group of people in one country, in one industry. And you're right. We don't know how that would play out in a different setting. And why don't we try to figure that out? What an exciting opportunity for

all of us to learn." And I, I think that's been just a big aha for me is that one, I learn a lot more with that orientation. And two, I think that people are much more excited to learn with you than they are to learn from you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's good. That's really, really good. So you-

Adam Grant:

But that's why people love... That's one of the reasons people love your show, Carey, is you enter into these conversations where you're in discovery mode and curiosity mode, not just preaching mode.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I tell ya, I formulate these questions really carefully and I try to be open. I try to be really, really open. And I have guests who don't agree with each other on the show. I don't have them on the same episode, but it's like, there's some room. So you would say you were the prosecutor, you were the person who was going to... What does a prosecutor do?

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Adam Grant:

I was the worst prosecutor and I still am more often than I would like to admit. One of my all time favorite cartoons is a guy sitting at a computer, he can't sleep and the question is why? And he says, "Someone is wrong on the internet." It's the story of my life. When I think somebody's beliefs are incorrect, I feel like it's my job to try to educate them. And I think that's why I was drawn to being a social scientist. It's why I was excited about becoming a professor in part, because I wanted to help people move closer to the truth. And I think the way that I did that, you touched on it earlier, I would pile on reason after reason and argument after argument.

Adam Grant:

And one day, one of my students actually called me a logic bully, which I didn't know what to make of that at first. And sheepishly, I was a little bit proud because I don't want to bully anyone but I want to use the most compelling logic and the most airtight evidence to try to convince people to change their minds on things. And so I thought it was a little bit of a funny compliment. And then she said, "But no, because I don't agree with your arguments. I just don't feel I can fight back."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. So it was intimidating, right? Or what would you say?

Adam Grant:

Exactly. I think she just felt stifled and she felt like she wanted to explore... She was trying to make a big career decision. And I thought she was missing out on a perspective that I knew from our past interactions was not comfortable for her. She thought she needed to accumulate degree after degree, after degree to get successful. And when she had this mission that she had to come back to business school for an MBA, after she'd already done an undergrad business degree, I was like, "Nobody really needs six years of business education." And I have this horrible instinct, Carey, when somebody is

passionate about one direction and I think they might have a blind spot to argue the polar opposite as passionately as I can, even though I didn't really believe it, but that was my logic bully mode telling her all the reasons that business school is a waste of time and money. Ironic coming from a business school professor.

Adam Grant:

And I think what happened was I was taking her ownership away from her decision. I was preventing her from really thinking the options through in an open-minded way by trying to hammer a bunch of counter-arguments at her. And I came away from that thinking "I don't want to be that person." And so now what I do in those interactions is I start by asking, "why are you here? Do you just want my stamp of approval on the decision you've already made? Because I'm happy to give that, I'm not going to judge you. I want you to pursue whatever happiness and success means to you. Are you here for me to point out holes in your thinking, potentially? I'm happy to help you do that. Do you want me to stress test your decision making process and really go into challenge mode?" And I could certainly do that and I never have regretted having that upfront discussion.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Yeah. Some of the ways I've thought about that is sometimes you give a \$5 answer to a five cent question.

Adam Grant:

So true. Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's just like should we go to Wharton? Or are you thinking about Stanford? And you give them the big essay on 17 reasons why business school isn't for you or whatever. And so that's a prosecutor mode and then politician, anything else to say on politician, you're currying favor, trying to win votes, trying to win the argument.

Adam Grant:

Yeah. I think a politician mindset is leading us to tell people what we think they want to hear, but not necessarily to change what we really believe. And so it's putting on an act or a show to try to impress or manipulate an audience, but yeah, I'm going to really stick to what I always thought was true here.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then thinking like a scientist, I know that is the metaphor that carries through the whole book, but just in a nutshell, what does it mean to think like a scientist instead?

Adam Grant:

So I don't mean it in the formal sense because I think a lot of people hear "Scientists? I don't have a lab coat, I don't know how to use a microscope or a telescope," but when I think about the values of being a scientist, I was trained, at least, to be humble and curious. And that means I have to know what I don't know. I have to doubt a lot of my convictions and treat a bunch of my opinions or beliefs as just hypotheses and then be open to testing them. This is actually something I've been rethinking since Think Again came out is I could have easily said think like a scholar as opposed to a scientist, because I don't

think you have to use the scientific method. I think what I like about the idea of being a scientist is you're open to running experiments and you're actually excited to discover that you might've been wrong because that means you've learned something and you're getting a little bit closer to the truth.

Adam Grant:

And I think that's what a scholar does. I think that's what a religious scholar does. I think that's what you do when you lead Bible study or when you encourage people to reflect on scripture is you're encouraging people to revisit ideas and assumptions that they might've been close-minded on or that they might not have thought about as applying to their life in ways that are very relevant right now. And so I think that it's interesting to me that part of what I mean by thinking like a scientist is actually what a good preacher would do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Say more about that because I do want to ask some deconstructionist questions like oh, do you just think again, think again, think again until there's nothing left? You've seen through it all. I love that thought. What about what a good preacher would do? How would that preacher do it?

Adam Grant:

Well, I don't know. So, that's the first I should disclose. I keep an ignorance list of all the things I'm just completely clueless on and it's ever-growing. And it's just one, a reminder to me to not try to sound articulate on things that I really don't have experience or expertise in. But two also, it's a prompt for me to go and get curious about the things I don't know. So that was part of why I was excited to have this conversation is here's a chance to learn from you what an alternative to the kind of preaching that I talked about in Think Again looks like. So I would love to learn from you. What do you think an effective preacher does?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, this is fascinating. So, even back in seminary... And let me go back into your prosecutor mode. And I don't want to flip the mic entirely. So my one year in law, which was not very long and I was junior, junior, junior on the totem pole. I was a student actually, but they threw me in court every day. And so pretty much four or five days a week, I was in court and I only lost twice. And I learned how to win in that little tiny experiment of a run. But the way to win was I had to not only think about my client's position, I had to think about the judge. What does a judge need to know to rule in my favor? And I've got to present that evidence. And if you were my opponent in court, quote opponent, I had to know what you were going to say.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I had to go through my mind and figure out okay, Adam is going to say this, and he's going to claim this and he's going to pull out this case law but then the judge, in order to rule in my favor, needs X. And so if I can say these things, which are true, you're bound by truth, then we're probably going to come out on top. And so it mostly worked, which was great. And I've taken that approach into preaching. It's like if you're coming to our church for the first time, Adam, and you're skeptical, you're like, "You know what? I actually went to school. I don't believe this stuff. I'm not sure Jesus rose from the dead. The Bible is an ancient book." It's what are you thinking, I speak to that. And often my favorite thing when I'm preaching a message is to think about the element of surprise.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because one of the things that happens is we think we know the text. We think we know oh, Jesus teaching on the sermon on the Mount or yeah, we heard it a million times. Particularly if, like me, you grew up in church you're like, "Yeah. I can rhyme it off." There's always surprise in the text. And so, one of my jobs as a communicator is to say, "Well, why did that man, who was very well-regarded in the community, fall down at the feet of Jesus? Do you know what that was culturally? Nobody would do that. Nobody would do that. That would be like the president of the United States breaking security detail and walking into a homeless shelter and sitting down in disguise and having a meal." It would be like...

Adam Grant:

You know what Carey? I have to say that is an episode of Undercover Boss that I would watch in a heartbeat.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Cool. Okay.

Adam Grant:

I love that idea. Go on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So it's surprise. And if the text isn't surprising me, and it should, because I believe it's a word of God then wow, here we are. So, exegete that a little bit. What is good about that? What is not? Sorry, that's a theological term, exegete but do you use that in...

Adam Grant:

No, I'm all for exegesis. Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Exegesis, yeah.

Adam Grant:

An exegesis, it's an academic soliloquy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Exactly. So, break that down a little bit. What do you think? What's your reaction to that?

Adam Grant:

Well, I think you're actually doing exactly what I've been trying to learn to do which is to describe something unexpected and then be curious about what is the reaction that provokes. And so this is very meta, but I'm going to try to answer your question as opposed to just being intrigued by the modeling that you just did of what I've been studying. So I think it's really compelling to me at a basic level, the one caveat to that is I don't think I would have wanted to oppose you in a courtroom. I think it would

have been a real challenge and uphill battle. And I also think I would have liked you less than I like you right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, we go for lunch after. It's fine.

Adam Grant:

Okay. I feel better now. No, but I think the element of surprise is exactly what's missing from so many conversations between people who disagree, both of whom will complain that the other person is being stubborn and close minded.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Adam Grant:

And it's one of the things I love most about my life as an organizational psychologist is I get to do and read all these studies that contradict my expectations. And then there's a part of me that wants to downplay that surprise because how long have we been studying leadership and teams? We should have a pretty good set of predictions by now. And then there's another part of me that says, "Well, meteorologists have been doing this a long time and they have much more precise measurements and they can't even tell me what the weather is going to be tomorrow." So human beings are even more complex than cloud systems.

Adam Grant:

So I think amplifying that surprise and saying, "Well, before we tell you what the data showed, what would you expect to play out here?" It's one of my favorite things to do in the classroom with students. It's one of my favorite things to experience as a reader or as a listener or an audience member. And I think my reaction to it is I think you just gave a poignant description of why we all need to be open to thinking again. Not about everything which we'll talk about.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Adam Grant:

Your idea that there might be a surprise in the text, that is an invitation to rethink material that you already believe you've understood and look at it through a new lens and...

Carey Nieuwhof:

There you go.

Adam Grant:

Why else would you keep rereading the same material over and over again if you weren't learn something new from it?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're right. See, I would make the argument that if you're only hearing what you think you're going to hear, you're not actually reading the text properly when it comes to sacred texts, that you're missing the point. Because if it's still not speaking to you, you're probably not reading it openly enough or curiously enough. And if God isn't surprising you, I don't know whether you're worshipping God. And I don't mean that in a heretical way, I just mean it as in a fresh way. One of the other seminary moves I learned back in the '90s at U of T, I think it was David Buttrick talked about contrapuntal. So apparently it's a football move. I'm not a sports guy, but it's a football move but the idea, what I took away from it, was you anticipate the objection.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a little bit like law. So if you're sitting there in my congregation on Sunday morning, I'm like, "Adam," and I don't know your personal background, but let's say you were skeptical, agnostic, atheist, whatever, I'd be like, "What does Adam bring to this text?" Oh, I know what he's going to object about. He's going to say, "Well, I don't actually think Jesus rose from the dead. That's like folklore," or "I don't actually believe that what you are presenting on the screen is what was written by Mark or Matthew 2000 years ago, that there's been all kinds of error and that kind of thing." And so then that's called a contrapuntal, you go and you bring that up and say, "Well, some of you are probably thinking I don't even know whether I can trust the Bible or I don't even know whether Jesus rose from the dead. And I can't solve that for you in five minutes, but let me give you a couple of thoughts around that issue." Boom, boom, boom. Because then what I've done is I've dislodged an objection that you would have spent the rest of the message thinking about, and now you can say, "Okay, well, I don't think he convinced me, but I can at least follow the argument for another 20 minutes or so."

Adam Grant:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Any thoughts on that?

Adam Grant:

Yes. I think that's so effective. It's something I've watched entrepreneurs do. My favorite example, you might remember from Originals is Rufus Griscom who pitched his startup by saying, "Here are the three reasons you should not invest in this."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes.

Adam Grant:

And by anticipating investors and objections, he showed that he wasn't drinking the Kool-Aid. He actually was thinking critically. He also made it clear that he must be pretty confident in the strengths of his startup if he was willing to admit all the weaknesses and he made it harder for the investors to think of their own objections and the harder they had to work to find the flaws in his argument, the less flawed they thought his argument was. And I think you've just done a version of that. What I think is

also... Well, this is surprising about it to me, is it makes me think a little bit about the difference between what you know and what you believe.

Adam Grant:

So I would say my stance is open. I'm not committed to a particular religious doctrine because I don't know.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Adam Grant:

But I can't imagine how this universe could exist without some force that we don't understand. And so, that's something I could see believing in and I would be much more receptive to you saying, "You know what? How do I know that Jesus rose from the dead? Well, I actually can't know that. I can't put you in a time machine and show you that it happened but here's why I've chosen to believe it." I'm like, "Oh, all right, I can get behind that." Is that the direction that you were taught to go or is that taking it too far for you?

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a great question. I don't know that I was taught that. I think I learned that. I think I learned that over time. I learned it through trial and error. I've been at it for 25, 30 years now between courtrooms and pulpits and writing. There was a certainty to dialogue three decades ago that has vaporized in the last few years. And now with the explosion of the internet, which I hope we'll get to, and everybody having an opinion, everybody being able to air it, I think it requires a different kind of apologetics. Literally, apologia means defense. And when you come across as defensive, I would rather come across as open, I would rather come across as I've got questions about the text too so let me show you what has helped me come to this conclusion rather than here's what you better believe, we got 13 minutes left on this message. So...

Adam Grant:

You are talking like a scientist and preaching to my choir in doing so.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There you go.

Adam Grant:

If that makes any sense. That resonates. And it makes me think of something else that I'm very curious to get your reaction to just while we're on this general theme. A friend told me the other day that she learned that the definition of repent is not what she thought it was. When I heard repent I pictured someone saying, "I'm a sinner. I'm guilty," maybe even, "I feel ashamed." And she said, "The original meaning of repent is actually to rethink. To reconsider your past actions and maybe chart a different course moving forward." And I wondered if you could either challenge that or elaborate on it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

She's much closer than I feel terrible and I'm ashamed and here I come begging for mercy. My understanding, we can do this when we're off the air, I'll pull out the Greek dictionary, is that it means to turn. That it literally means I was going to attack you but now I'm going to step back. Now I'm not going to do it. So it means a change. So it doesn't necessarily accompany. So I think her definition, to rethink your position, to go, "Oh, I could be wrong." Yeah. I would say that's probably within... Because usually what happens when you look at the original Greek, there's a range of meaning. So she could be very accurate on that. It certainly doesn't mean grovel, cry, sniffle, and maybe on a good day I'll forgive you. That's not what it means.

Adam Grant:

I mean, right there, that immediately makes the idea of repenting much more appealing to all your skeptics. Doesn't it?

Carey Nieuwhof:

It does. Yeah. And it's so funny because you walk in with all this baggage, some of which because you probably heard repentance preached exactly according to the stereotype that you would, but often, and that's the element of surprise, the first time I realized that is not what repentance means, I'm like oh, well, that's interesting because with my personality, I don't always feel remorse. I should, but maybe I don't. And then other people, they struggle with guilt so badly that they think I'm never going to get over this. I'll never be good enough. I'll never be forgiven and...

Adam Grant:

See, say more about that. What do you mean when you say your personality means you may not feel as much remorse as you should?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know whether you know the Enneagram or not, it's a personality typing system, so I'm an eight. So what it means is I tend to be a bull in the China shop. And so often I will step on your feelings. And I have people in my life I've been with for years who are my team on my staff and they're twos and they feel everything. So, I used to have people pull me out of the meeting, it's like, "Do you know you totally insulted him. And she was almost in tears at the end of it?" And I'm like, "What? Oh, sorry, I didn't even see it." And so I would be a little less sensitive and other people would feel that more. So that's what I would mean by that.

Adam Grant:

Very interesting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you what you are on the Enneagram?

Adam Grant:

So I should say, full disclosure, I'm on the fence about the Enneagram because on the one hand I think the categories are extremely informative for people and you can immediately identify how you differ from other people using it. I think it hasn't kept up with modern developments in psychology and psychometrics. And so some of the items end up probably misclassifying people. And I'm not sure that

we actually need all nine categories. My colleague, Brian Little, just did a need analysis where he showed that there might actually be five or six underlying them but I think it's one of the most intuitively appealing frameworks I've ever seen. Is eight protector?

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a challenger, but it does have protective. Yeah, definitely, once you're in, I gotcha.

Adam Grant:

Got it. Yeah. I think every time I've taken it I've been two, three or five, which I want to say are... Trying to remember it. There's supporter, advisor is one of them. One is achiever. And I forget...

Carey Nieuwhof:

And five? My wife's a five. So, Ian Cron calls that type the investigator. So this is somebody who's very research-driven, hidden, cryptic, all those things. Well, this is fascinating. We're going to have to get you to reinvent apologetics and preaching for us for the 21st century.

Adam Grant:

I'm not sure I'm qualified to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. But the framework's fascinating.

Adam Grant:

I like the reframing of it. Back to you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So one of the questions I did have, and I think you get to it at the end of the book, and I know you believe this, what happens if you have a core belief? My faith is very central to who I am and what I built my life on and yeah, I'm open to looking at this passage in a fresh way and really surprised by this but at the end of the day I think Jesus, I'm continued to be convinced he was risen from the dead. Can you get to the level of deconstructionism where you rethink everything so much that you no longer believe anything? Is there a line?

Adam Grant:

Yeah. I don't think I'd want anyone to be there because at that point you might just be a nihilist.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, exactly.

Adam Grant:

It doesn't sound like fun or a productive way to live. I guess I think about this as a spectrum where most people are probably too far to the left of the sweet spot of rethinking in their lives overall. And that means they're too inclined to prefer the comfort of conviction over the discomfort of doubt. It means they're too interested in surrounding themselves with people who agree with their conclusions, as

opposed to those who might challenge their thought process. And so what I want to do is I want to... I don't think it's my place to tell anyone how much rethinking they should do, let alone what they should rethink.

Adam Grant:

What I want to do is just encourage people to reflect on am I doing enough rethinking. And Carey, the reason that I care so much about that is I think the vast majority of our regrets are situations where we did our rethinking in hindsight. And we said, "Oh, I wish I had reconsidered whether there this job was the right fit for me or whether I should have left this toxic culture or whether I should have been in a relationship with this person who was clearly not aligned with my values. And I think if we did a little bit more of the rethinking upfront, we could avoid some of those regrets.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is so good. And I think there are core values. I tend to see, from what I know of you publicly reading your books and listening to your podcasts, you love the values of compassion and empathy. I would say those would be core. So you're not talking about rethinking those over and over again?

Adam Grant:

No, you could give me every single argument you can think of for why I should be a selfish jerk, and I'm probably not going to be that motivated to rethink it. I'll always look for another way to say, "Look, you can try to be kind and generous and the chief success." And the good news is I have a lot of evidence on different ways of doing that. So I've went and I feel like I pressure tested that set of values, but I think you just made an important distinction between beliefs and values that's worth double clicking on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Adam Grant:

I think that we should be quicker to rethink our beliefs than our values.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you explain the difference?

Adam Grant:

I think of a belief as something that you accept as true.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Adam Grant:

I think of a value as a principle that you hold as important. And so when I think about my values, I'd say generosity, excellence, integrity, and freedom are maybe the top four, although I'm open to revisiting that, tinkering a little bit, but I want to stay as flexible as I can about the best ways to live those values. I might find out tomorrow that the way I was pursuing excellence, which makes me late for meetings all the time, is actually not a generous way to treat people. Actually, I found that out several times. I really need to work on it, right? But I want to be open to rethinking my habits and my beliefs about what daily

behaviors and practices will best allow me to express those values and make them core to my life. And so to take this back to your original question, your faith is really interesting because you could position that as a belief or a value or both.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Exactly. Yeah.

Adam Grant:

What parts of that system of thinking for you are belief versus value?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I'd really have to, again, double click on what you mean by that, but I think it's both. Foundational to me is the word of God's the word of God. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is God. And beyond that, I'm not one of those people who has a doctrinal statement that you need a dump truck to read, right? Here it is. I just delivered it to you. It's 17,000 pages. Enjoy it. I'm not one of those people. My faith is very Orthodox in the sense that it's traditional. It tends to be what Christians have believed over the centuries as opposed to what some guy on the internet believed yesterday. It's less propositional and more foundational to historic Christianity and hopefully first century Christianity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

As far as my values go, yeah, there are things that are ... I think beliefs are becoming clearer and things I used to believe, I don't believe in the same way. And that's not, oh, I've become more progressive or I've become more whatever. It's just like, no, having wrestled with the text, I think the text is actually demanding of me things it didn't use to demand in terms of kindness and humility and patience, and this is a very different way. I have a Sunday prayer ritual where I go through some of what they call the fruits of the holy spirit and I pray that they would be more manifest in my life, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, self-control and a few others. I'm revisiting on a regular basis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then that's probably also feeding into my values. I don't know. I'd really have to think about that, but there are some core beliefs, like we mentioned it a few times ... Jesus rose from the dead and he is God ... that I would be like, yeah, it would take a lot for you to dislodge that from the center of my life, so yeah, that's my take on that.

Adam Grant:

Yeah. And I wouldn't want to dislodge that, right, because I can't disprove that. Completely outside the realm of my capabilities as a social scientist. And I mean, the audacity also to tell you that I know what really happens, please. Come on. This is your field, not mine.

Adam Grant:

I think there's something interesting, maybe a hunch or a question that I want to explore a little bit here. And you may decide that this is not an interesting line of inquiry, but I'm curious about it, so I want to ask you about it. I want to run a little thought experiment and say ... Well, first of all, let me test one of my assumptions here. Jesus did not write the bible, correct?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Correct. Yeah.

Adam Grant:

How many years later do we think it was captured?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Depending on who you read, the scholars, there's a range, but the gospel of Mark may have been complete by 30 years after the resurrection, a little under 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus, so within decades, and it was carried through an oral tradition and fragment, but most people would say that the four gospels in the New Testament was composed between 60-ish AD, some would put it in the 50s, through to 90, about 90, 91, 96. Revelation goes maybe to 96 AD, so within the first lifetime of Jesus.

Adam Grant:

Okay, great. That's helpful. We're looking at some number of decades.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Correct.

Adam Grant:

One of the things I think about with my psychologist hat on is a game of telephone and how if you've ever told a story to somebody and then they tell it to someone else, there are pieces that get lost in translation. And so let's just imagine for a moment that a little bit of that happened over the 30 or 60 years between Jesus's teachings and then the transcription of some of the core text.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Adam Grant:

And let's say that ... I don't know ... we discovered an earlier iteration that we can authenticate, and it turns out that Jesus said, "Hate thy neighbor."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Okay, for argument's sake.

Adam Grant:

And it's authenticated. It's a source closer to Jesus than the text you've been relying on your whole life. And I know this is such a weird thought experiment. My question is, would you rethink your stance on what you owe to your neighbor based on that?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ooh, that went in a very different direction than I thought you were going to take it. Well done.

Adam Grant:

I think you probably have a sense of why I'm going there, but I want to play it out for a second and then we can figure out whether it makes any sense.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No. I'm not a person of hate and I would want to-

Adam Grant:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes. I'm not a person of hate. I do not want that. I would want the other texts to be true about Jesus. And we'd have a long discussion about the scholarship of that fragment, et cetera, et cetera, and we'd have a really good look at it, but no, I would want to be a person of love. And one of the principles of Calvinism ... I don't know whether it's Calvinism or not, but the clear interprets the unclear, because you can find that Bible verse fragment and run a million miles in the wrong direction with it, but there are times where the Bible is evidently clear. The Bible has been very clear, Old Testament, New Testament, about love, so yeah, I would say no, I'm still committed to love. We'll have a conversation about the text.

Adam Grant:

That's amazing. Okay. That hypothesis I think was supported.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Adam Grant:

My hunch was that there are certain values you hold so dear that you would stick to them even in the face of some of your beliefs being challenged.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes. And I would say what's formed that as a foundation of my love, though, because this is chicken and the egg thing, I grew up with Christian parents. That was something that I learned as a child. It's something I have believed for 55 years and all that stuff. And now I look at it and go, "Jesus was about hate? We need to have a really serious conversation about that and I need to really see the scholarship." But it's an interesting thought experiment. I have one for you if we're going to play along, okay? If church felt more like this, what do you think would happen?

Adam Grant:

I think that a lot of people who choose other careers would be drawn to the clergy in some way I think is the first thing that comes to mind. I think the second thing is that a lot of people who are more agnostic or not even agnostic, right, but just not deeply religious would be excited about church as not just a source of community, but actually a place to go to explore and learn. In other words, what school is supposed to be.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I'm going to get emotional. That's really cool to hear you say that. That's been a hope of mine, a prayer of mine for a long time. And I think there's a lot of stereotypes that we're closed-minded, we're going to beat you over the head with our logic. And I want to get back into logic bullies, but I'm just going to breathe that in. Thank you. That was a gift. That was a gift.

Adam Grant:

No, no, no, please. I mean, it's completely the opposite of what people who are not attached to a religious institution expect when they think about entering that world. I mean, I think it's a complete rethinking of the role of religion in American society at some level, right? Because at least if you take our ... and obviously this is not your strand of Christianity, but if you think about the founding of America, right, this is a Protestant country. The Protestant work ethic still dominates our workplaces. The vast majority of CEOs come from a Protestant background. We tend to see hard work as a virtue inherently, regardless of what purpose you're working toward and whether that's a worthy end or a noble cause.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes. Sometimes it is, sometimes it's not.

Adam Grant:

Exactly. And so I think this is a really interesting and different way of imagining the role that religious teachings could play in people's lives, which is this is a place to explore important questions about the meaning of life. And I'm sure ... This might be a little tangent, but you must've read Derek Thompson's Atlantic article I think two years ago on workism.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, I read parts of it. Yeah. I couldn't quote it to you, but I am familiar with that. Yeah.

Adam Grant:

The thing that really stuck with me about it was that as religion has declined in American society, people have acted as if work could be a substitute, that the meaning and the community and the frankly, the understanding that I expected to come from really engaging with questions that are much larger than myself, I'm going to get that from my job really, and it's no wonder that people are often miserable and depressed at work because that is an unrealistic set of expectations.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That would be a fun ... Okay, you've just tapped into a mother lode of an idea about what is replacing faith in America, because I think you can make the same argument ... I've heard Tim Keller, a preacher in New York City make this argument that if you look at all the pressure on marriage today, children, the worship of children, the worship of spouses, the worship of work, the worship of ideas, ideology, politics, I mean, there's a vacuum right now in American life and so many contenders, people are just reaching out for something.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I would want to say to be fair, you have plenty of evidence, unfortunately, very recent evidence that the church is full of close-minded people who are not open to ideas. All you have to do is accidentally

follow someone on Instagram, which, again, I really appreciate about your book because you go there toward the end where you talk about the way we talk as a culture and the way we think as a culture. Oh, this is so fresh, man. I feel like we could have dinner and talk for a couple hours about just that one thing you've raised about what is filling the void of religion in America.

Adam Grant:

I mean, that's a book waiting to be written. It's a whole podcast series in and of itself.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It is.

Adam Grant:

Wait, and also, are you saying we're not having dinner right now? This feels like it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know. It really does, doesn't it? Oh man, Adam. So you think work is ... What are the dangers in that workism article, just to give people ... because we do have a lot of entrepreneurs listening as well, and being a preacher, it's like I'm probably not going to have drugs or alcohol as my vice, but throw yourself into work, you get a raise and a promotion, right, so why can't work ... You're an organizational psychologist. Why can't work bear that load?

Adam Grant:

Well, I don't think organizations exist to give purpose to the people who work in them, right, sadly. I would love it if organizations did, and we do know mission-driven companies, but I don't think that's why most organizations are started. I think that's a challenge. I think it scares me anytime somebody calls a company a family. Really? Would your family fire you if you did a bad job for a couple of weeks? That's not a standard that we can match up to. Call it a community. What you're trying to say is this is not just a transaction. This is a place where you can belong, but communities expelled people when they violate their values. And I think that's another thing that is just a tough pill for a lot of people to swallow.

Adam Grant:

I think another challenge is that when work fills this void in our lives, it's too easy for people to become compulsive workaholics where they feel guilty if they're not working, they put undue pressure and stress on themselves and there are actually physiological health costs of that, right? We know that you're at higher risk for heart attacks, for example, if you become a compulsive workaholic. My colleague Nancy Rothbard has a nice alternative to this. She calls it being an engaged workaholic where you still may work a lot, and I think, Carey, you might be one of these people, but you work a lot because you're passionate about it, you enjoy the work and you also think it's making the world a better place. And it turns out that there there are no documented health costs of that kind of workaholicism, as long as it's a choice as opposed to just an obligation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, this is kind of my retirement. This is what I hope to do for the next few decades. And it is fun nine mornings out of 10 when I get up and get to have conversations like this, and you know that. It's funny. I

heard someone say, "Meaning isn't something you get from your work. It's what you bring to your work." Does that make sense as an organizational psychologist?

Adam Grant:

It does. It tracks with what my colleague Amy Wrzesniewski has studied for years, which is that meaning isn't really something that you seek, it's more something that you make or create. And you read about this in Think Again. She and Jane got into these wonderful studies of job crafters, people who take these job descriptions that were made for somebody else or some faceless group of people and say, "Well, this doesn't capture all of my passions and values and strengths. Let me become an architect in my own job and customize it so that I can make it a little bit more me and bring more of myself to this work."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ah, okay. Well, we got to get into some of the ideas in Think Again, because we've barely scratched the surface, but this has been absolutely riveting, Adam, and thanks for going there. This is-

Adam Grant:

No, thank you. I'm enjoying it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... helping a lot of leaders. Let's talk about Mount Stupid. I love Mount Stupid. You got beautiful graphs in there, and what'd you call the chapter? Stranded at the Summit of Mount Stupid or something like that? What is Mount Stupid?

Adam Grant:

Mount Stupid is the point where you start to gain experience. It might be knowledge or skill, and your confidence climbs much faster than your competence. And pretty soon you think you know a lot more than you do and you fall victim to this terrible combination of arrogance and ignorance. And the worst part is that you don't know you're incompetent because you just know how much more you know than you did yesterday and how much better you've gotten than you were last month and you can't see how limited your own expertise is.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One of my favorite graphics in the book ... this is skipping way ahead ... was the flat earth diagram that you put toward the end, which is somebody who just discovered that the earth is flat and this loop that they do where they discover it, they share it with their friends. They become evangelical preachers about how the earth is flat and everyone's wrong. Is Mount Stupid kind of related ... and I'm not talking about flat earthers versus round earthers, but it's sort of that whole thing, like I just discovered something in the ... I read about anti-vaxxers on the internet or that kind of thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you describe that mindset of what makes ... because we just came off a year of unprecedented conspiracy theories, stuff that if you had gone ahead in 2010 and shown us what we'd be saying in 2020, we'd be like, "You're talking about another species or civilization," and yet here we are. And everyone's got their own pet theory about everything now. And that diagram, I want to frame it and put it up somewhere so I can see it. Can you unpack that for us? Because it feels like Mount Stupid.

Adam Grant:

Yeah. I wouldn't have believed it, honestly, if you had told me in 2010 this is where we would be.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Adam Grant:

I guess I think about it in terms of an overconfidence cycle where you start out ... I think if we take the flat earth conspiracy theory as an example, there's actually a bunch of work in psychology on why people get attached to conspiracy theories. And I've seen two really interesting explanations for it. One is what's called the Cynical Genius Illusion, which is the idea that a lot of times we think cynical people are smarter than their peers and that's how they show, "Well, I can't be won over. I'm not gullible." On average, they tend to be less intelligent than their peers and cynicism is a defense mechanism against being outsmarted, this knee jerk, "That's not true," and that's how you avoid getting manipulated.

Adam Grant:

The other big motivation, it seems, behind the popularity of conspiracy theories is the desire to believe that a chaotic world is actually in control, that it's predictable, that bad things don't happen at random, right, that good things happen to good people. And I think that this is also part of a lot of religious teachings, right? I don't need to tell you that, but the conspiracy theory version of this is, "Well, I don't want to believe that a pandemic could just happen. That's horrible. I don't want to live in that kind of world. That is an unjust world, and so let me figure out who the evil people are that orchestrated this in a lab to try to profit from it."

Adam Grant:

And then what happens when you meet a few other people who share that view is you start to take pride in having special knowledge that other people don't have and you're in the know and often you're somebody who's been an outsider before and maybe felt like you weren't respected for your intelligence or you didn't have expertise, and that makes you convinced that you're right and leads you into a trap of confirmation bias and desirability bias where you only see what you expect and want to see, and then that just reinforces your pride and you become arrogant. And the more you affiliate with a group of people who share that beliefs, the more you end up with a polarized set of views, because the way people gain status in a group of flat earthers is to be the most extreme flat earther, like, "I am more all in on this than anybody else. I know more about why the earth is shaped like a Frisbee than anyone else," and that pushes the whole group a little bit more and more toward the extreme.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, logical bullying. I remember I had a counseling session years ago. It was in my 30s. I had a lot of time in university, et cetera, but I remember my counselor saying that knowledge is power, but I was using it as a defense and as something that I could hold over people, and I've never forgotten that. And you can see that at play, right, that knowledge is actually supposed to be used to serve people and to serve others rather ... Does that resonate?

Adam Grant:

Yes. I think so many people think that knowledge is a weapon to wield when in fact it's a resource to share.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Yep. And so let's talk about ... because this goes into what is it, logical bullying, and there's a certain sense in that even in the flat earther conspiracy, whether that ... and pick your issue, right, whatever conspiracy theory you're on that the virus was manufactured in a lab in China and this happened and that happened. We figured it all out and now we know, and the authorities are keeping us from this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let's talk about echo chambers, which is related to conspiracy theories. I'm sure you're familiar with the work of Tristan Harris and others like him. Talk about ... because I've been writing about that and trying to alert listeners to we all end up in this echo chamber and I would love for you to speak to people who would say, "Well, you guys seem so open, but everything's so clear in black and white to me and I've got this armchair quarterback perspective on the world and I know it's wrong and you don't." What would you say about echo chambers and what are the dangers there?

Adam Grant:

I think the biggest danger of being trapped in an echo chamber is that you spend all your time affirming what you already believe rather than testing and questioning and evolving your beliefs, which another name for that is learning. I think we all want to be lifelong learners. And I'll tell you, Carey, the way that I've tried to navigate this personally, because I can't write a book like Think Again without worrying that I'm going to be a hypocrite, and I've actually shifted my view on this whole idea that you should practice what you preach. After writing about some of the risks of thinking too often like a preacher, I thought, "Well, maybe this should go the other way, that you should only preach things that you already practice."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh.

Adam Grant:

And that way you don't end up with as many moments of-

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's interesting. I made that shift in my preaching years ago. I'm like, I will only talk about something if it's something I feel I have some level of integration in my life with or if I'm actively working on it and can speak with integrity about it.

Adam Grant:

I'm so glad you said the latter part of that, because I think I over-corrected on this one and I said, "All right, if I haven't mastered something, I can't talk about it."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, then I got two subjects maybe.

Adam Grant:

That's one more than me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

On a good day, maybe one. Talk to my wife, okay?

Adam Grant:

No, no, but it's such a helpful reframe to say, "Okay, if I'm working on it, then part of the reason that I'm going to in some cases preach it is the more I say it out loud, the more I'm pushing myself to rethink the habits I'm trying to let go of."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Correct.

Adam Grant:

By telling you I have a bad habit of going into prosecutor or logic bully mode, I'm trying to talk myself out of that, right, and complete this rethinking cycle that I've been going through for a number of years. And I guess, just thinking out loud about this a little bit, I think that where I've gone with it is I've said, okay, my natural instinct is I like to be right. It bothers me when other people are wrong so I'm going to follow people on social media, I'm going to listen to the podcasts of people who generally reach the same conclusions I do. And I'm not going to say I was learning nothing doing that, but I was mostly learning more reasons to think the things I already think. And I didn't feel like I was evolving much in my understanding of the world. In some cases, maybe I was going a little deeper, but I was narrowing myself.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Adam Grant:

And so I shifted my goal a little bit and I said, okay, let me find people who are people who are both open-minded and high integrity in their thinking and their reasoning. When they argue, they argue in good faith because they're trying to get to the truth, not because they want to troll somebody.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm.

Adam Grant:

And they do take a discovery that they were wrong as a joyful opportunity for learning. I want to listen to those people, regardless of what conclusions they reach, because those are the kinds of thinkers that I want to learn from. I think my aha moment was learning is not about the knowledge I accumulate in my head, as much as it is the skills that I gain for how to learn. I want to listen to people who are great learners, not people who always have the right answers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know whether you're familiar with this phrase at all. It's an obscure interview, but you know Yuval Noah Harari's work, right? Brilliant, brilliant and in so many ways. There was an interview a couple of years ago, Chris Anderson from Ted did with him and he said, "What is the greatest existential threat to humanity?" And he said, "Human hacking." Are you familiar with his work on that? I'm putting you on the spot.

Adam Grant:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But my understanding of what he said with human hacking is to the extent the algorithm is at work and AI is at work, we lose the ability to think for ourselves. We have the illusion that we're thinking again, we have the illusion, but back to that flat earth diagram, it's like, "I just found..." Now I'm more of a flat earther than you are, now I'm more of an anti-vaxxer than you are because you're not even as enlightened as I am. He says it's that loss of agency and the ability to think independently that is the greatest existential threat to humanity. Any thoughts on that? I'd love your take on that.

Adam Grant:

Intriguing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It is, keeps me up at night some nights.

Adam Grant:

Me too. It's something that I've spent a lot of time thinking about. I've talked to Tristan Harris about this a bit. This is a great area for me to try to embrace some intellectual humility because I don't know a whole lot about AI. I'm very much a consumer of these ideas, not a producer of them. I'm glad that Yuval is weighing in because there's an old joke that it's hard to predict the future and historians can't even predict the past with perfect accuracy. I find it really hard to imagine that I have a crystal ball and have a clear understanding of where artificial intelligence is taking us.

Adam Grant:

But I think one of the things that I've become more open to than I was before, is this possibility that, as you described, that AI can create the illusion of free choice without actually offering it. This goes to the echo chamber point that if algorithms are engineered to only show me things that I like, and I only like the things that are consistent with what I preach or that are the opposite of what I prosecute, then over time the algorithms are going to serve me up basically the worst version of my own preexisting convictions. Just drill those into my mind.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You become more extreme.

Adam Grant:

Yeah, and I think that's a scary proposition. I become more extreme and more entrenched. Both. I'm further down one end of the spectrum and it's also much harder for me to let go because I've built up all this cognitive support and reinforcement for whatever set of opinions I'm attached to.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Which completely jettisons the kind of dialogue we had half an hour ago in this conversation. That is impossible. That kind of, if I'm entrenched and I'm like, "Adam, I'm going to show you how you're wrong and how I'm right," you're out the door. Even if you have to sit there for 30 minutes, you've tuned out.

Adam Grant:

Completely. I can see that being a source of peril for the human race. What's the timeline for that? I think that it's longer from my read of the data as an outsider than a lot of people are sounding the alarm about. I don't think that in five years we're going to have computers doing all our thinking for us. What we could have though in five years, is a very subtle set of slippery slopes that we fall down where we're not seeing how much we're trapping ourselves in one of those echo chambers. I do think it's a great time to rethink algorithms and ask, "Is there a way to gauge what a thoughtful conversation looks like?" A conversation that opens both people's minds, as opposed to one that just makes everyone feel good.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's why I think your book is so important. Okay, we're coming up on time. I want to respect your time. I want to ask a question and this doesn't feel like a place to stop, but I think it's a great place to stop. Probably the most moving part of the book was where you told the story of a Black musician who befriended a leader of the local chapter of the KKK. They became friends and he actually ultimately resigned his KKK membership. Then also a story out of Quebec, Canada of an ardent anti-vaxxer who ended up having her mind changed about vaccinations, had her whole family vaccinated.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Two very real issues, racism, and the whole anti-vaxxer thing. But the tactic used to disarm both in their opposition to it was so surprising and maybe that is a good place to finish. What did the vaccine whisperer do? What did, trying to remember his name, was it Daryl?

Adam Grant:

Yeah, Daryl Davis.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah. What did he do to disarm the tension between him and a white supremacist?

Adam Grant:

Well, in both cases, the opening of the other person's mind came from an unusual combination of non-judgemental asking questions and listening carefully to the answers. It's the opposite of what any well-trained prosecutor or logic bully would want to do. Let me tell you why racism is wrong. Let me tell you why it's stupid not to get this vaccine for your kids. I mean, it's clear as day. How could you not see it? You must be an idiot.

Adam Grant:

What Daryl did, I think the most memorable interaction of all the ones that I learned about from him, was the one where he sat down with the KKK member and asked, "How did you arrive at this belief? How did you arrive at this belief that Black people are bad or inferior?" This KKK member said, "Well, look at crime. Look at all the Black criminals out there. It must be because Black people, they have smaller brains, they have more violent cultures. This is a real problem." This should not be Daryl Davis's responsibility as a Black man to have to go and educate the hate out of a white supremacist. But Daryl has the courage and the conviction to take it upon himself.

Adam Grant:

And instead of getting angry, which he had the right to do I think in that situation, he said, "Well, I'm Black and I haven't committed any violent crimes." The KKK member said, "Well, your gene must be latent. It hasn't come out yet." I would have lost it at that point. Can't even imagine being a Black man and being told that to my face. Daryl lets it sit and he asked the KKK member to name some serial killers. He says, "Every serial killer I can think of is white. I guess that means maybe you're a serial killer and your gene is latent. It hasn't come out yet." The guy got very quiet, changed the subject. Didn't bring it up for months. And months later, he walked away from the KKK and told Daryl it was that series of questions that changed his mind.

Adam Grant:

I have to tell you the big aha I took out of this and the vaccine whisperer technique is very similar, which is just trying to understand how did you arrive at these beliefs and what do they really mean for you? If you want to change what someone believes, you almost always have to start with understanding what they want to believe. Our beliefs are driven by our motivations and it's a lot harder to force someone to change their beliefs than it is to help them find their own motivation to change. I think the only way you can do that is to ask genuinely open-ended questions about what would lead you? Would you ever consider not hating somebody who looked different from you? Are there circumstances where you might consider getting a vaccine? What would those look like? Then it's that person's job to decide whether they want to change.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, Adam, this has been so rich. I can't thank you enough. Wow! I would love for you to tell people who aren't connected with you online, about your podcast, where to find you online. Then obviously, for those of you who are watching, here's the book. The whole thing is devoured, dogeared, noted and will be a reread, so I can't recommend it enough. Tell us where we can find you online, Adam.

Adam Grant:

Oh, thank you, Carey. It really means a lot to me that you enjoyed the book and that you are willing to recommend it. I guess I would say I host a Ted podcast called WorkLife and it's designed to make work better. I have a regular newsletter called Granted, which is about the latest updates on work and psychology that I've found interesting. Yeah, I guess I would say that I came into this conversation hoping I would get to rethink some things and you've definitely accomplished that for me. I hope also that we can move toward a world where people recognize that rethinking doesn't mean you always have to change your mind. It just means that you're open to reflecting and reconsidering some of the convictions that might not be serving you well anymore. Or that might've made sense in a version of the world that existed 20 or 30 years ago, but that we don't quite live in anymore. I think that kind of mental

flexibility is something that would probably make us all into slightly better leaders and also better partners too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Much better leaders. I would say one of the things the book has done for me, because I've noticed that age and closed-mindedness are frequent companions. That the older people get, the more cynical they get and the more close-minded they get. It's like, "Oh, I used to believe that when I was younger, but..." As I head to the next, God-willing, 20, 30 years whatever's left, I want to become more open-minded, more curious because I discover the 80 year olds that I really admire, they're all those things. And they still have their convictions, they still have their deep core beliefs that perhaps have been with them. But I find that rethinking has made me a stronger Christian, not a weaker believer. That there are some things that needed to go, but then there's some things that are like, "Wow, I am more core on this than I was because I was open to different points of view." I think the truth has a way of standing up to scrutiny.

Adam Grant:

I think that's just beautifully put. Yeah, I mean, worst case scenario, you listen to your critics and they make you stronger.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And you learn from them and you become friends with them, which is a joy.

Adam Grant:

Something we could all use more of and Carey, I guess I would say from a recovering faux prosecutor, to a former lawyer, current preacher, once upon a time, would-be a politician, I think that this has been a conversation where I've come away with a bunch of new questions to ask. That, to me is the best thing that could happen in a conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we got to a tenth of what I wanted to cover. That gives you an idea of where my mind is. I feel exactly the same way, Adam. Thank you. This has been a gift. Just a pure joy and a reminder to me why we do this show. Thank you.

Adam Grant:

Thank you for having me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that was a delight. Was it not? Adam, again, thank you so much. I do hope you will buy his book. It is one of my favorite reads in years and entertaining. Like I said, there's cartoons and pictures and he's funny and the charts are off the chart. They're really great. Just the ideas, I think that this book could really change the tone of not only online, but how we relate to each other. I think that kind of openness is just fascinating.

Carey Nieuwhof:

By the way, I did realize that I got put on the [inaudible 01:24:58] Jesus spot and Adam was a 100% right. Or his friend was 100% right on the definition of the word repent. If you go back to the Greek it's metanoia, which means a changing of your mind or in other words to think again. So there you go. Just want to clarify that, save a few comments and some emails. I just froze on that one when Adam asked me and he was absolutely right and his friend was right. It does also mean to turn, it has multiple meanings, but I emailed Adam on that the next day and let them know.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hey, we got a what I'm thinking about segment, and I want to go a little bit deeper on how evangelism is changing and how to think again and do apologetics. I would love to hear what you think in the show notes. You can go and check that out at careynieuwhof.com/episode405, where you will get quotes and insights and every link we talked about. Links to all the things we talked about in the show, as well as transcripts. We do that for free thanks to our partners.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I do want to thank Gloo Connect and also Pro Media Fire. You can go to gloconnect.church/Carey to grow your digital outreach campaigns. And to get free access to my four-part course, click to connect. And by Pro Media Fire, you can get help with your social media management and digital growth and get 10% off for life at promediafire.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, by popular demand, next episode, Steve Cuss is back. We had a great conversation about a year ago on this podcast about managing leadership anxiety. Then actually, this is another dinner conversation type conversation with Steve and I. We talk all about how do you manage stress a year into the crazy world we now live in? Here's an excerpt.

Steve Cuss:

I probably shouldn't have done it, but I remember early on, one of the guests at our church, she laid out every pastor who had ever let her down before she came to our church. I had less of a filter and wisdom back then, I was more obnoxious. And I just said, "Why don't you behead me now and mount my head on your wall? Let's get it over with, because my job as an anxiety coach is to notice recurring predictable patterns. Of course, I'm going to be pastor number seven." But I didn't say it in a way that was helpful because I meant to say it playfully and what I was trying to say is, "Can we get the offense out of the way and let's see what's on the other side of this?" That's where the good stuff is, is on the other side of the offense.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Also, coming up amazing conversations with Annie F. Downs, John Maxwell, John Acuff, Rick Warren, Amy Edmondson, Simon Sinek, and well, a whole lot more. I'm so excited for this year on the show. We are seeing more of you tune in than ever before. If you haven't subscribed yet, you can do that for free wherever you get your podcasts. Yeah, just let us know how it's going. You can always shoot me an email over at carey@careynieuwhof.com.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to talk to you picking up on what Adam and I talked about, about how evangelism is shifting. I really think if we change our tone and approach in the church, we will do a much better job of reaching people. I promise you, what Adam and I talked about really, really, I find to be a very refreshing conversation, both with people who don't go to church and people who do have a Christian conviction.

Carey Nieuwhof:

In a post-Christian, post-modern world, here are five shifts I think every leader needs to make when it comes to evangelism. This is no surprise if you follow Adam's work. But the first point is simply this. Embracing the question is as important as giving an answer. Historically, apologetics is okay, "What's your question? Here's my answer." Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Somebody says, "When I die, will I be re-incarnated?" A typical answer might be Christians don't believe in reincarnation so no, not at all. You're going to be resurrected in Christ. Or what you could do is you could say, "That's actually a great question. Thanks for asking it. Actually, the Christian experience focuses on resurrection. Would you like to talk about that?" You see, it's the same destination, but it's a totally different approach and there's an openness there that I think is very attractive to people you want to have a conversation with.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I mean, I don't know about you, but just on a human level, I do not enjoy having conversations with people who are just trying to hammer me with their views. I don't enjoy that. As Adam said, a lot of people don't. His section of his book, Think Again, about how to make a persuasive argument, killer, killer, killer, killer.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, point number two, steering the conversation is better than pushing for a conclusion. One of the things you can do is just steer a conversation in a helpful direction. You do that by not freaking out at people's questions, no matter how strange they might be. Trying to listen without judgment, affirming a person's intention. Going, "Okay, that's really interesting." Steering a conversation back toward truth is far more effective than slamming on the brakes. That's point two. Number one, embracing the question is as important as giving an answer. Number two, steering the conversation is better than pushing for a conclusion.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Number three, being open is more effective than being certain. I do think that there is a niche market for the certainty that we talked about. It's like, "Here's the way," and people will always follow you. But if you look at the broad swath of humanity, most people actually just want to have a conversation. I think that kind of openness. I thought it was a really fascinating point in the dialogue with Adam. This is one of my favorite interviews that I've done 400 episodes in, where he said, "Are you open?" And the fact that I was open, made him more open to my viewpoint and I'm always learning. I'm always growing. If I'm not open, I'm not even going to grow as a Christian. I think being open is more effective than being certain. I would also say that certainty and self-righteousness are often frequent companions.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. That leads us to point number four, arrogance, smugness and superiority are dead. There's a ton of that in the church. There's a ton of that online. I don't think it's really good. If you want to repel anyone under 40, lead with arrogance, lead with smugness, and lead with superiority. Arrogance, by the way, is also a sin. Here's that word, repent. Get over your smugness and superiority. Humbly love God,

your community and people who don't know him because God does. Arrogance is only attractive to the arrogant.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then finally, the fifth thing I would say about the way that evangelism is changing in a post-modern culture is the timeline is longer. I'm a pretty driven person. I would love to conclude everything in about 35 seconds. Evangelism doesn't work that way. Do you ever notice that people who come to faith when they're pressured, often leave it after a few years? It was just some weekend or there was a really big mood in the room and they were pressured into it. Then they're just gone a few years later. Jesus said he would draw all people to himself and he will, but he didn't promise to do it in three minutes or even during a 90 minute service or an eight week class. I find having a long timeline is really helpful. It took the disciples three years to figure out who Jesus was, so that should give us some encouragement.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Having ministered in the same area for 25 years, I can say that extended timeline is amazing. Sometimes people walk out the door and then they come back and sometimes they come back multiple times and you see them grow. So give people time and space to come to faith. Apparently God does too. He's still patient with you, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Those are some thoughts on how evangelism is shifting in a post-Christian world. I hope the church gets good at this fast. I think a lot is riding on it. And Adam, thank you for being an ally in this cause and trying to get us all to open up our minds and think again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we are back with a fresh episode. Thank you so much for listening and 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.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:04]