

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 411 of the podcast. It's Carey here and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, so good to have Ian Morgan Cron back on the podcast if you follow, All Things Enneagram, you probably know about Ian and if you don't, you're in for a treat. And today's episode is brought to you by Pro Media Fire. You can book your social media management consultation today at promediafire.com/growth and by XPS 2021. CTF Capital is bringing you a gathering of innovative XP leaders, you can join by googling XP Summit. So, we're going to talk now, things are reopening. I mean, I don't know about you, we're still in lockdown in Canada, I think we're going to be in lockdown to like I'm 90, I don't know. But the UK is reopening. Hey there, UK listeners we see you and hear you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Europe is kind of all over the place. Australia, New Zealand, you're kind of reopened. If you're in Texas, Georgia, you are reopened. Different parts of the US are going at different times but, we've been through quite the year. And so, we're going to talk about how and we get into it a little bit about how Ian's handled this but then we get into how your Enneagram type responds to chronic stress because that's what you're in, right? You're in chronic stress. And the opening is kind of, reopening is wobbly and we don't really know what to expect. So, I hope you're going to find this really helpful. I know I did. And then listen to the end because he's talking about fake authenticity and true vulnerability. We talked about that a couple times and it just nails me, nails me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to talk at the end too what I'm thinking about segment about self awareness. Because people are like, "Really, the Enneagram," and I have so many personality profiles done on me and my team. It's not even funny, but how that's actually I believe a spiritual discipline because you won't confess what you can't address. And so I'm going to talk about that at the end of the episode. And I hope you really enjoy it. Ian Cron is a best selling author psychotherapist, Enneagram teacher, Episcopal priest and the host of the popular podcast Typology, which I listen to. I've been on it, my wife and I have been on it. His books include the novel Chasing Francis, The Spiritual Memoir, Jesus, My father, the CIA and Me, and The Road Back To You, an Enneagram Journey to Self Discovery.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He's also working on a brand new book. He's a sought after speaker. His clients include the Discovery Channel, Ramsey Solutions, Michael Hyatt Company, Warner Brothers Music, OCLC, among others. And he and his wife, Anne, have three children, they live in Nashville. And with that said, imagine waking up wowed by the beautiful content you see on your social media platform all week long. You ever just look at your social and go, I need to up my game? Well, imagine your Instagram and Facebook stories filled with excitement, custom graphics, you got two choices in 2021 when it comes to social media. You or a team member, do it yourself all day all night try to get it right. And remember the algorithm and the strategy is constantly changing or you hire Pro Media Fire. You get an entire team of experts that keeps up with trends to help you grow online.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The choice is yours. And if you're interested in learning more, book your social media management consult today, it's free at promediafire.com/growth. That's promediafire.com/growth and if you're a second share leader, executive pastor, admin pastor, operations pastor at a local church, you have a lot of influence. And I know a lot of you listen to this show. So I'm privileged to have been part of the Executive Pastor Summit, which we called XPS in the past. And they've got another one coming up. This year, the voices that they're featuring include Ed Stetzer, Dan Reiland and Beth Ganim. The event is May 25-26 in Denver, Colorado. You will actually get to fly on an airplane and go in there. So I would encourage you to sign up and connect with the sharpest women and men XP leaders in the country.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You can check out more, you may want to write this down. Okay, you can go to welcome.CDFcapital.org/XPS2021. That's welcome.CDFcapital.org/XPS2021 or here's what you can do, google XP Summit that will get you there too. Maybe you want to try that one. So don't miss that May 25-26 in Denver, Colorado. Well, I am so excited to dive into my wide ranging conversation with Ian Morgan Cron. Here we go. Ian Morgan Cron, welcome back, it's good to connect-again.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Carey, it is always a pleasure to hang out with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And so we were chatting about re-typing me. Am I a three or an eight? We may get to that at some point, but I want to start where we are last time you were on, we were a few months into the crisis and honestly, I just never... Nobody knows what's coming until it happens. And here we are a year and a bit later and we're still in the midst of whatever we're in by the time this airs, there's not any easy relief in sight. And I would just love to know, let's start personally, what's been the most surprising thing for you in this crisis so far in?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Initially, I would have said that how easy it was for me to deal with lockdown. In other words, like a four on the Enneagram the individualists. Time alone to reflect, to read, to be creative, I have a very strong introverted side. It wasn't terribly hard in some ways in the beginning but this year, now I live in Nashville. So here we've been through a horrible election, we went through lots of civil unrest. We here in Nashville went through a terrible tornado, a big flood, COVID. I mean, just things started stacking up and eventually I really got to the point that I was pretty darn, I guess, I didn't realize, honestly. And I came to the conclusion that I'm living in a traumatized country, like this whole country is traumatized. And I'm sure that that's the case to some degree in every country in the world. I'm understanding that, I'm just beginning to think about, "Well, what are the long term effects of that kind of trauma on a country and on individuals?" It's going to be very interesting to see what happens.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, that's a really interesting observation. I think we're definitely at the cultural impact level, like you and I, we're not 20 year olds anymore, but I think about my friends with young kids. Some of their children, it's like all of their life, half their life, a quarter of their life have been lived in pandemic lockdown, perpetual crisis. We've had a year plus now. So that's meaningful if you live to be 100, 1 or 2%

of your life was lived in this kind of environment. And I think it's this cascading crisis business, we have our internal trauma, our internal struggles, but then all of this, like you're saying natural disasters, racial injustice, political unrest, economic inequality, all of that is compiling and it shows up at a leader's door every single day. What would have been helpful coping strategies for you? And what have been unhelpful coping strategies for you?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, in terms of health ones as a therapist, I often work with people who're pretty stressed. And as a consultant, now with CEOs and corporate management teams, I'm dealing with a lot of stress, they're dealing with and it's pretty intense. Given lockdown and working from home and etcetera, etcetera. I pay attention to the details, Carey. I really do. I believe in the basics. If a client comes in, let's say or a CEO comes in they're like, "I'm just freaked out. I'm flipped out about this." They'll call at eight o'clock in the morning. I'll be like, "Okay. What did you eat for breakfast?" There'll be silence on the other end of the phone. They're looking for some big existential answer. And I'm like, "What did you eat for breakfast?" "I didn't have time for breakfast." "Okay. How much water had you drunk today?"

Ian Morgan Cron:

I'll ask the question. "When was the last time you exercised?" And then I'll ask, "How much sleep have you gotten in the past three nights." And a lot of times what I hear is two, three or four of them just haven't been addressed. I'm like, "Tell you what? You do those four things and call me back." Sometimes I'd say seven out of 10 times, they address those issues and their stress levels just go way down because they're just not attending to the basics, that we have human bodies that have requirements. And as you know, a lot of leaders live with the myth of invincibility. They're just not invincible.

Ian Morgan Cron:

They need water and food, sleep, exercise, fun. I sometimes say to a leader, "When was the last time you went and just had fun, like screwed around?" "Oh, I don't have time." And it's like, "Well, if you don't have time for that, you don't have time to be a good leader." I attend to the basics. I attend to the basics and then I do stuff pretty... I mean, I meditate regularly. That's a very big spiritual practice for me. And I won't go into all the research on mindfulness meditation but I can just tell you, I'm a big believer. Big believer. I try to foster healthy friendships. That's important for me, I check in. You know this, that I'm part of a 12-step recovery group for people who've had chemical addictions for many years. I try to call it three or four of my litter mates, as I like to call them in that community every day. "How are you doing? What's going on?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Every day? Wow, three or four.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Every single day. Yeah, maybe a five-minute conversation. It's just a check in, we have very serious bonds of friendship and commitment in those communities. And sometimes I just have to get out of my own head and think about someone else's feelings for a few minutes. I try to have a good sense of humor about stuff. And, frankly, I go to therapy every week. Again, that's a long list but I don't care. Like, I'm not sure if we're going to get into Enneagram types here. But I don't care what type you are. Those things apply to every human being, all of them. So you've got to invest in those things, if you want to properly manage long term stress or short term stress for that matter.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I want to double click on a couple of those. This may be a rabbit trail that's not worth going down. But you mentioned calling two or three friends a day. So here's something I've been thinking about a lot over the last few years and never really articulated or frankly talked to anybody about it. But there was a time, you think back to our childhood we're of similar vintage. People used to drop by. You think about your parents' house, friends would drop by then that stopped happening. There's just like, people don't drop by anymore because people are too busy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I had a traveling salesperson knock on my door last month. I'm like that happens once a year or once every three years that used to be normal. But then this weird thing happened with phones in where you used to just call people all the time. It's like, "I wonder what he ends up to, I'll give him a call." And now it's like rude to call or you schedule a phone call. And that whole kind of spontaneous connection, like my calendar, unless I'm really intentional about it, even with my friends, I feel like sometimes you have to schedule time. And I want you to speak into the impact of that. What do you think there's anything there? Like what is the value of just being able to say, "Hey, I'm just going to call my best friend right now. I'm going to call my buddy and see how he or she's doing."

Ian Morgan Cron:

To tell you the truth right now I'm going to start laughing but I call people all the time. I don't care if they roll their eyes and I'll tell them when I call them. And you know what else I do? This is even worse time then because I'm not satisfied just to hear their voice. And maybe it's my therapist side but I want to see their eyes. I want to see the expression on their face. I want to be able to know what's going on for real there. I want to smile at them. I want to let them see if I'm not in a good space that my face is downcast. Like I want to connect. And sometimes I'll text beforehand. And I'll say, "Hey man, you got time for a quick call." I did that twice this morning. It's like I am not satisfied with my machine talking to your machine. You know what I mean? I don't want-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know what you mean, I know what you mean, man.

Ian Morgan Cron:

... two degrees of separation between my glass and your glass. I want to relate to you. And I always tell people... I did it yesterday. I always tell people, "Will you please feel free just to stop by my house and have a cup of coffee or tell me, "Let's go out for a cup of coffee." Or, let's sit on my porch and talk. Because I'm always looking for a distraction. And so if you want to come sit on my porch for 20 minutes, half an hour, an hour or whatever. I love it. So to your point, I... That's a long winded answer but I do believe in the power of human face to face interpersonal contact. And I will take it any day of the week over and sometimes I kind of force my friends into it by saying, "Hey, let's not do just a call, let's FaceTime." So you can do it any time Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to do it to you. I'm just going to like bomb you. And I remember when it shifted about a decade ago or so and so like you, I have a lot of young leaders who are listening, a lot of young leaders at the Typology Podcast. I would love for you to speak to a leader in his or her 20s who goes, "No, you

text people," I don't even know that my phone has a phone. I don't call anybody and I FaceTime once in a while and that kind of thing." But what are you missing when everything is scheduled? You are a therapist. You are a psychologist. That's your background. That's what you do. What are we missing because we don't have that kind of spontaneous face to face, voice to voice, drop by my porch culture anymore?

Ian Morgan Cron:

We're facing loneliness. That's what we're facing. And loneliness has reached epidemic proportions. And it's being widely reported on. I just was reading a Harvard Business School article the other day and they spoke about the fact that in England, they now have a Minister of Loneliness. They actually have someone in their government who's trying to deal with the problem of systemic and epidemic loneliness in the culture. Now, I don't know but I bet you, I could draw a line between when cell phone use and texting began and an increase in loneliness. I don't know if there's some kind of a connection, but I would not be surprised if there was.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There is. Do you know the research of Jean Twenge from the-

Ian Morgan Cron:

No.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I hope I'm pronouncing that right, University of San Diego. I think she's going to be a guest on the show later this year. I just reached out to her, we're setting it up. She's done extensive research on the spike of anxiety in college age students, because she teaches at University of San Diego and the first digital generation. And she draws a direct line, not a dotted line, not a, "We think it's like," no, there's a direct spike in digital nativeness and the rise in anxiety and depression.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, and part of that is that we receive more news, information, from around the world than we are capable of processing or digesting. So when I was a kid, you read the New York Times and they were like five headlines. They didn't tell you about the outbreak of some small thing going on in Myan- not Myanmar but it's a big deal. But, I mean, like in Papa New Guinea, it's like there are disasters coming at us from everywhere. Bad news coming at us from everywhere. And of course, clickbait headlines. Their job is to scare the be Jesus out of you so you'll read it. There's just a lot of stress and you know what? I don't think the human mind and heart is designed to cope with that much information. It's overwhelming, it's too much. No wonder we're anxious and depressed.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I agree with that. I really do. Because you and I have the good fortune of having a pre-digital memory. I remember when it was newspapers. We're old enough to remember three networks, four networks. And basically, you kind of got like news was in a half hour and every time you look at your phone, something's blowing up, someone's blowing up, something's bad. People are trying to get your attention. And the majority of listeners to this show wouldn't remember a world where that wasn't the case. What are some strategies in your mind for coping with that or handling that? Because I find

sometimes for me, it's like, I'm not looking at the news anymore. I don't watch TV anymore. I really limit my news consumption to what I need to know. Try not to make the doom scrolling thing a part of my life but it is hard to keep it that way because it's just, you're bombarded 24/7.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, I mean, one is, is I am. I spend... I mean, I shouldn't but I guess but I spent virtually no time on social media, especially Twitter, which is sort of the outrage channel. I just, after a while, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, all these people who think I should be interested in their outrage." I mean, it's just, I'm a little bit like, "Gosh, it's just too much anxiety and rage for me." And then, of course, Instagram has its problems, sort of anxiety producing or envy producing problems, when envy leads to feelings of comparison and then inferiority, etcetera, etcetera.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I spend very little time on it. I go through periods where I get a little trapped in News stuff in the morning but typically I glance at the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and maybe CNN but I read the headlines and I'm like "Kelly, you're click baiting me," and it just, it starts to annoy me. And so I do try and be self disciplined around those things. And again, like I said, I just don't think I'm capable of coping with that much information without feeling like I'm drowning. Like, I'm just drowning and I just don't think that's any way to live. But, we do have to deal with our... That this is a real addiction problem and technology is set up to create addicts. So, it's discouraging at times but we can come up with good disciplines for it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, compassion fatigue is something I've spent a lot of time thinking about. Like, when I get overwhelmed by international problems and some of them are truly tragic but there's a lot of trivia there and clickbait and the whole deal. And then when you have an actual crisis, sometimes your compassion doesn't function the way it's supposed to function. It doesn't behave the way it's supposed to behave. From your training and your experience, any thoughts on compassion fatigue and how to deal with it. And then I want to talk about meditation because we skipped over it quickly but I want to come back to it.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, good because actually meditation will tie in beautifully to this topic of compassion. It's no wonder we have compassion fatigue, it's no wonder we have it because when you are watching these many catastrophes every single day. I mean, if you felt too much compassion all the time, you're going to run out and after a while it becomes so commonplace that you're like, "Okay, there it is again." I mean, it's like. And-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Plenty of shootings on the weekend.

Ian Morgan Cron:

You have a feeling of helplessness like, "Well," and after a while, you have this feeling of helplessness. It's like, "What can I do? Well, there are too many crisis I don't even know which one to pick." So again there's this feeling of helplessness, powerlessness. And when you develop learned helplessness, it's like

you're just like a dog in a cage being poked with a stick and it'll bark the first 10 times you do that but after a while it just lays there when you continue to do it, it just gives up. And I think that's what can happen to us with compassion. Now, let's talk about meditation. What's your question?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. What's your practice? What does it look like? What are the benefits?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Every morning, I get up, I go to my cushion. I have my meditation cushion. I've been doing this for many years. I sit for 20 to 25 minutes in silent meditation. And I use a basic mindfulness practice which is sitting on...It's I mean, meditation is so simple, we make it hard. So I can just tell you right now, there's no guru kind of magic to this thing. You sit down on the cushion, you quiet the mind, you bring your attention to your breath and you follow your breath. And when your mind becomes distracted by thoughts, which it will, thoughts aren't bad, we just secrete them, like the thyroid gland secretes enzymes or whatever. And we just smile at them and bring our attention back to the breath. And so it's a training of the mind. And one of the...

Ian Morgan Cron:

What the research has shown from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, from Stanford, from countless places, that regular mindfulness meditation elevates compassion, empathy, and of feelings of well-being and connectedness, among other things. And I have seen that in my life, when I fall out of my meditation practice for some reason, the discipline of it, I feel it. And when I'm doing it, there's a palpable... I'm a different person when I'm regularly meditating. And then I go, "Why did I stop for two weeks?" It's like, "Oh, my gosh, this is something I don't ever want to lose."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why do you think that is? I think a lot of us have heard about the benefits of meditation. It's part of the Christian tradition. It's part of a lot of spiritual traditions. What do you think? Like, I know what it is, and I think a lot of listeners would know what it is but why do you think it's so powerful?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, there's some... Remember to that mindfulness there are many people who would call themselves atheists who have mindfulness practices. Because there's a science behind it. There's a reason why in the Christian tradition, the Buddhist tradition, other traditions like it, that people gravitated toward it. It's because it works, that we knew it before the scientists did.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, exactly.

Ian Morgan Cron:

And so the science says that what happens in meditation is there's a kind of rewiring of your neural pathways and we now know that routine patterns of let's say negative thinking or judgmental and things like that can be softened and changed, rewired. So, mindfulness meditation has the capacity to and the proof is in the pudding. I'm always telling people start at five minutes and do that until you think you're ready for seven, then go to seven. If you do that for two weeks, and that's all you got, okay, fine, then do

it for two weeks, then go to 10. I mean, just I didn't go to 20 and 25 minutes, I got there in 20 years where I can do 25 or 30 minutes. And in a group, I can do it, but in a group, I can do an hour. That's not I mean, it's a little bit easier for me in community than it is alone, but I can do a full hour with a community pretty easily.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Why is that? How is that?

Ian Morgan Cron:

I just feel so. Yeah, I don't think that's unique to me. I think when you're in a community, there's a sort of a sense of support that you feel in the room, we are all doing this together and we feel sort of connected and supported in the time of meditation and that's why I think it's easier.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What happens when because they do happen. I'm not, I wouldn't say prayer, but not meditation, I want to try it more because I think it has tremendous benefits. But you're right, you get derailed by all these thoughts that come in, and I got this to do and "Oh my goodness, I forgot about that." What do you do with those interruptions?

Ian Morgan Cron:

That's why we call it a practice.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because I want to grab my iPad or a piece of paper and write it all down, but you don't.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah, well, no, no, no, no. But again, it's so simple we make it hard and it... But it is difficult to quiet the mind is a difficult task. But it's really crucial. It's so crucial. It also develops [inaudible] which is the quality of being able to cope and respond rather than react to whatever life happens to throw at you in a given moment. Like when I have a regular practice going and the crap hits the fan. It's much easier for me to stay calm and respond rather than go right into reactivity and do really dumb stuff. You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, right.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Say dumb stuff, make stupid decisions I have to apologize to three people, whatever. I just am more centered and grounded and in not control but, in a place of where I'm able to really live that first part of the Serenity Prayer, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference." And to just be, "Okay, so this, let's deal with this." And it's not, I just live with more emotional wisdom when I have a regular meditation practice and so for Christians by the way where I recommend them to go is to really learn about centering prayer. And centering prayer, if they went to Father Thomas Keating, I think it's centeringprayer.org if I

remember, a Catholic priest who's been sort of a pioneer of centering prayer, which is essentially a mindfulness practice, it's just it's a Christian mindfulness practice.

Ian Morgan Cron:

And so for some Christians that feels more safe, if they're slightly anxious about the word meditation, which I think is a silly thing to be considering, it's been a big part of our history. I think it's silly, but hey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, considering it's Old Testament, New Testament, that's not that much of a stretch.

Ian Morgan Cron:

If you need it to be centering prayer, that's fine with me just do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's good. Ian, you interact with 1000s of leaders every year, maybe more and you're talking to them on a regular basis. So here we are a full year and a bit into the crisis. What are the presenting issues? We kind of touched on it a little bit already. But if there's anything more there, I'd like to go there. What are the presenting issues? What are the challenges leaders are facing in this moment now that we're in a period of chronic stress, uncertainty, anxiety and unresolved crisis?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah, one is, to a point I just made, how do you respond instead of react? How do you begin to answer the question, "what does this crisis make possible right now," versus "how do I get things to go back to what they used to be like?" Well, you need to give that up. That's the wrong question. It's always the wrong question. The real question is always, "All right, so what is this...?" Okay, here's a prayer, I often say, "God, what is your will for my life in this situation over which I have no control?" And that's a really great prayer in any given moment. That's a responding prayer and-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it is.

Ian Morgan Cron:

That's how you respond to crisis. You go, "All right, God, what is your will for my life in this situation over which I have no control?" Okay? And who has control over the pandemic, who has control over what the unemployment is like, in a volatile economy and et cetera, et cetera. But to step back and go, "Okay, what is God's will for me in this situation over which..." And this is important, "Over which I have no control." Because that's an illusion. I mean, control is an illusion that people would like, because they get anxious, they like to think they're more in control of life than they are. Accepting powerlessness is actually the greatest source of power we have ironically. Embrace your powerlessness and when you do that, you find power. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's true.

Ian Morgan Cron:

That's just a spiritual principle in general of the universe. That's one thing. I think another thing that leaders are facing in the midst of, I mean, so many changes and uncertainties in the future is, "How do I continue to lead rather than fall into the pitfall of micromanagement?" When people panic, they stop leading and they go down into the weeds. It's almost like a reflex. It's like they've got to start micromanaging the details. Instead of saying, "No, if there's ever been a time when I need to lead, and not micromanage, it's right now." But that's the temptation is to get down in the weeds and start dealing with stuff that is really the business of other people. And you need to stay, leaders need to stay at 100,000 feet. Not go down to 10,000 and get involved in the minutiae of whatever the organization is that they're leading, because that's always a temptation. It's to get too involved in stuff that's really not best for you to be involved in.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How do you stay out of that as a leader yourself? Are you tempted to go there into micromanagement? Because when you say that, I've learned that that is one of my responses to stress is like-

Ian Morgan Cron:

I told you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, I'm going to get all in the details. So how do you keep yourself from that when you see yourself going there, if you do?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, again, I mentioned meditation, again, because meditation helps me to be self aware. What it does is it develops an inner observer in me, that's able to stand back and catch myself in the act of doing things that I ought not be doing. It prevents me from living on autopilot. I'm able to step back and say, "Oh, this feeling of stress is coming up." And I feel like I want to become critical, and want me to see things, reports and things like that, that really aren't for me to look at, I just need to step back and let people do what they're supposed to do, I'm going to do what I'm supposed to do and discipline myself to stay at a higher level, looking down the road, instead of getting too trapped in what's happening in this present moment. It's all anxiety management.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it kind of, isn't it?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It kind of is especially in a chronic stage. I mean, you can get through a bad week and get through a bad month, but when this becomes your life it's a different story. All right, I do want to open this up to the Enneagram. Because that is where you have spent a lot of your life and what a lot of leaders know you for and this is a really broad question. So feel free to take it wherever you want. And because this is your wheelhouse, but what does the Enneagram have to teach us about this season that we are all in?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, so much but I mean, one of the gifts of the Enneagram is that once you know your type it's able to reveal to you what you will probably begin to act, think and feel like when you're under stress. And when you're able to recognize that pattern arising in your life to make new choices. It gives you the freedom to make new choices in the face of stress like, I know that I start to look unhealthy two, when I'm under stress. And when I spot those patterns emerging in my life I'll go, "Oh, oh, I see where this is going." And I can choose to approach things differently, to make new choices than I used to make before I understood my type. Be on autopilot, I would just go there. I'd go back and swing at the same old pitch and strike out every single time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That would be a fun place to camp for a little while, if you're up to it.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you mind taking us through the nine types, which will cover all the leaders, give us a quick summary of what they are, and where we go when we're unhealthy? Because that's one part of the Enneagram I haven't got top of mind myself, personally.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I kind of have a rough idea but I would love to know. We can start with ones and give a brief thumbnail and then, "Hey, when ones are stressed, here's what they do. They go to this." That would be worth camping on I think.

Ian Morgan Cron:

All right, so we're going to do it real quick. I'm only going to get thumbnail sketches super, super fast. Ones I call them the improvers. They used to be called the perfectionists, but I stopped calling them that because they would say to me, "Why am I the only type whose signifier is so negative or pejorative sounding?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I would argue that the Challenger actually is more pejorative, but that's okay. That's me.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, I'm not so sure if it is but-

Carey Nieuwhof:

But it feels like to me anyway, so number one is improver.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah, the improver. So these are people who have a need to perfect themselves, that all that they do others in the world, okay? When a one is under stress, they start to look like an unhealthy four. Their inner critic begins to work overtime, their need to perfect the world goes into overdrive, they might become more resentful of people who are having more fun than they are, are not as concerned as they are with perfecting the world, they'll become more sensitive to criticism and depressed, and they'll start to long to be free of obligations and responsibilities, and perhaps feel a little unlovable. So that's where ones will often know in stress. Twos in stress, they start to look like an unhealthy eight, they'll become demanding-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Two is a helper, right?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Twos are the helpers. They have a need... Actually, I'll make it real simple for you. Twos exhibit need to be liked. They just really want to be liked. They want to be liked, appreciated, and approved of, and when in the strategy for winning that love and approval is really giving and giving to others and helping to meet the needs of others. So there's a little bit in a, not a very self-aware too, there's a little bit of calculated giving. It's like if I give to you, in return you will give to me and what I'm looking for is your approval, your appreciation, your liking me, and also meeting my personal needs without my having to directly come right out and ask for it.

Ian Morgan Cron:

But when they're not doing great, they start to look not so great eights. They become demanding. They can become controlling, aggressive. They will blame other people for what's making them unhappy, and sometimes even vengeful about past wrongs. That's where two can go. They can also get into space where it's like, the sort of murderous resentful thing where it's a little bit like, "I'm always there for other people, but when I have needs no one comes to my aid." You know what I mean?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I know exactly what you mean.

Ian Morgan Cron:

It's like there's a little bit of a.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, so that's a two.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Three is performers, they have a need to succeed, to appear successful and to avoid failure at all costs. When they get stressed, they start to take on the characteristic behaviors of unhealthy nines. And they'll kind of retreat to the couch with the remote. They may get lost in unproductive busy work. They'll be kind of worn out, they lose their characteristic optimism and competence and they become a little more self-doubtful than they normally are. They might lose interest in working out or eating healthy foods and paying attention to their appearance. So, there's this kind of weary edge to that unhealthy three. I can

tell when a three is down and feeling stressed man, they don't bring the juice like they normally do. I would say with fours, the individualists, these are people who I think really want to find a place of belonging in the world.

Ian Morgan Cron:

They feel like they're missing something important in their essential makeup that everybody else seems to have. And, that creates in them a sense of inferiority and it launches them on a quest to find whatever it is inside that is missing, that everyone else seems to... And they tend to envy other people's normalcy and happiness. And there's this kind of feeling of I'm a misfit kind of a quality to them. That's why we have so many artists and poetry comes out of that feeling space, that melancholy that fours are often for. And when they get into a bad space they start to look like an unhealthy two. They become excessively dependent on other people, they crave attention, they'll need a lot of reassurance and affirmation from their friends and their partners and jealousy might surface. Do you want me to give you an example of this?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I would love you to.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I'm a four. Now, I'm a particular subtype of a four, we're known as the sunny four. I'm not as melancholy as the stereotype four. I'm an Episcopal priest, I'm celebrating the Eucharist at an Easter Mass, and I happen to notice that in the front row, there was a guy wearing a seersucker suit standing next to his eight year old wearing an identical seersucker suit, and identical bow ties, arm around each other, just singing and smiling. All right? Now I see those two people and I look at them. And of course, I had this terrible relationship with a father who died from alcoholism. And I looked at them and suddenly I just felt this sense of envy come up like, "Oh, melancholy unending. What if I'd had that kind of relationship with my dad?" And now because I have enough self awareness, I mean, I'm not going to pat myself on the back. But I've done a lot of work on this stuff.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I just was able step... my inner observer was able to step back and observe it, and I went, "You know it's Easter, right? You know it's that whole resurrection thing promise of new life?" And I'm like, "Do you really want to go there on Easter? I mean, seriously, this is the day we're singing Christ the Lord Has Risen Today. How about you join them?" And then I kind of laughed at myself and I moved on. But that's where that four can go when they're under stress. We become... That envy can arise and feelings of lesser than and why didn't? What if? And thinking a lot about suffering in the past, and it's like, under stress when I start to go there I now know like, "That's an old story, man. If you want to live in that story, you go ahead. But as far as I can tell, God has a new story for you, brother."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's powerful.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Moving on. Investigators.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fives.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I love fives.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm married to one. Yeah, they're good?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Aren't they the best when they're healthy, man?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hm.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I love fives. Fives are really people who are motivated by a need to conserve what they perceive are limited resources particularly for relationships, they feel very depleted and drained when they're around people too much. They are motivated by a need to gather knowledge and information to fend off what to them feels like a really overwhelming and draining world. And how do they do that? It's this, they become sort of information junkies, they just can't stop learning. And that gives them a sense that knowledge is power. And so that gives them a sense of power. Now, when they're not doing great, they start to look like unhealthy sevens. And that's really something to behold.

Ian Morgan Cron:

They become disorganized, distracted to the point that they're not able to complete tasks. They sort of have word salad. They're normally very, very articulate, and they're very linear and analytical in their thinking suddenly, things get disconnected and ideas are coming out right and left. It's hard to follow what they're saying. But they can also if they're not careful in that space become a little rude, a little condescending, and emotionally more distant than usual. You're nodding your head like that sounds like.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I recognize all these patterns and she will recognize mine when we get to them.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Totally.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Six is the loyalists, these people are motivated by a need to feel safe, secure and supported, in what to them feels like a very dangerous, unpredictable world. Now, when sixes aren't doing great, they go to

the low side, the negative side of three, the performer where they can become workaholics who are looking for material success or hoarding resources. Why? Why would they choose to chase after success? Because it would make them feel more secure. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Ian Morgan Cron:

So in that space sixes are... This is interesting. Sixes are some of the most truthful, honest people I know but when they're under stress, they are more inclined to misrepresent themselves and project an image of competency to fend off their own anxiety and to give others the impression that they have it all together, like an unhealthy three would. You see where I'm-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Totally.

Ian Morgan Cron:

This is the same for every number, and why? Because it's going to fend off anxiety that they live. Sixes typically have a lot of anxiety.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've got to tell you your description of sixes both in our conversations, but also in *The Road Back To You* has given me such an appreciation of sixes because it is that mildly critical. I never knew how to read that personality type that mildly critical 20 questions, 100 questions on the front end. But then when they're bought in, they're like, loyal for life. And you believe your theory is that that is the largest percentage of the population? Probably?

Ian Morgan Cron:

It's changed.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, not like the majority.

Ian Morgan Cron:

It's a meaningful chunk, but that's speculation. A lot of teachers, Enneagram teachers will say, we think there are more sixes than any other type representing the population of probably fewer 4% in the population than any other type.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But I've identified sixes in my life, and I appreciate them more than ever, because they were always a puzzle, and I couldn't figure out, "Why are you so critical and then so loyal?" Like, "I get it."

Ian Morgan Cron:

Be careful with using the word critical, I would say that they're more-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Questioning.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Questioning and they're the first people to spot what could go wrong in a plan.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, you're right.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Or a project and they'll... If you're the leader, and you've got a six on your team, you present a plan. They're the first person to say, "Yeah, but have you thought through what would happen if this happened, or that happened, or this happened, or that happened?" And you may feel like, "Golly man, this guy is so pessimistic."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I definitely feel that way.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Or, "He's so paranoid." And if you say to a six, "Stop being such a pessimist." They'll get right up on you and go, "I'm not a pessimist. I'm a realist." And you're up and you're an idealist, but you're in the clouds, you have not thought through what will happen to cash flow in the third quarter. If you go forward with this plan, I can see the problem, you cannot see the problem. And you'll feel like they're critical or pushing back on your leadership. No, no, no. They want to know what they're supposed to do should something go wrong. So they're going to keep pushing you to find out, "Have you thought through all the contingencies?" And if you answer all their questions, and you have prepared for what could go wrong, they will follow you off a cliff, they will support you to the very end. But if you haven't thought it through, man, they're going to be like, "I don't know."

Carey Nieuwhof:

So helpful.

Ian Morgan Cron:

"I don't know about following this guy."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to get my 30s back because I think I alienated a lot of sixes then.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Man, I'd like to get my 30s back. If I knew then what I know now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah.

Ian Morgan Cron:

I think about it anyway, obviously, enthusiasts, these are people who are motivated by a need to avoid psychological and emotional pain. And they do that by hotly pursuing fun, happiness, future escapades, adventures, interest by pursuing interesting ideas, sampling everything that life has to offer them. So that they don't have to be in the present moment where things like stuck and boredom and routine and sadness or grief or discomfort might be. They can live in this future of unlimited possibilities all the time. The future always has something contained in it that this moment cannot give you.

Ian Morgan Cron:

So now when a seven is not doing great, they will start to look like they're sort of an unhealthy one and they'll become pessimistic, judgmental, argumentative. They'll take the moral high ground, they'll start blaming others for their problems and they'll lapse into black and white thinking. So that's something that sevens just have to be aware of. My son went boarding school. And sometimes he would call me on the phone and say, "I don't like any of the kids on my floor, they smoke pot and they're just not respectful." And I'll go like this, "Is it exam time?" Because I know what's happening is he's taking the moral high ground. I'm not saying he's wrong, I'm just saying he has suddenly become focused on those sorts of things and becoming kind of yeah, judgmental, critical and a little self righteous indignation starts to bust out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Eights.

Ian Morgan Cron:

All right, let's talk about eights, when you guys are not doing great. Well, first of all, you're the challenger, you're motivated by a need to assert power and strength over the environment and others in order to mask vulnerability. Now, when eights get stressed, they move to and take on the qualities that you would associate with an unhealthy five. You will withdraw and become even less connected to your emotions. And you might experience insomnia, you may neglect to take care of yourself, you may not eat correctly or exercise right, you'll become more secretive, hyper vigilance about the trail. And you also may dig your heels in and become even more uncompromising than usual.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes.

Ian Morgan Cron:

And that's not a great space for eights, and you withdraw, which is very unusual for eights. Normally, eights assert when they want something they go and get it. Fives tend to withdraw when they're not in a great space and they go into themselves to find what they need. They don't tend to get what they want. You go out and get it pretty aggressively. Nines last number. In stress nines start to act like unhealthy sixes. And they become over committed, worried, rigid, wary of others more anxious, and may not know why. They'll become more self doubting than usual, which makes decision making even more difficult. And they'll become reactive which is sort of a big departure for a number that is rarely if ever quick to react. That's the nine types. It's just a thumbnail, I could say a ton more about what they're like under stress. But that's just a sample of what some of those types will do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's so helpful. And you and I have an open dialogue right now about whether I'm an eight or a three because my wife Toni, and I did an interview for your Typology Podcast. And at the end, you were like, "You share your name, are you a three?" And so I imagine there's some listeners here who are like, "I'd love to know which one I am." Tell them how they can figure it out.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, they can read my book, *The Road Back To You*, that would be helpful. They come visit my website.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I've given that so many times to people and it's so helpful.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Thank you very much. I thank you and Brown University thanks you for paying my son's tuition. You can go to IanMorganCron.com and you can take my IEQ9 Enneagram assessment. That would be another possibility. Listen to my podcast *Typology*, which I speak to people of all types and try to hear what it's like to live in their shoes and to see the world through their eyes. And that also is very helpful to people when they identify with different types. And obviously, check out my Instagram, Facebook and Twitter feed at ianmorgancron and you'll learn something about what I'm up to.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, I like what you say too, about just paying attention to giving yourself some time, read the book, maybe do the assessment, live in a little bit, see what works. It took you like a long time to figure out what you were and you teach this stuff? I would love to know, just a couple more questions before we wrap up. Talk about getting healthy. What are you most concerned about for leaders moving forward? It does seem like we're moving into an unstable time or season. So what is worrisome to you or what are you focused on as we head into the future in?

Ian Morgan Cron:

I think I've covered some of it in the conversation, which is helping them to live in a space of responding versus reacting to what's happening. Also, to avoid slipping into management mode versus leadership mode. Most leaders have good managers that don't need them, let them do their job. And don't frustrate them by getting into their grills about stuff. Stay at the level of mission or vision of looking down the road and forecasting what's coming. That's the sort of thing that I think supports. And another thing we spoke about, I think it's very important for leaders is to make sure that they're to really self examine and ask themselves the question, "Am I lonely?" Because obviously, loneliness is a big issue for leaders.

Ian Morgan Cron:

What's interesting about right now that's happened is I've been reading some articles and talking with leaders is they've been calling CEOs of companies they compete with. And because, they have ambivalent relationships a little bit, but most of them know each other. And they're asking each other, "What are you doing within the pandemic?" Like, "How are you handling this? And what do you...?" They're like, sharing notes with each other. And I think part of that's reflective not only of, "I need help,"

it's also a reflection of, "I'm kind of lonely out here." And I think leaders have to be very cautious of loneliness, really cautious.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Could you tell me why? What happens when you're lonely?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Human beings are social creatures. When we get lonely we start to feel isolated, we start to live in what I call an epistemic cocoon, meaning that we get trapped in only hearing our own viewpoints and perspectives, and we lose the opportunity to bounce them off of other people, and to hear alternative ways of seeing the world and reacting to the world. And you know what? Our hearts just need it. We have a deep need for human connection. It's just a fact. I mean, there's research. It's not even like, it's not a spiritual opinion, although it is, it's not good for men or women to be alone. To borrow an idea, I mean, and tweak it a little bit. But, I just think it's true. I mean, let's talk about it from a Christian perspective. God is a community. He's three. Our God has a social component. And so, I think we have to pay attention that this is the case, we were built for relationship or community. And we desperately need it for good health, mental health.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So random phone calls, FaceTime calls, connection with friends, for leaders who feel isolated, and this is becoming a recurring theme on the podcast, but I'd love to get your take on it. They're like, "Okay, Ian, thank you, I'm all alone. I have burned some bridges, I'm cut off, I don't feel comfortable, there's nobody I could really call right now." And that according to people, like Henry Cloud and others is actually the almost default position for most leaders, if you really get under the hood, most of us are lonely. And what would you say they should do?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, they need to stop flattering themselves. If they think, "I really burned too many bridges," as you said, or what you just described there's so many of them. A pretty high opinion of their badness, or their unworthiness of relationship. I mean, they have to cultivate more emotional wisdom. I mean, they could read Daniel Goldman's book on emotional intelligence. I mean, they just learn how to be with people in the world. Leaders have to learn how to be vulnerable. Oftentimes leaders can confuse vulnerability with weakness and that's a big mistake, man.

Ian Morgan Cron:

They've learned that in business it's like... I remember one CEO saying to me, "Hey, you know what? If you want to play in the NFL, you got to expect to be hit." And he was being a tough guy about it. And I'm like, "Okay, whatever. Here's another one of these guys who doesn't know how to be vulnerable." And he thinks that invulnerability being a hard--- all the time is courage. And I'm like, "That ain't courage, man. That's cowardice." Vulnerability is courage. Vulnerability is what requires courage, not defendedness. And vulnerability is arguably the most important ingredient in forging great relationships. So I would tell leaders work on vulnerability of many things, I'd say, "You want to have relationships, start practicing vulnerability."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think one of the things you told me once and this might have been on a podcast, so people will listen back, but I would love you to underscore it. And if it's incorrect in my memory, let me know, but I believe you made a distinction between vulnerability and transparency. Does that resonate at all?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because you said, "Carey..." I think you said, "Carey, you're being transparent, but not vulnerable." Can you explain what the difference is?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah, and I would even say just for our sake today, I'd say about what I call strategic transparency. I remember there was a period in the church when you go and you hear some pastor, but it was outside of the church too when everyone was talking about "authenticity". We want to be an authentic church, I want to be an authentic pastor. And as a parent, I was a pastor, and I'm a therapist whenever I hear people saying, "I just don't want to be authentic." I'm usually like, "You understand, don't you know that when you try to be authentic, you're automatically being inauthentic?" You understand what I'm saying. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know what you mean.

Ian Morgan Cron:

And so you sometimes I hear people talk and there's this kind of strategic transparency. It's like, I want to tell you about my... I have this addiction, I have this... And it's a little bit like, I get the sense that that just feels a little bit like strategic transparency, like you're taking a shortcut and making it sound like vulnerability, but it's not really. I know I'm being vulnerable when I share with something with somebody, and I sweat or I might get choked up, or the hair on the back of my neck stands up. Or I really worry, this person might abandon me if I tell them this thing about myself, which has rarely ever happened. But that fear comes up.

Ian Morgan Cron:

To me, that's sort of the tell that I'm being vulnerable. And so, sometimes I hear what I call a strategic transparency, and it kind of drives me crazy, because I think it's unconscious on the person's part but frankly, at its worst is it kind of manipulative. You kind of get this sense like, "Oh, you're trying to create this sense of making a connection with me, when actually, this is not really what's happening here." And smart people can smell it usually. It feels a little bit like an act.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And if you're an eight like I am, that is a little bit harder than it is for other types. Is that fair? Is that true?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Well, it'll be harder for you because you have no tolerance for it. I mean, you are somebody who you can smell deception 100 miles away. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, totally. I say that to people I'm with. I'm like, "That guy's lying. I can tell."

Ian Morgan Cron:

I mean, you can smell it, and you can smell a poser. You don't have much time for it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Don't get me started.

Ian Morgan Cron:

You get the sense that somebody is kind of like trying to work you. You're like, "I don't know, this guy seems like he's got another agenda here." It's like, "I'm feeling an ulterior motive behind all this sharing." And I know that it's... Listen, I don't want to be too cynical here. I want people to understand to discern... I want leaders to discern the difference between strategic transparency and vulnerability. I don't want leaders to become stupidly vulnerable. There's a place to be appropriate.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you shouldn't share with everybody.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Right, yeah. You want to be appropriately vulnerable to this person and the situation. I don't tell my kids the deepest secrets of my heart. It's not appropriate. It's not appropriate. I mean, I will with my wife. I will with very, very few people. You have to be very... Again, discernment is the rule here. Be discerning. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes.

Ian Morgan Cron:

A good leader is vulnerable enough with his or her team. If they're not like for an eight, that vulnerability does not... You have to really be more... I can be vulnerable in a heartbeat brother. You have a lot more troubled vulnerability than I do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a learned skill. No, it's not a learned skill. It's a learned habit. It's not a skill, it's a practice of mine that I have become more and more comfortable with over the years.

Ian Morgan Cron:

Right. And when you do it appropriately with your team, they then feel comfortable sharing their weaknesses and vulnerabilities with you. Otherwise, they will see you as Teflon and something they can never live up to. And they'll view you as potentially being someone who's unsafe. Because, "I'm not

going to share with... He's not going to meet..." There's kind of a little bit of mutuality that happens for real vulnerability to the benefits of vulnerability to bust out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And once again, so rich. I know this is a continuing conversation on this show, and I know it won't be the last round but just thank you so much for serving with our leaders today. Any final thoughts, anything you want to leave leaders with as we move into this rather wobbly future as far as we can see, anyway?

Ian Morgan Cron:

Yeah. Well, every morning I say four prayers. And I'll just tell you one of them, and then go look it up. And by the way you could do this prayer even if you're not a Christian, I don't care. It is one of those prayers of intention, if you want it to be or a prayer that is aligned with your own spiritual worldview. You already heard me say a little bit of it, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Enjoying one moment at a time, living one day at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace, taking as he did this simple world as it is not as I would have it. Trusting that you will make all things right, if I surrender to your will, that I may be reasonably happy in this life. And supremely happy with you in the next." One of my favorite prayers. Good for everybody. Great for leaders.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we'll leave it there. Ian Morgan Cron, thank you so much. I appreciate it. We'll link to everything in the show notes. People can find you at ianmorgancron.com, make sure you check out the Typology Podcast, and so excited for that and do get a copy of, *The Road Back To You*. It's a fantastic book. Thank you so much, Ian.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, aren't you glad you listened to the end? That whole piece about vulnerability and authenticity, so good. So good. Yeah, it makes me think sometimes I'm transparent, but am I really being vulnerable? I think that's really important. And I want to get better at that. I want to get better at that. So I got *What I'm Thinking About* the segment, I'm going to talk about all these personality assessments, Enneagram and more and how that I actually think this is a spiritual discipline. You can disagree. But listen to the end to find out. Next episode, I want to let you know what's coming down the pipe.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Annie F. Downs is back. How can you not love Annie F. Downs? She is the best. She is so much fun. She is crushing it. She just hit the New York Times bestseller list. She has an amazing Podcast Network. And well, we talk about all things Annie. Here's an excerpt.

Annie F. Downs:

And people need... They need to know that their workplace where they are eight hours a day, the majority of their day, and the majority of their week, they need to know that that's a place where the fullness of their life is allowed to be. They are not just the robotic doing their tasks. So you inviting that into your company is actually saying like, "I recognize I need help having fun. I bet we all do. So we're going to talk about it. And we're going to come up..." I mean, Carey, one of the things I would suggest to

all of our friends listening with the teams that they lead or with their family or both, is if you will sit down and say to each other, "Tell me what sounds fun to you?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that's coming up next time. For those of you who are authors. She's got some really, really interesting tips or would-be authors. Also, coming up subscribers you get it automatically delivered to you. Francis Chan, Tim Keller, Simon Sinek. Who else do we have? We have Alan George coming up from Life. Church, which is really fascinating. Amy Edmondson, just book Jean Twenge from the University of San Diego and David Allen, Getting Things Done. I mean, a whole lot coming up over the next little while. So excited for all that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now it's time for What I'm Thinking About. This is brought to you by Pro Media Fire. You can head on over to get a free consultation today at promediafire.com/growth so that they will manage your social media for you and Google XP Summit. If you're an executive admin or operations pastor, you want to be there this May in Colorado, XP Summit hosted by CDF Capital. I am a big fan of The Enneagram and I know there's a lot of people who are like, "I'm blah, blah, blah, blah." Or, "What about all the personality profiles?" I can tell you if you join my staff, that's true and I lead a church, it's true and I lead a company. I will run you through at least a half dozen personality profiles. We use the Enneagram, we do the iE9 report from Ian Cron.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What else do we use? We use Leading From your Strengths. Fantastic, fantastic piece, not just for individuals, but for the team. I also use Right Path. We use Strength Finders, and a handful of other tools that we've used over the years. Also, Pat Lencioni's Working Genius. Run my whole team through that. So why do I use so many different personality profiles? And I'll tell you, here's what I really believe. It leads us to self awareness. So, when you're hiring or when you're trying to figure out how to lead yourself and lead your team, these personality profiles will help you realize for first of all, you've got to lead people the way they want to be led. Not everybody is the same.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you're managing an Enneagram one, and they are really hard on themselves, you're going to have a very different dialogue than if you're managing an eight, who, like me maybe needs to be hit over the head a little bit harder, or a six who's very sensitive, or a two, who really just wants to help. It can really help you be a better manager, and a better leader. I think you're a better steward of the people that you're encountering. Now, the other profiles also do the same thing. But here's what I found really helpful, too. When I use the Enneagram, when I use Leading From your Strengths, Strength Finders, Working Genius, programs like that, Right Path. Here's what I discovered, I learned about myself, I learned about my blind spots.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have been on this personal growth trajectory now for about 20 years. I don't even remember what the profile was but, I went to Ohio, probably around 2003 to participate in the now defunct Pastors of Excellence Program. It was a great program. And I remember getting some kind of assessment and it was one of the first ones I had seen in myself, I was in my early 30s. I read it and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, I got like big blind spots," because I had a staff member years ago, who called me, Bamm-Bamm. She

goes, "If you ever watch the Flintstones, it's like Carey, you don't know your own strength, you walk into a room, you think you're having a conversation, but you just clobbered everybody in the room." I'm like, "Really? I didn't even know it." See, and you're blind to that stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And so it's going to make you a better person, better spouse, better parent. If you have kids, it's going to make you a better friend, it's going to make you a better boss, better team member. So from a self awareness standpoint, that's huge. You know what else it is? Self-awareness is spiritual awareness. I have come to realize that if I don't know that an issue is present in my life, or the impact that I'm having on other people, that I can't confess it. I can't really like what is populating my prayer life. I don't like everything I read in the reports about myself. I mean, some of it is kind of amusing and some of it's like, "Oh, you need to do some work Nieuwhof. You've got to do some work here." Okay, you're not being the kind of husband that you could be or the kind of father or the kind of boss or the kind of friend.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And so I get to sit down with the assessment. Have you ever done a 360 review? Right Path will do that for you. That can be brutal sometimes. You sit down and you're like, "Okay, God, I've got to pick the stuff up here. What do I do?" And that's why I also believe in counseling. I have sought counseling for the last two decades. I just hired a new performance coach/psychotherapist over the last few months. I'm learning new things about myself in the season. And I'll tell you, I want to keep growing, I want to keep growing. So if you're a little bit suspicious about things like the Enneagram, or you're not sure it's worth the money, not sure it's... I mean, you buy a book, whatever, but you can do the iE9 or run your whole team through the personality profiles. I would just suggest to you that the self-awareness you get from it is huge. That's how you're going to grow as a human if you've got the courage to take it and to actually look at that and go, "Okay, this is who I am." Self-awareness is spiritual awareness.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It was John Calvin who said without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God and without knowledge of God, there is no knowledge of self. I think that is a profound statement. And the more you learn about yourself, the more you see your blind spots, the better a leader you can be. Hey, I so enjoy this journey with you. Thank you for everybody for sharing it on social media, for leaving ratings and reviews and all those good things. Back with Annie F. Downs, next time 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.