

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 421 of the podcast. It's Carey here, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, if you need encouragement, you came to the right place. I have a gut honest conversation with Christine Caine, which got pretty emotional at times, and I'll tell you about that in just a moment.

Carey Nieuwhof:

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Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, a shout out to all our subscribers, and particularly those of you who are new and to those of you who are leaving ratings and reviews. Man, I'm so grateful. Apple Podcasts have different stores around the world or whatever you would call it. So, I was in the Australia Apple podcast world recently, and Andrew Groza, is that right? Groza? Graza? Man, your review made such a big difference. He calls it restorative.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He said, "I'm maybe a little exaggerated to say this, but Carey and his podcast has restored my faith in leadership. I've been listening to Carey's podcast now for almost three years. When I began listening episode 219 was my first, have to admit, I was a little cynical and jaded toward the practice of leadership even though I was leading, but as I listened week in and week out, I was gradually won over by Carey's candor and vulnerability, by insightful questions, and by the fascinating stories of his guests. Slowly, I felt my perspective clear and my passion come back to life."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Man, that moves me, and I'm reading this because of what's coming ahead with Christine Caine. I'll tell you, cynicism is just such a challenge. So, anyway, Andrew says, "The breadth and depth of guests has kept me fresh, developed new skills, deepened my thinking. It has richly and positively impacted not just my professional life, but my personal life as well. My family, my friends, and those I lead are grateful. Therefore, I am, too. Thank you."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Andrew, man, thanks for that review. I am so humbled to hear that. Hey, we're all on a journey, and one day I think I'm going to write a book about cynicism. Here's the difference, right? As you get older, you see life for what it really is, but the challenge is to keep your heart fully engaged, and I think that's what this episode, hopefully, will do on the podcast. So, hey, keep the reviews and the ratings coming. We really appreciate them in whatever part of the world you find yourself in.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Christine Caine is my guest today. She's the founder of A21, and she's a recipient of the Mother Teresa Memorial Award, and she talks about the pain of leadership. In a highly critical, outrage-driven culture, it is easy to get cynical, disengaged, and she talks, we talk, it gets emotional about how to lead with your heart fully in it for decade after decade after decade. Man, I'm so glad to have Christine on. She's got a brand new book as well we'll talk about.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to thank our partners for this podcast. We can build a team and bring this to you absolutely for free, and these are people that we vet and really believe in. So, giving is a concern. Somebody told me years ago, "Money is a problem whether you have it or whether you don't," right? You never know with a volatile economy. So, what's going to happen? You're doing well now, but what about six months from now or a year from now?

Carey Nieuwhof:

The economy will shift. We've got signs of inflation, et cetera. Wouldn't it be great if you could be prepared by understanding how healthy your church is now no matter what reality you might face. Well, that's why listeners of this podcast have an exclusive opportunity to get their Generosity Pulse Report. Think of the Generosity Pulse Report as a quick snapshot of the health of the culture of your stewardship and giving. When I ran the church for 20 years, I was looking at the giving data all the time and looking at our health, and now that I run a company, I'm doing the same thing. You've got to be on top of this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

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Carey Nieuwhof:

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Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, let's have a conversation now, a real one, with the one and only Christine Caine.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Christine, great to have you back on the podcast. Welcome.

This transcript was exported on Jun 03, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Christine Caine:

Carey, I'm so happy. I'm happy to be with my fellow commonwealth man.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's right. That's right. As I joke, right? We know good cup of tea when we see one.

Christine Caine:

We do. We do, but this is how the queen really speaks English. How do I do?

Carey Nieuwhof:

You say Australia is the queen's English?

Christine Caine:

Well, kind of like. Well, you Canadians have got a nice accent, but this is how the queen wishes she could speak.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. I know this is not why we're here today, but I would love to, and maybe a listener has this, I would love to figure out from the United Kingdom, how did Australians end up sounding the way they did, New Zealanders end up sounding the way they did? Canadians, they almost have a Midwest accent. Every once in a while, I get a note that's like, "I can tell you're Canadian." It was the way I said about or something like that, but then even in America. They say the Southern accent is very similar to Old English, which is, okay, I don't understand that.

Christine Caine:

Me either.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One day when I'm bored, I'm going to explore that. So, somebody knows about it.

Christine Caine:

There's the South African accent as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah, the South African accent. No. There's a little bit of Africans in there. So, I have Dutch in my background. So, I can hear in the South African, I can hear the Dutch.

Christine Caine:

Yeah. I could tell them all the time. When people meet me in America, they'll think, "Are you British or New Zealand?" I'm like, "Wow." For us, we could tell South African or New Zealand or English or Canadian or Australian. It sounds very different.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah. So, what city in Australia was it for you?

Christine Caine:

Sydney, Australia.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sydney. Now, when you go back to Sydney, do they say you sound American?

Christine Caine:

No. I don't have an American accent. I didn't move here until I was 45, and we travel so much internationally that I'm not ... Now, my children have gone to school here, so they speak both. I tell them when they start speaking to me, I go, "Speak Australian," and so then they pull out their Australian accent and then with their friends who can't understand them, they speak American.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's fun. Okay, yeah, because I talk to people who immigrated maybe earlier, and they're like, "Yeah. I don't speak my native tongue and I don't speak American either. So, I don't know what I have," right? It's like my dad. He doesn't quite speak Dutch and he still got a Dutch accent when he speaks Canadian or English, I should say.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Anyway, hey, I really appreciate your new book, and I want to surf off that a little bit. So, we are in a really interesting season when it comes to spirituality, Chris, and we have a lot of business leaders listening, church ministry leaders, and there's just been so much drift, so much deconversion, so much gravitational pull against like I have these conversations all the time with people who are like, "Well, it's the organized part of religion that I really don't like in some spiritual, but I'm not very open."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Christianity really seems to have lost a massive amount of influence in the West, and even in America, and I think the pandemic accelerated that when you look at that. I'd love to know, agree or disagree we're losing influence, and then can you comment on that?

Christine Caine:

Yeah, sure. I would say in America because it's unique. Now, I grew up like you're in Canada, I'm in Australia. I was in Australia. So, we grew up in very secular humanistic-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, that ship sailed a long time ago in our countries.

Christine Caine:

Absolutely. So, you know what? I used to travel. I started traveling to America in 1998, and it was like a foreign world to me because I had no idea that you would thread Christian culture for want of a better phrase so much through society, in politics, entertainment, universities. I mean, in Australia, we just

never had that. You were just a person like we were all people, and then according to your faith tradition, you had to learn to outwork that and live that in a very multicultural world.

Christine Caine:

So, you couldn't lead out. It's not that you had this Christian, Judeo-Christian infrastructure that was going to somehow give you a benefit. In fact, it was not beneficial. It was not cool to be a Christian. So, a lot of what I see happening here now and I'm watching people really be surprised about, I'm looking at it going, "This is normal Christianity in most of the world." You do what I do.

Christine Caine:

I travel so much and we now work with A21. I am in the Middle East, definitely in Europe, Eastern and Western Europe quite often. So, I mean, just before the lockdown, one of the last places I went to was Qatar and watching the Christians navigate that culture and being in a Muslim nation and how they could live out their faith in that context. That's just normal.

Christine Caine:

All my ministry life, all of my traveling life has been in and out of countries where there was not a predominant Christian subculture like I've seen in America when I first came in my early years, and you're right, the shift has been rapid. I remember, Carey, when I was young, I've got two brothers. We used to go on vacation to this place called Umina in Australia, in New South Wales. My dad, because we're Greek, everything is colorful, everything is loud, my dad would put up one big umbrella on one side of the sand and then a big beach towel on the other side. He would say to us constantly, "When you go out, the undertoe is so strong, but you're not going to know that the currents underneath are always shifting."

Christine Caine:

So, he would say, "Get up frequently and check your markers. If you don't check your markers, then the currents are changing, so you are just going to be swept out. You don't have to do anything to drift. Just do nothing."

Christine Caine:

I think what has happened in our world is a lot of us and perhaps even Christians, when I say did nothing, it wasn't like we were actively engaged in the world. There was a Christian subculture that ran parallel to the world, and what has happened is I think that framework is what has been falling apart, but it was an artificial bubble, anyway.

Christine Caine:

So, now, we are in this thing called the world. So, the world has shifted massively for everybody. I mean, it doesn't matter where you are on the spiritual line or whether you're not spiritual at all. My friends, I have plenty of friends across the board, of different faiths or no faith. All of them have just been so disrupted by what has happened here in America, especially in the last five years, five or six years, and particularly the whole world this last one year.

Christine Caine:

So, I think what it is is that all of us have come to a place where we're going, "Let me check my markers and then reevaluating what are my markers." So, some of these things that we call deconstruction or people are just thinking, "What's going on?" That's not a bad thing. It's like we're all evaluating, "What was my life built on and what principles, what markers were taking me through north in a positive direction?"

Christine Caine:

It is all a lot more confusing, I think, right now because everything has shifted. It's not just politics. It's education. It's economics. It's science. It's technology. There is not one sphere of society that has not had this massive upheaval. I think everybody, regardless of what they believe, has been really, really massively disrupted in their internal ... There's external changes, but those external changes have, I think, created an internal angst in a big way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think it was Yuval Harari, if I got this right, who said, "The response of the massive disruption we're in right now shouldn't be panic because panic assumes control." He said, "It should be bewilderment." I thought that was really good. I've been looking a lot, reading some futuristic type books about what to expect in the next decade, et cetera.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think it is a bewilderment. I think there are panicked Americans and Canadians and conservative Christians right now, but we have people of all stripes who listen to the show, and it's interesting to look inside. I think you're right. Deconstruction, there's a lot of deconstruction happening, but deconstruction doesn't have to lead to destruction, right?

Christine Caine:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Just because you're deconstructing your faith doesn't mean you're destroying your faith. I think often, in my case, deconstruction has led to reconstruction in a healthier way, but I'd like to go back to something you said. Growing up in Australia, living four decades there, you said you had to think differently as a person of faith in a widely post-Christian secular culture.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Obviously, you have a strong, if you've been to strong, there's a strong Asian influence there as well, right? So, you have Buddhism and a variety of perspectives in that nation as well. Plus, obviously, aboriginal spirituality. What were some good techniques for you as an Australian to be able to live as a person of faith in that culture, and then what were some things that if you'd tried them, it almost always ended in catastrophe? Because this will be helpful for people who are going through the shift right now in America and Canada and beyond.

Christine Caine:

I think what we had to learn from the word go, I'll give you even another example. I grew up in a staunch Greek orthodox home. So, my parents were immigrated to Australia from Alexandria, Egypt,

and they were Greek, and to be Greek is to be Greek orthodox. It's a cultural thing. It is a religious thing. What you'll find often with immigrant communities all around the world, they tend to be more protective of their culture even outside of the country than inside because they're so desperate for their children.

Christine Caine:

So, when I go to Greece, they're like, "Oh, my gosh! You're more Greek than we are," because my parents were so strict that we had very few Australian friends or friends from other culture, it was just very, very the Greek bubble for want of a better phrase. So, then even when I became a follower of Jesus of my own volition and began to go to a non-Greek orthodox church, that was extremely challenging for my family.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Did it feel like disloyalty? What did it feel?

Christine Caine:

Very much so disloyalty. In some cases, for someone like me to convert, it would be almost equivalent to a Muslim converting to Christianity because it's just so shocking that you would leave the tradition of the church and the whole history that goes with that, and to them, it's like you're leaving your whole Greek culture. It was a very painful season in my life, but it taught right from my own home, I was single living at home, that there was no way I was going to get up and be able to do a four spiritual laws conversation with my family every day. It wasn't like, "Pull out the Romans road to nowhere." That was not going to work.

Christine Caine:

I couldn't draw the two cliffs and the cross in the middle. It was because my family was like, "Well, we've had the orthodox faith is the first faith."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, "We've been around a while."

Christine Caine:

Yes. So, that was never going to work. So, I learnt early on it had to be an outflow of who I was, and that I had to love people and find, when I say entry points, it was like by genuinely loving people allow authentic spiritual conversations to arise. So, it would be more because my values were different, my life was different and never perfect, but if I made mistakes, and the same to this very day, we're all human, be very quick to own those mistakes, be very quick to apologize, be very quick to live a life of service.

Christine Caine:

Some of the things that now I think we're looking at post-Christian America and we're going, "Well, our old forms of evangelism, no one is going to stand on a street corner with a bullhorn and start yelling at anybody. Nobody is going to be doing door knocking and, 'Would you come to Jesus?'" That isn't going to work because nobody is asking the questions.

Christine Caine:

This is what I found in Australia. Nobody is really asking deep existential questions about, "Where am I going to spend eternity? What is going to happen when I die?" Now, that worked back in the '50s and '60s. People came back from the war. It was very in your face. Death was in your face, pain and suffering. Now, it's a little bit more like that post-pandemic, but still, most people right now are wanting to know how can life on this Earth work and there's so much contention, there's so much anger, there's so much animosity.

Christine Caine:

I lived out a lot of my early Christian faith before there was an internet and before there was social media, so that adds an entirely different dynamic, but I learnt very early on in the workplace, in my university years that I would have to build authentic relationships with people, I would have to engage in all of life and then allow opportunities to come up, which happened very frequently. There would be this deep peace in me or this deep joy in me.

Christine Caine:

One of the best ways to explain this is I remember one of my friends back at Sydney University, I don't know how this might shock some of the listeners, and I came from the immigrant area of Australia, very low-income government housing and went to a school where I was the only that matriculated into university. It was not one of those great schools.

Christine Caine:

I had a friend at the university, went to the best school, came from a great heritage, very connected in Sydney, the total antithesis of everything that I was in terms of our socioeconomic background, our cultural background, but I was always a bit nervous about speaking to her about faith because, truly, and way back then, I remember thinking, Carey, "What could I possibly have that she would want? She's got it all, lives in the best part of Sydney, comes from the best schools, has the best boyfriend, everything's fine."

Christine Caine:

I remember one day, and so this is Sydney, Australia 1986-1987, and so it was the height of rave parties in Australia. So, the drug ecstasy was running rampant, and in the university scene, people were doing ecstasy and people going to rave parties. I hadn't seen my friend for about three days. I was wondering, "What's going on?"

Christine Caine:

Then one day I was doing my homework up there at the home building at Sydney Uni, and my friend comes running in, and she goes, "Chris, Chris, I couldn't wait to see you." She goes, "You would not believe I've just been at this most amazing rave party, and it was the most incredible experience of my life. There was so much love there. There was so much joy. There was so much peace. We didn't sleep for three days."

Christine Caine:

She put her hand in her pocket, pulls out half an ecstasy tablet, and she said, "Chris, it was the most unbelievable experience, and I didn't want you to miss this experience, and so I saved you half of this ecstasy tablet because I wanted you to step into this experience."

Christine Caine:

I remember that moment, tears started streaming down my face and internally in my heart I made a vow, and in my heart it was like I said to the Lord, "She is more passionate about the love, joy, and peace that this synthetic drug can bring to her than I am about my faith that theoretically is supposed to bring love, and joy, and peace, and kindness, and goodness, all of the fruit of the spirit." I thought, "That is not the fruit of the drug of ecstasy. It's supposed to be the fruit of the spirit of God," and that started me.

Christine Caine:

So, very early on in my faith journey down a road to go, "Okay. Our Christianity has to be lived inside out. It's not just about what laws are out there or what group I'm a part of or how militant I might be on social media. It's got to flow from within me, and then that, whether someone is a corporate CEO, a doctor, a lawyer, a stay-at-home mother, a nurse, whoever I come in to contact with, if they see these things flow from me inside out, then they will be more compelled to ask me, 'What is the source of those things?'"

Christine Caine:

I think in the culture in which we live, we are being challenged. This is why it's good that the bubble has burst because we could hide behind a bible. I used to always say, "You don't have to be a Christian to live within the Christian culture. You either just need to vote right or say the right things and maybe attend a service for one hour in a Sunday, but you don't need to authentically be a follower of Jesus to do those things."

Christine Caine:

What the world in which we live today is that separation is now gone and so you're forced. I think that's perhaps why some of the ... We use the phrase deconstruction or the reevaluation of our faith. That is never a bad thing because we need to ask ourselves the question, "Was I just in a cultural system or was I truly following Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform me from the inside out?"

Christine Caine:

I mean, that has to do with our leadership. That has to do with our parenting. That has to do with every aspect of our lives. I think what the pandemic has done has just brought it to the fold. Those of us that perhaps have come through this pandemic and I lead a global organization, we have offices of A21 in 15 countries. We've got three churches in three other countries. So, I lead nearly 200 staff in 18 countries of the world during a global pandemic and lockdown.

Christine Caine:

So, there was not a little cultural bubble that could keep that going. There either had to be an authentic faith, and from a leadership perspective, our leadership, my husband and I had to flow from the inside out so that we could keep people on mission, able to pivot, able to make changes, and then what we

needed most during this pandemic are things like self-control, and goodness, and kindness, and peace, and joy in the midst of a very, very challenging time.

Christine Caine:

It's so interesting. These things that we used to roll our eyes at and go, "Well, the fruit of the spirit, isn't that cute," have become the cornerstone of my leadership and just my life. Because I've discovered, right back from Sydney Uni with my friend to today, ultimately, that's what people are looking for, whether it's in satisfaction in their work, accomplishments in the world or whether it's just in our own inner world being, and it's got to flow from the ... Leadership flows from the inside out, and life flows from the inside out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No. I agree with you on that, Chris. Yet, it is not what the culture is seeing in Christians, particularly I think in the West, but in America as well. They see hostility. They see division. They see anger. They see judgment, all the things that, honestly, just human-to-human make you run in the opposite direction, right? If that's how this interview is going, you'd be like, "Well, Carey, thanks for the 20 minutes. I think I'm out," right? That's what you'd do as a human.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. So, I sent you this clip. I don't know if you've got the chance to see it or not, but it was a YouTube video from 1973. So, young leaders, long before there was Jimmy Fallon, there was Jay Leno, and before Jay Leno, there was a guy named Johnny Carson. I know you're laughing because you remember Carson as a kid, too. So do I.

Christine Caine:

Yes, I do. We're both old enough. Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're both old enough to remember who Johnny Carson is, and 90% of listeners are like, "What?" Anyway, most people know Billy Graham. So, somehow, I went down the YouTube wormhole and found Billy Graham on The Tonight Show in 1973 with Johnny Carson. I watched the whole 20-minute dialogue, which I rarely do on YouTube, and there was a gentleness and a peace in that dialogue, and a respect. Johnny Carson would be like Jimmy Fallon. I mean, he's paid to make fun of people, basically make fun of himself, make fun of people, keep it light and entertaining, but you could almost sense this genuine curiosity respect that Carson had for Billy Graham, and yet, Carson wasn't a person of faith to the best of my knowledge.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm watching this and I'm thinking, knowing that our interview is coming up, which is why I sent you the clip, I'm like, "Whatever happened to that dialogue? Whatever happened to that degree of civility? Whatever happened to that genuine curiosity and mutual respect?" Billy Graham had just spoken to the largest crowd assembled in human history, 1.1 million people, gathered to hear him speak live in Seoul, South Korea in June 1973 and now he's on Carson to talk about it. Carson is taking notes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm like, "Whoa! What happened to that?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, any thoughts on the demise of that civil dialogue between the church and culture?

Christine Caine:

For sure. I wouldn't limit it to just the church and culture. I would limit it to just the world in general of any civil discourse in this age of outrage and anger. There is, I think, a reason for this. There's just been so much, I think, people where post-MeToo era, we have seen just so much misuse and abuse of power and structures and, I think, of course, obviously, with the heightened awareness of what has always been there, but the racial injustice and a lot of these things are coming to the fore. It's not that they were never there.

Christine Caine:

The difference is in 1973, again, I'd come back to, there was no internet and there was no social media. So, there was, I think, the fact that everybody now has a platform, everybody now has an opinion, and everybody is a different place of growth and where the world is at. It's like we instantly get online and say the first thing that comes to mind or what we authentically are feeling right now, but then what you had in that conversation, you have Fallon and you have Billy Graham, who even though they might be coming from opposing or just different backgrounds, there is a maturity and a wisdom and a grace that comes to the table, but when our tables now are mostly online, and you've got people at all different levels of emotional and spiritual maturity and with different backgrounds, all coming to the table and just maybe venting or crying out and trying to articulate their pain or their sense of injustice, and putting it all out there, and then everybody is just jumping online, and this thing finds a life of its own.

Christine Caine:

So, very soon, it isn't even a place for dialogue. I often watch people and I see that they're trying to come there and say, "Can we talk about this?" but the minute someone else jumps on and hijacks the conversation and just either their tone or their posture has gone, and I think in perhaps the Christian world in some segments of it and, again, I don't like to be generic, but in some segments of it, there is this fear that we might lose control or this fear that things are falling apart in society.

Christine Caine:

So, we just think, "I'm going to come at it with the same tone. I'm going to come at it with the same posture as I feel the other side is coming at it," which are all-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fight fire with fire?

Christine Caine:

Yeah, and it's antithetical to the gospel, anyway, which is that love your enemies, that you be quick to listen, slow to speak, I think some of those things. I don't know that it's always going to be like this, but I think a lot of people that maybe jumped onboard in the height of the outrage, people are weary at this point of the year, 2021. I'm watching lots of people begin to disengage because it's so toxic to the soul.

The human soul was not created to be able to yell and scream constantly and live in that angst and that tension.

Christine Caine:

So, I think definitely the posture of some segments of the church, but there are ... I get to travel across the breadth of the church all the time. There are a lot of people that are authentic Jesus followers and a lot of pastors and a lot of leaders that nobody knows that are doing the work in the trenches every day grappling and wrestling with reconciliation and helping those on the margins and truly loving people and truly trying to extend the grace and the love and the mercy of God. By far, there are more of them than anybody else. It's just the loudest voices, the platform voices, and we can get really despondent in our life, I think, if we just focus on that.

Christine Caine:

So, it depends what TV network, what cable TV you're watching, and I know the numbers are large, but they're large in certain segments. They're not large by and large across. I think most people are just weary and exhausted, and they want to do some good. They want to help. They want to get on and learn.

Christine Caine:

So, I'm never one to quickly dismiss all of the good that is happening because there is a lot of good that is happening. I don't know that we'll ever get that big, when I say cultural voice that someone's going to invite us on Today talk show and go, "Let's discuss the big issues and from a faith perspective." I think it's going to be a lot more one-on-one with people encounter people.

Christine Caine:

It sounds simplistic, but it is true that when the majority of Christians, not even within the institutional system, just people that are Jesus followers are living authentic Christian lives, not perfect lives, but day-to-day authentic Christian lives and they encounter other people. The fact is a lot of people are hurting, a lot of people are desperate, a lot of people want help. I deal a lot with leaders and so I'm finding at the top levels of organizations people are weary. People are weary and their soul is weary.

Christine Caine:

So, I don't think everyone is just turning on the TV going, "I'm hoping for another one of those conversations." They're like, "I'd get through today. Someone give me some tools on how I can get through today." So, there's so many reasons, and it's not just a church problem and a society problem. The entire fabric of society has shifted. Some of the people that I follow, and particularly, atheists, have no faith.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Same.

Christine Caine:

They're so concerned about what's happening in the world, and I'm watching them argue with each other as much as you're seeing church people argue with the world. I think sometimes, particularly those that are Jesus followers, because we know that we should be doing better. We know that should

not be the posture of a Christian. You shouldn't be on there. You can have convictions, but that ought to be presented with love. There are other times that they don't actually even need to be presented. I just find just because we have an opinion about something doesn't mean we need to give it about everything.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's true.

Christine Caine:

I think that's the best of the challenge.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, you do have, for those listeners who may not be familiar, you do have a huge global presence with A21. Can you give us just, because then I've got another question about that, but just a thumbnail of what you do in terms of trying to end human trafficking and the other good work that you're doing? Just give us a thumbnail.

Christine Caine:

Very quickly, yes. So, what we do is A21, we're there to abolish slavery everywhere forever. So, 14 years ago, I became aware of this issue. I didn't know that it still existed, and wanted to play my part. I have a background of brokenness. I was adopted at birth, abandoned, and then adopted. I encountered sexual abuse for many years of my life. So, there was a lot of brokenness and a lot of healing I had to find in my life.

Christine Caine:

It's almost like so many parts of my broken background have been redeemed to be able to be used for good, and to help other people that find themselves in that kind of situation of abuse and brokenness.

Christine Caine:

We have a threefold purpose and that's to reach the vulnerable, to rescue the victim, and to restore the survivors. So, we are involved across the world everything from prevention and awareness, education, and training to rescue and to restoration programs and aftercare programs, holistic health, body, soul, and spirit.

Christine Caine:

So, we are at 15 countries around the world, and four offices here in America. So, we are very, very committed not just to sending an ambulance to the bottom of the cliff and mopping up the mess, but putting nets at the top of the cliff to say, "Let's deal with this at a systemic level so that we can help eradicate the things that lead to trafficking occurring in the first place."

Christine Caine:

So, it's a bold initiative, but in all of these years, we have seen so many, tens of thousands of abolitionists raised up around the world and partners partnering to really take this seriously. I've seen such a difference when I started it in 2008.

Christine Caine:

In the church world, there was two responses. Some streams of the church were very open, and then other streams I got a lot of pushback like there'd be questions like, "Christine, here you are traveling the world and teaching and doing what you do. Why would someone like you be doing something like this?"

Christine Caine:

Now, I didn't realize then. I'm looking at some of the discussions now in 2021 about the issue of social justice and Christian involvement in those areas. I did not realize that was a thing. I thought things like justice and evangelism, faith and works was simply two sides of the same coin.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You had arguments from people saying that's not your place?

Christine Caine:

Yeah, "Why are you doing this? That's not really gospel work. Why are you being involved?" I thought, "That's what Christians do." We do good. Faith without works is dead, if you don't put your faith to work in the world to make this world a better place and to bring justice. I did not realize it was such a contentious subject. I do still maintain sometimes ignorance is bliss because if I knew all the reasons why I couldn't do it back then, I wouldn't be doing it and we wouldn't have offices around the world. We won't have the Mother Teresa Award and the President's Award. We would never have gotten that because I would have listened to all of the experts that told me, "You can't do this."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That goes to my question exactly, which is you're doing work that in my view is like, "Okay. Who's going to criticize that?" Clearly, as a public figure, you get your share of pushback. You just talked about that, even to the nature and quality of the work of rescuing human beings from slavery in whatever form, sexual or otherwise, right? So, people are like, "Well, you shouldn't be doing that." How do you respond to your critics?

Christine Caine:

Yes. It's deeply painful because, and when we talk about critics, it's not just, there's the faith sector, but then there are other sectors of society that perhaps don't agree with my faith, and then so what got me from that perspective-

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, we can do the whole secular rescue, but please don't bring God into it.

Christine Caine:

Yes. So, you can't win if you're not right enough for the right or left enough for the left, and you're me, you're like, "You may as well, Carey, paint a target on your head and get up every morning and go, 'Well, here we go,'" because it's not a matter of, "Will I offend anyone today?" Even doing the work of justice, I mean, this is not even talking about standing up and proclaiming some of the claims of our faith, which in today's culture, depending on who you're talking to, can appear either bigoted or narrow or even dangerous.

Christine Caine:

In certain sectors, they're like, "Well, you believe that?" Then when you do what I do and you're a woman in certain sectors of the faith sector it's like, "You speak? You teach the bible?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you're right, you're right. I didn't think about that. That's multiple. You're getting hit from every side.

Christine Caine:

Again, this was not really what I encountered in Australia because there's not enough Christians for anyone to ... They're just like, "Oh, my gosh! Thank God. We've got one more. Go out there. I don't care what you are, man, woman. Thank God. You can talk. Get out there and do something," a little bit like the woman at the well in Samaria. It's like, "Just go. Go and tell everyone," and Jesus being raised from the dead and going, "Mary, go tell them. Go tell them that I'm here."

Christine Caine:

So, Australia is a bit more like that. Desperation does that for you. You don't get too picky about which seminary did you go to, what gender are you, are you qualified to pass the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, and can you just tell people about what Jesus has done for you.

Christine Caine:

So, that, again, I say ignorance is bliss. I have to learn. I got to wait. Now, I'm in grad school because I wanted to understand what is this culture that I've stepped in to. So, you've got that aspect that could be there. Then you've got a secular world that maybe sees what I do in different ways. At the end of the day, I'm like, "Can we all agree that it doesn't matter ultimately what you may believe from a faith perspective? Can we all agree that human trafficking is not a faith issue, it's a humanitarian issue, and that no one should be in slavery, and that we can all work together whatever stream we're from and whatever our belief system is? Can we work together to abolish slavery everywhere forever?" Is that not the ...

Christine Caine:

It's so amazing that even with something like that how people will bring from both sides of the aisle will bring all of their other baggage with that to either say ... So, how I handle my critics is as a lot of people say, you look for the nugget of truth I think in calluses. You look for the nugget of truth and see is there any truth in what people are saying. I've made mistakes that I've had to apologize for and make rights in my life. None of us are not perfect. It's just that when you're more public, a lot more people have an opinion about-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Those things get amplified.

Christine Caine:

Yes, and you're just like, "Wow! Am I not a human being that can make mistakes, get it right, acknowledge it, apologize, make restitution, do whatever I need to do?" So, that sometimes can get to your heart, but at the end of the day, and this is where I think it really comes back to both my faith,

working together with my husband, our team, we have a great extensive and going, "The people that know me best and know me inside out and have known me for decades, am I being authentic? Am I being true? Can they authentically speak into my life, not just pretend, but really speak into my life?"

Christine Caine:

So, if I'm 55 years old, I'm not above correction, I'm not above learning, I mean, I'm back at grad school so that I can learn at my age, and so I think I've got to look at it, and then you have to really develop thick skin and a tender heart. It's deeply painful when you're in the work of compassion because you want to keep your heart soft. That's how you keep getting out of bed and doing what you're doing. That's how numbers don't become statistics and people remain people and lives remain lives.

Christine Caine:

So, it's very much like pastoral work. Keep your heart tender and not just self-protect or to try to self-justify. I mean, I could spend every morning till night just trying to make things right, "No, no, no. That's not what I meant," or "No, no, no. That's not what I said," or "No, no, no."

Carey Nieuwhof:

All day clarifying.

Christine Caine:

I need to have a full-time job to do that. So, you go, "Okay. The people that I am accountable to truly, am I accountable? Have I done everything I can do every day to communicate things in the best way that I can communicate them and then still know that, ultimately, no matter what I do, there are going to be people that are just not going to vibe with what I do and they're going to go online and going to say things that may or may not be true, that may just skew a particular angle of something." And if I spend my life looking at that, I've had to really guard my heart from that.

Christine Caine:

Now, I have people that look and say, "Of course, if there's anything I need to know," but otherwise, and I'm very-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let the fires burn? Is that it?

Christine Caine:

I work a little bit with, I don't know if you've had him on the podcast, Steve Cuss, who talks so much about-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah. I know Steve.

Christine Caine:

Yeah, Steve's awesome, about anxiety and this third space where you cannot be responsible for what somebody else is thinking about you or saying about you. I've had to do a lot of work to go, "Okay,"

because it matters. I mean, of course, nobody wants to be slandered or misrepresented or maligned, but you would never get anything done in our modern world that is an online world, that is a very public world where everyone has an opinion. You would never ever fulfill your assignment or get your job done if you spend all your time listening to the naysayers.

Christine Caine:

So, from a more scriptural perspective, I've got to keep a little bit of that Nehemiah attitude, which is I can't come down from the wall to continue to have those discussions and I've done ... If it's something that needs to be discussed, I've done everything I can that I know to do and I can't do anything else, and so I'm just going to have to live with the fact that it is what it is, and then you've got to move forward.

Christine Caine:

So, I don't know that you ever, you get better at going, "Okay. I can't spend my life listening to critics. I can learn what needs to be learned from that, but if I'm going to keep my soul intact, if I'm going to keep my heart in place," I mean, you see so many leaders, whether it's organizational leaders or pastoral leaders, the reason I think many, and in this last year, have walked away and not finish their race is because at the end of the day, it's like, "I just cannot deal with the criticism anymore. It doesn't matter what I do. I'm going to offend or hurt somebody, and for my own soul care, I can't continue to do this."

Christine Caine:

I think when I wrote How Did I Get Here, it came out of some of that as well, apart from leaders always going through their own personal stuff. I had my mom passed away, my sister-in-law, my husband's sister, and his brother, brother-in-law. So, you've always got personal things that you're trying to navigate. I'm raising two teenagers. I've got a 19-year-old and a 15-year-old. I've got a marriage of 25 years. I've got a couple of hundred staff in 18 countries. So, I've got a life, and then you have this online life that that exists as well.

Christine Caine:

So, I can't navigate all of those things. I can do the best that I can do for the thing that I've been called to do, but if I allow the critics to get into my heart and my spirit, it would take me out. I think that's what almost happened. When I talk about my own drift, it was more I got to that place where I thought, "If I just take my foot off the pedal," Carey. That's it because 30 years I've been following Jesus and leading organizations. I lead A21. I lead Propel Women. We've got 4,000 chapters in 120 countries. I've been an advocate for women my entire life.

Christine Caine:

So, in the midst of all of that work, plus all the other stuff that I do, the teaching and the traveling, I've thought, "I don't know if I am made for this be a target or this fighting certain fights that I never signed up for," and I'm like, "Wow!" I thought, "If I just take my foot off the pedal," and I remember this one night, Nick was watching this Netflix series on the Navy Seals, and that's how he relaxes on hell week, and I'm like, "What is this?"

Christine Caine:

At that point, I didn't know what hell week was, so then I discovered that you've got to be a very elite Marine to even be able to or Navy person to even get into that, and then the whole purpose of that week is to break you, whether it's physically, emotionally, spiritually-

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're like, "I'm loving hell week," right?

Christine Caine:

I'm like, "This is insane." They don't let you sleep. They yell at you. The whole goal is to make you ring the bell like go and ring the bell and then you can go have a shower and you'll still be in the Armed Forces, but you're just not going to be a Seal.

Christine Caine:

So, I felt like there was this one scene, they dropped the guys out of the helicopter into the Pacific Ocean, and they had to swim like, whatever it was, six miles to the shore and not sleep. It's brutal, but there was this one scene they dropped the men, and I started to cry. So, my husband already knew, "Whoa! Something's not right."

Christine Caine:

I said, "Nick, I think this is how I feel. I feel like, spiritually speaking, I've been dropped in the ocean and I know I can do it. I've been dropped in there before. I know that I'm not going to die. My body is going to be okay. I've got the strength to swim to the shore. I've got the strength to do all of the exercises I need to do," I was really very emotional, Carey, and I said, "But I don't know if I want to."

Christine Caine:

It was the first time in 30 years of frontline ministry work, global work, social justice work, women's empowerment work, preaching and teaching that I thought, "I don't know if I want to," and that scared me because I have been at places where I thought, "I don't know if I can. I don't think I'm cut out for this. I don't know I'm good enough. I'm not equipped enough. I'm not resourced enough. I'm not smart enough. I'm not connected enough."

Christine Caine:

I've had many of those experiences in my life. Never had I had, "I don't know if I want to keep my foot on the gas at this level and keep going." I don't mean driven for accomplishments. I mean just-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, no, no, I mean-

Christine Caine:

... half-heartedly following Jesus for what I was called to do, not measuring it with anyone else, but knowing that I was all in, skin in the game, it's all in. I knew I needed help. I've frequently throughout my life, and especially with my broken past, gone into different counseling sessions and worked with therapists. So, I knew I needed to go and see someone because I thought, "This is not a good place."

Christine Caine:

I remember coming to that place I said, "Nobody would even know, Nick, that I took my foot off the gas. I've got so much momentum from 30 years and I wasn't thinking I'm going to go do anything bad. So, I'm not going to go and have anything backslide. I wasn't thinking I'm going to walk away from the faith or go and do anything destructive. It was just take my foot off the gas," and I said, "Nobody would know."

Christine Caine:

There is so little discernment out there, and I've got so much momentum that I could pretty much cruise at the time I was early 50s, I could cruise into my 60s, come out every now and again, do a message, do whatever, and nobody would even notice. Then it was this moment in my life and I went, "But Jesus would know. He would know that I took my foot off the gas, and He would know that I didn't have all my skin in the game. Nobody else would and they're like, "Chris Caine is doing all this stuff. It's awesome," but Jesus would know and I would know.

Christine Caine:

I want to be, I think in that moment for me in terms of spiritual leadership, it was like when the apostle Paul says, "There's one thing I'd do for getting this things that are behind my press." I was not willing to keep pressing not for anything. At my age and stage, Carey, I'm not looking for platforms, I'm not looking for invitations. The Lord's been very gracious to me throughout my entire life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You don't need that. That's not what fills you.

Christine Caine:

No. I'm 55. The finish line is closer for me. I've got less time in front of me than I have behind me, and I plan to a very fruitful and long life, but whichever way you want to slice it up, I've got less time ahead of me than behind me as a leader in every way of my life.

Christine Caine:

So, going helping and talking through this for many, many months, it was like, "Am I up for what leadership entails in the 21st century with the shifting currents, with a very public profile, with a target on your head no matter what you do. With everybody having an opinion, without knowing you personally in any way, am I up for it for the sake of the next generation? Am I up for I'm going to make mistakes? I'm going to be misrepresented. It's for any leader right now no matter what sphere of life you're in.

Christine Caine:

In the midst of our cancel culture, you're really counting the cost. You're going, "Well." You're counting the cost and I think particularly if you are a Jesus follower, no matter how long you've been walking with Him and how sanctified you are, you really know that you still got a long way to go. So, we are so profoundly aware, hopefully, if we're self-aware of own humanity.

Christine Caine:

So, you're going, "I know that I'm likely to make a mistake, to say something wrong, to maybe do something in the wrong way because things are changing so quick." What you said yesterday can be

weaponized against you today. When you have a life of speaking as long as I have, you've got 35 years of stuff out there-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Somebody can go into the archive.

Christine Caine:

Sometimes I see someone take something that I said 10 years ago that I still would say today, but in today's cultural moments, how I would frame what I said would be entirely different and so I almost think, you sit here and you go, "It's not even fair that you're taking something that was said that is true in and of itself, that was said in a particular way because it suited that cultural moment and that particular crowd that you were speaking to in the particular country, especially when you're a man, you've spoken all around the world."

Christine Caine:

It was appropriate. There was nothing wrong with doing that there, but you pulled that into this context, in this hour with whatever social issue is flying in the moment right now, and suddenly you go, "Wow! Wow!" When you're a speaker, what you're trying to do to help people can be weaponized and used against you and you start to wonder. You go, "At 55, do I just want to take my foot off the pedal and just go, 'I'm going to go run a taverna in Santorini, Greece and just speak to my people to come and buy the baklava and talk to them about Jesus and have a-'"

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'll be there for that. I'll sign up for that. That's great.

Christine Caine:

So, what I'm saying is we all, so whether someone's only on deconstructing their faith or somebody is just having challenges in their marriage or having ... There is not one person, I don't think. If you're truly engaging with this world that is not wrestling internally as a leader with counting the cost and going, "Wow! How much of my life do I spend on the defensive and how much of my life am I on the offensive, taking ground, going forward?" That is my daily battle, and that's a lot of work, "How did I get here?" because I don't know that you even just, I mean, I made the decision, "Yes, I'm going to keep going," but that still doesn't mean that suddenly everything's gotten peaceful and kumbaya, but I am convinced that the things that I wrote about are the things that have kept me anchored and will keep me anchored to the end, and this is just part of the cost of being faithful to what I've been called to do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's tremendously clarifying. I told you before we started I really enjoyed the book. I meant that in a good way. I feel like it's a fresh voice. I think you just described the existential angst that pretty much every leader listening to this podcast at 55, 35, 25 either has gone through or is going to go through, and when describing that, I'm like, "I think I had that conversation with myself over the last few years." I really feel like I did. It's like, "Okay. I've gotten to a point in life where I'm not leading a church anymore. I got this little hobby that became way bigger than I ever thought in doing this stuff. Do I really want to do this? Do I want to build a team? Do I want to sign up for the next few decades? Do I have to?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

To quote our friend Andy Stanley, he would say, "Are we done yet? Are we done yet? When is this over?" Obviously, Andy's not done yet either, but you ask that question, and I think the criticism and I don't get a lot of it compared to most leaders to a lot of the listeners here, but, yeah, that really is like, "I don't need this anymore," right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't want to be unfaithful, so I'll just back off a little bit. I'll give it 70%. I'll give it 60%. I'll cruise. When I was a 30-year-old leader, Chris, when I saw that in 55-year-old leaders, I hated it.

Christine Caine:

Me, too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then I hit 50 and I'm like, "Oh, this is why that happens." Now, you have this weaponized ideological angry outraged culture that just made it even more toxic. Was there a turning point? Why did you decide, "Okay. I am going to continue to do what I feel called to do?"

Christine Caine:

Yeah. In my case, because I am Jesus follower, it will come back to that, and it's because Jesus is worthy and Jesus is the one that called me. When I said to Him, "I'll follow You to the end," so I want to cross that line. Particularly, I think I'm 55 and I say I want to finish well. I want to cross the line and I want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Ultimately, I think for me the pain of regret would be greater than the pain of carrying on, and you just got your pain.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I hear that. I didn't expect the interview to go in this direction, and for those of you watching, you can see the emotion right now in the interview for the last 15-20 minutes. This is a live issue. I think you can maybe hear it in our voices, too, but you know what it was for me?

Christine Caine:

What was it?

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's like you can only sit on a beach for so long, and I want my life to be about something and I want to help the next generation, and I want to run the race well, and I want to try to use what I believe God has given me for the benefit of others, not just the benefit of myself. Some days, I wake up and I'm like, "Really?" I get it. It's an active struggle. I had mentioned it very recently where I posted something, and I won't say what, but people got angry and they accused me of being woke and selling out, and lost hundreds of followers. I'm like, "Really?" It just makes you sad. It gets to you.

Christine Caine:

Yeah, it really, really does. I think because we're older, you're profoundly aware that it's not necessarily going to get easier. You could see where the world is going and you're like-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah, yeah. No. I had that thought. I'm like, "Don't get cynical, Nieuwhof."

Christine Caine:

Yeah. It's not even cynical. For me, it's like, "Okay. Are you going to play it safe?" This is to me when we talk about we war against the flesh and the spirit because there's a very real side of me, my flesh, that's like, "I'd like to," and I'd like to play it safe. It would be less painful, but the fact is that I've spent 30 years of my life preaching and teaching and saying, "Jesus didn't come to make us safe. He came to make a mark." It's not just make a mark of till I get comfortable or I've accomplished what I wanted to accomplish or achieve the accolades that I wanted to achieve because at this point, I think almost I could say it, and my age is a lot to do with this is that it really isn't about me. It's about my daughters. It's about the future. It's because I do love the church, and I foremostly love Jesus, and I truly believe in the gospel message and God has always just used very flawed people to deliver that.

Christine Caine:

So, I think someone listening to this in their 20s and 30s is like, "Come on, man. If I could have 15 officers and we got the Mother Teresa Humanitarian Award, and if we ..." This is my goal. This is what I'd like to do. You really begin to understand, and I don't know that you can understand, till you're at this stage when poor goes, "I'd love to go home, but it's to your benefit that I stay," and you start to go, "This is what it's about for me to stay in the game, for me to stay on the field and continue to be, by God's grace I pray, a role model for women and to help women move forward, and for the church in general. I have the privilege.

Christine Caine:

I speak 45 Sundays a year in churches around the world to help build the church and then to continue to be an advocate to abolish slavery and to continue to raise up the next generation with all of the angst that that involves of leading a generation of Millennials and Gen Z and going, "Okay. I believe that the gospel is so worth it," and our job on this Earth is what we've been called to do. When Jesus called me, it's not going to be over till there's a white chalk mark around my body.

Christine Caine:

So, if I woke up this morning and I was not in a very sealed body bag in a very cold room, it means I'm still here, and it means I still got a purpose, and I've got great tools and, I mean, my last semester, a master's in evangelism and organizational leadership and it's just like, "Okay. So, I'm equipping for this generation to understand the nuances of what's going on in the world." I've got 35 years of life experience in Christ to bring to the table, and I want to continue to do that.

Christine Caine:

Now, all the operational side of our organization, we've already done a lot of that handing up. We've got a fantastic organization, a wonderful team, brilliant people, highly skilled lawyers, and social workers, and psychologists, and law enforcement, and aftercare workers, and all of the things. So, working with teams, raising up teams, I've done all of that.

Christine Caine:

I think one of the greatest gifts that I can do at the end of the day, I could bring all my leadership skill to the table, but Paul says at the end of the day, he says, I will add my Christine version, "Teachers you have many fathers," and I would add mothers, "you don't have a lot." I think if people like you and I stop now, it's not even so much about the leadership principles we're teaching people or the organizational principles. You can go get a book and you can listen to every episode of your podcast for the last and get all of that, but people that are willing to stay in the game to the finish line, that's what's becoming rarer and rarer. So, perhaps the greatest gift we can give to people is not to drift from that. Now, that's not easy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No. You know who I think has modeled that really well? It's Gordon MacDonald. He's been on the podcast a few times. He'll be back if he's not back already. I talk to him regularly. He turned 82 this week as we're recording this, and I'm like, "Yeah. That's a model in my heart for what if I get that many years." He would say the call for the last 20 years has been being a father to people and his wife, Gail, a mother and he said, "We live in that kind of generation that needs it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Speaking of generations, do you see a shift with Millennials and Gen X? We now have Gen X rising a little bit. Do you get less pushback from them? What are you discovering about the next generation?

Christine Caine:

Very much, obviously, in terms of they don't have a disparity. So, some of the initial resistance I came up against, which was, "Is it gospel work or justice work?" That is one and the same thing for this generation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, they see it as, of course, it's-

Christine Caine:

It's like what you think is they would not sign up, I don't think for anything that's in the church or in any other organizational ministry. So, I think even in the marketplace, in the corporate world, people want to be involved with corporations that have got a mission that's bigger than themselves and is giving back to the world. Certainly when it comes to our faith sector, they're not separating.

Christine Caine:

It's like my faith has to work here on Earth as it is in heaven. I think this is good. This is a part of maybe we've done this part right. Some of us that have just said, "Okay," and, of course, I would be pulling very much from N. T. Wright that it's the here and now. I'm not just waiting to pray some prayer and then I'm waiting to die so that my life begins. It's like I understand that if I have truly been born again, that I want God's will to be done here on Earth today as it is in heaven, so then I want to bring justice to the world.

Christine Caine:

The thing, though, that is going to be an interesting thing for this generation is bringing justice and righteousness together as well, truth and righteousness because I think sometimes we've got to be careful that I'm so glad for the reformation in that we all discovered that good works are not going to

save you. We're saved by grace through faith, and that's awesome, but we have to be careful now that we're not replacing one form of good works pre-reformation, which was, "I've got to work my way and be good enough for God," to "I've now got to do enough good things that would be applauded by the world and depending which thing is the popular thing at the moment, and if you're not posting about that thing, if you're not liking that thing, if you're not saying what I want you to say about that thing-"

Carey Nieuwhof:

In the way I want you to say it.

Christine Caine:

In the way that I want you to say it, and this is what leaders are challenged with. I mean, for me, I had the same experience as you. I posted something that was very biblical. Actually, I didn't even think it was contentious, and then I watched 10,000 people go, I mean, I did. It was in under 30 minutes and I went, "Wow! How crazy is that?" It didn't bother me because I thought, "If that's how quick of searching for 30 years my life, if in under 30 minutes you can dismiss 30 years and nuance and have a benefit of a doubt, ask a question because you did not like how I said a particular thing that maybe ... I don't even really make political statements. So, it wasn't even that, but because you read into it as a political statement, I'm like, "That is deeply disturbing from a theological leadership issue."

Christine Caine:

It's not like I need it for me. I'm just looking at, "Wow!" In terms of spiritual formation, making disciples, creating future leaders for the church, this is really, it's making me really think, "What an interesting issue."

Christine Caine:

So, the thing that the Lord has granted me, which I think is very helpful and, again, because I was older when the internet, social media came on, and the Lord had done so much in life, I wasn't looking for that, but I have always been far more obsessed about how many people on this Earth are not following Jesus than how many people are following me. I've been far more obsessed with becoming more like Jesus than people liking my posts.

Christine Caine:

So, that is really good because it does take a lot of pressure off you. You're just like, "I'm not doing it for that," and at this stage of my life, can I tell you, Carey? At 55, I'm not spending all my life thinking, "How am I going to build a brand?" I'm not saying that's not important, but for me, it's not my priority. Also, the message that I've got to bring to the world is not going to be liked if I truly believe what the scripture says by everybody, and my thing is I want to be as broad as I can.

Christine Caine:

For me, social media is not a place where I go for contention or argument in that sense. It's I want to encourage people. I want to inspire people. I want anyone from someone that has no faith to someone that is a professor at a seminary to feel like I could come there and be encouraged and be inspired. So, it depends what you want for your platform. That's what I want for mine because I think that the issue is that the younger generation, if we begin to be way more concerned about how people are liking our

posts than the work we do and whether we ourselves are becoming more like Christ, it's going to cause a lot of problems down the track.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is something. You and I, I think I'm a year older than you, it's like, yeah, we have that pre-digital memory, which is so good. So, I hope you're taking notes. That seems to be a recurring theme now on the podcast, particularly over the last year whether you're talking to you or Cal Newport or Seth Godin or others like that that focuses on the quality of your work, not the quantity of your likes or the traction you're getting on social media.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think Cal had a book called Be So Good They Can't Ignore You. I think if you're looking for that thing, it's just really good. We're trying not to do that to have people not ignore us, but, yeah. That's so good. Man, I got to tell you, we didn't go half the places as I thought we would go today, but it was so rich, and I think this felt like, I don't know, a therapy session for leaders, soul fuel for leaders. We're all in this together, and I just want to give you an opportunity to say a final word to the leader who is where you were a couple of years ago watching hell week going, "This is me. I don't know. Should I take my foot off the gas?" Business leaders, ministry leaders, people who want to be leaders one day and maybe you're in school, what would you say to them if they feel like, "I just can't handle this. I'm taking my foot off the gas"?

Christine Caine:

For sure. I think there's a couple of things. First and foremost, it's great to be honest about where you're really at. I think, to be honest, that's the big thing because I think to try to squash that to even heap guilt and shame and condemnation on yourself, it's not going to be helpful at all. It's so important to go, "I'm going to raise my hand. I need help and I need help to work through this." I think that's a really good thing.

Christine Caine:

I think, always, you've got to come back to your why. You can have a huge public profile, but the affirmation of the crowd, and we all hear it so much. I think whoever is listening to this, when they're young, already they're filtering this through it, "That's okay for you, Chris Caine. You have millions of followers. You can do this." So, I realized, you guys, listen to this in 10 years. This is going to really speak to you.

Christine Caine:

A lot of us that are, I think, late 30s, early 40s and beginning to have these thoughts very, very deeply right now, they're looking at it going, "Wow! It's either I'm not where I thought I was going to be or I am and it hasn't delivered what I thought it was going to deliver internally. What now?" So, you've got to keep coming back and I keep coming back to this in the book because I've got nothing else for you. This is it.

Christine Caine:

Why did I start this? I started it for Jesus. Who am I running for? Ultimately, yes, do I want to build the world's best anti-human trafficking organization? Yes. Do I want to build a phenomenal women's

empowerment organization? Yes, to the best of my ability. Do I want to bring the best talks that you could ever bring? Yes. I do all my due diligence. I work really hard. I want all of those things to happen.

Christine Caine:

Are they ultimately going to bring me significant security, peace, joy, hope or contentment? Well, no, because as we've all discovered, whether it's the global pandemic or personal disruption in our own life or failures, mistakes, whatever it might be, we're all going to be at this place at some point going, "None of that is satisfying and none of that is enough. There's got to be the bigger reasons."

Christine Caine:

So, you come back to your why, I did it for Jesus. So, someone else doesn't misunderstand and for me to actually remain faithful to Jesus, that means people on the right are not going to like me, and people on the left are not going to like me, and that's the way it's going to be. Am I still willing? I think no matter what, I don't believe leadership needs to be lonely at all. I've got friends. I'm a very big believer in all of those things, but what I am convinced of at 55, particularly after the last couple of years, there is a definite place of aloneness, and particularly if you're a faith leader. Jesus had it.

Christine Caine:

Even when you take your friends to Gethsemane with you, they're going to fall asleep, and you are somewhere, whether you are 55 or 56, and I'm sure when I'm 60 again, you're going to have to get on your knees and go, "I wish Peter stayed awake. I wish my friends were awake in this garden with me," and you're going to say to God, even after you've been faithful, Jesus was for 33 years, even when you've done the will of the Father, even when you say my food is to do the will of Him who sent me, even if you believe your entire life I have done everything I believe the Lord's called me to do, I've led through the pandemic, I've led this church, I've led this organization the way that I believe, not perfectly but to the best of my ability and now I'm in Gethsemane, and I never expected to be in Gethsemane, and I'm saying to God, "I don't want to drink this cup."

Christine Caine:

I think that's where I was. I think that was ... Is there another way? Can I please go and have my taverna in Santorini? Can I just pull back? You've got to get to the place, and this is that place of aloneness, which is probably only 1% of your life, but it's never going to go away, that 1% where it's just you and your why, which in my case is Jesus and go, "Am I willing to say again, nevertheless, not my will by thine," and I think that's where I got to.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's awesome. Yeah. Christine, thank you. Thanks for being so vulnerable. Thanks for being so open. People will want to follow you online. Where can they find you these days? Please be kind, people.

Christine Caine:

Yeah. They are. No, no, no. I have 99% phenomenal, but there's the reality.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know. We all face it.

Christine Caine:

We have to know that if you're going to, our place is a really fun place that it's 99% awesome, but all the Christine Caine places, whether it's christinecaine.com. You'll find me. It's all there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You'll find her. Well, the verse that I've thought about often is, "Well, to who else would I go?" Right?

Christine Caine:

That's it. There is no, and that's-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What's the alternative?

Christine Caine:

There is nowhere else. You say you can only lie on a beach so long. What I do know is I believe what I've been saying for 30 years-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Totally.

Christine Caine:

... that there is hurts on the inside of you that Jesus is worthy, that there is this passion, and you will find it. You've got to be real in this moment and get help where we can, but we don't have to stay there. When we drop our anchor again, and that's like you drop that anchor again and you go ... I think in Zachariah there's that scripture, Zachariah 9:12, about, "Return to your stronghold, prisoners of hope." I think I've come out of this whole pandemic season, out of this whole season with a book and going, "You can't pick whether you're going to be a prisoner." You're still in Canada, so you guys are still on lockdown.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah, right now.

Christine Caine:

I can choose the type of prisoner I'm going to be, and I'm going to be a prisoner of hope, and that's how I want to go out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Awesome. Well, the book is called How Did I Get Here. I would strongly recommend it. What I love about it is even if you're not a person of faith, it is a very, very good read if you find yourself drifting, lost, confused because I think we all are to some level, you're going to really appreciate it. Christine, thanks for being with us today.

Christine Caine:

Thank you, Carey. I've loved it. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that was emotional, that was real, that was vulnerable, and that's leadership. Chris and I are around the same age and I have been thinking a lot about how do I stay fresh in celebrating 20 years from now, 30 years from now if God gives me that much time. I really want to see that for you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I was doing a deep dive into Google Analytics with my team, and one of the cool things is the number one demographic who listens to this podcast and accesses my content is 25 to 35-year-olds, but the second biggest demographic is 18 to 24-year-olds. If you can master some of this stuff now, I got to tell you, you've got a much better life ahead of you, and that's the hope. That's why we do what we do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Andrew, whose review I read earlier in the show, man, that just encourages me so much. I've got a What I'm Thinking About segment. I'm going to talk about some things that will encourage you or at least I hope they will. In the meantime, wow. We have the one guest. Here's a trivia question. Who is the one guest out of 400 and some odd episodes who has two in the top five? There's only one person, and that is Gordon MacDonald, and he's back. We talk about being driven versus being called. Here's an excerpt.

Gordon MacDonald:

Driven people, this is in priority order. Driven people can be angry people. They want things to go their way, and when they don't, when someone puts a monkey wrench in the works, you can see anger. We've seen some big illustrations of leaders in the last several years who couldn't control their anger, and it finally lost them their leadership one way or the other. People finally said, "I'm not going to work with this guy anymore."

Gordon MacDonald:

I wrote down some other thoughts. People have become obsessed about the symbols of leadership. They have to have the desk office. They have to drive the nicest car. They have to be in-charge. They have to sit at the head of the table. They are always reminding you that they're one step above you. There are people who are always addicted to expansion, no sooner have they finished one building program that they're beginning another.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He's 82 years old and so sharp, and has become a great friend, and I can't wait to bring you the third conversation with Gordon MacDonald next time on the podcast. Hey, thank you to our partners, Generis. If you do not where your church is at for the long haul financially, you want a free report? Go to your free Generosity Pulse Report at this address, [generis.com/carey](https://generis.com/carey). Tell them I sent you. ServeHQ would love to help you. You can sign up for your free 14-day trial and use the code CAREY to get 10% off for life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, what am I thinking about? I am thinking about the encouragement we all need as leaders. It's super challenging to lead in this day and time. As we talked about a billion times, yeah, this has been an unprecedented season, but here's some things. I know when I get overwhelmed and I've been overwhelmed in seasons over this years last as well, you got to think about, "Okay. What is going right?"

Because mostly as a leader, you focus on what's going wrong, and to encourage someone. I love etymology. I'm not as good at it as a people, but when you think about the origin of words, what does it mean? Encourage someone literally means to give courage to them. So, I hope this gives you courage.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, number one, you haven't quit, right? You haven't quit, and that's good news. I always say never quit on a bad day if you're going to quit. Quit on a good day. There have not been a lot of good days recently in the world. So, you're hanging in there and that's awesome, and I believe your faith and your strength can be renewed and restored.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Number two, you're learning to lead in constant uncertainty. This is a super power. I'm sure at some point the world is going to stabilize again, particularly if you're a young leader. You're probably going to see it stabilize, but you're learning now how to lead off balance. In uncertainty, agility is ability and flexibility is a super power and you're getting a graduate degree on that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Number three, you're navigating deep divisions and forging unity. Yup. It's a hyper divided time, but you're learning now the skillset to really how to navigate deep divisions and unite people and forge unity. That's important. You're also bringing hope, right? I love the idea that we leaders are dealers in hope and ideas. The ability to name group a reality and never lose hope as Jim Collins says. So, hope is what people need right now. Hope is so hard to find. You're bringing it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Number five, for those of you who are people of faith like me, you're deepening your faith. Your reliance on God is probably moving into very deep level and that's a good thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then finally, you're learning new skills, right? Every leader ends up in ruts, at least I do. Right now, you're learning new skills at a rate you may not have learned them in years. So, you're learning online, you're learning social, you're learning how to lead in division. Man, these are going to serve you well for a long, long time.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, that is something I just want to encourage you with today. If you enjoy getting encouragement, I send a daily email, almost daily email to over 80,000 leaders. You can go to [careynieuwhof.com/email](http://careynieuwhof.com/email) to sign up for free. You'll also hear about all the things we're doing as well, but, hey, that's just a little daily dose that I hope can really help encourage you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So grateful for you. Thank you so much for all that you do. For all the ratings and reviews, I'm grateful. Gordon MacDonald next time plus a whole lot more coming up on this podcast all summer long and throughout the year. Thanks for listening, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before.

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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.