

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 up to episode 462 of the podcast. I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. And I'm very excited to bring you Jordan Raynor today on the podcast. He's been on before, but my goodness, he's got a brand new book on Redeeming Your Time. We're going to talk about all that and many other things. And today's episode is brought to you by Medi-Share. They have a 98% customer satisfaction rating and an average member savings of 50% or more. Find out how much you could save by going to [medishare.com/carey](https://medishare.com/carey). And by World Vision they've got a free leadership assessment guide that you can access today at [worldvision.org/careypodcast](https://worldvision.org/careypodcast). Well, good to have Jordan Raynor back. He is a serial entrepreneur, also a father of three young kids. I get that question a lot, having written At Your Best. It's like, "Well, nice for you, your kids are grown."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, Jordan and I get into the thick of it. He's got three young kids, he's a serial entrepreneur, national bestselling author of the book Redeeming Your Time, as well as others. He's helped millions of people around the world connect their faith to work, through his Call to Mastery podcast, his devotionals, and other books. He serves as the executive chairman of Threshold 360, which is a venture backed tech startup that has built the world's largest library of 360 degree virtual experiences of hotels, restaurants, and attractions. He's a highly sought after speaker on the topic of faith and work. He has spoken at many events around the world, including Harvard University and South by Southwest. He has been selected as a Google fellow twice and served in the White House under President George W. Bush. And he lives in Tampa, Florida. And that's where I catch up with him today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hey, want to thank all of you for your continued just hanging in there. I mean, we're coming to the end of a year and I think it's a miracle that you're still leading, you're still moving. I know it's been a very, very difficult time and I just want you to know, hey, I hope this podcast brings you some hope. We hear from you every single day. I'm so grateful for you and thanks for partnering with us. We have a pretty exciting 2022 coming up. I've got a series I'm very excited about, about the future really, of technology and the church and culture. It's a miniseries that will start in January. We've got some really great guests. And if you appreciate this podcast, maybe you're new, subscribe, leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or Overcast, where I do my listening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I love the Overcast app, by the way, super smart app. And well, we're just glad to have you along, that's all. Hey, it is that time of year again, it's open enrollment season and you've got to figure out what you're doing for healthcare. Well, there's probably two factors that rank above the others, trust and affordability. With a 98% customer satisfaction rating and an average member savings of 50% or more Medi-Share checks both of those boxes. They offer access to almost a million healthcare providers and a proven 27 year track record. And there's another thing I love about Medi-Share, which is, we all need a little bit of extra help and they have got unlimited professional virtual counseling sessions available to

their members. Right now is the best time to make the switch. So find out how much you could save by going to [medishare.com/carey](https://medishare.com/carey).

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then as we've already indicated, it has been a really, really tough season for leaders. Every day seems to bring new challenges and World Vision is in your corner. So they have partnered with Krish Kandiah to create an interactive tool, to ask yourself the critical questions you need to ask as a leader and take stock of where you are and how you're doing. So you can get their free leadership assessment guide today at [worldvision.org/careypodcast](https://worldvision.org/careypodcast). Well, without further ado, let's dive into my conversation with Jordan Raynor.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Jordan Raynor, welcome back to the podcast. It's good to have you.

Jordan Raynor:

It's a joy to be with you, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you and I have the fun thing of writing the same book at almost the same time. For those of you watching on YouTube, we got Redeeming Your Time and At Your Best. We were kind of joking about that, right? So I'm the pastor who put no scripture in his book and you're the entrepreneur whose book is filled with scripture. What's going on there, buddy?

Jordan Raynor:

Hey, it's the old adage, rock stars want to be movie stars, movie stars want to be rock stars, right? It's you and me. I don't know who's the rockstar, but I think that's what's going on there. Here's the thing, both of these books published with the same publisher. You would've thought somebody would've raised their hands-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Somebody would have went, "Hey, do you know Jordan Raynor?" But, Jordan, the thing about this and we have known each other for a couple years, you reached out to me when you were in Toronto pre-pandemic and like, "Hey, come on down." You had me on your show, I had you on here.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And we actually got to meet in real life, which was awesome. But the thing is, you and I were talking about it, this is a category of productivity, time management, that seems inexhaustible, a little bit like a cookbook or a weight loss book. It's like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I've already seen a cookbook in a store. Please don't write another cookbook." It's like, why do they keep selling? Same with weight loss, right? It is pretty simple. I think it has something to do with eating fewer calories than you burn. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong on that one. Why do you think time management is such a problem? And

by the way, I'm delighted Jordan wrote this book. It says things, you go in territories I do not go into. And there's a lot of ideas that are absolutely worth bringing into your life.

Jordan Raynor:

This is such a perennial challenge. Listen, I mean, you're a pastor, Carey, you know. The theological answer is because we work unto the fall, work unto the first. The thing that infuriates me about diet books, not that I've read them or time management books, which I've read many, is when the author acts like solving these problems is going to be easy. It's not easy, right? You know I know? Because we keep publishing books on this topic, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Uh-huh (affirmative).

Jordan Raynor:

But listen, Carey, there's 60,000 books in the time management category on Amazon right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ooh, I'm glad I didn't know that before I started writing *At Your Best*.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I found out afterwards too, and I've read all the perennial bestsellers in this category, making my way through the next best or *At Your Best* right now. And listen, I love all these books. I love David Allen and *Getting Things Done*. I love my friend, Cal Newport, *Deep Work* and Greg McKeown, *Essentialism*. But I don't know, for me, Carey, I just have three big problems with most of these books, which are really the impetus for writing *Redeem Your Time*. Number one, these books tend to be centered on what I would call workspace productivity, right? The idea is, "Hey, you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed, leader. Follow my system, do exercises X, Y, and Z and then you will find peace."

Jordan Raynor:

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I believe I already have peace. "I have ultimate peace with God," Paul says in Romans 5:1. So I don't do time management exercises to get peace. I do them in response to the peace I've already been given. And I just think that's a radically different foundation for a book. The second, and you already touched on this, Carey, second reason why I wrote this book, second problem I have with these other books, none of them account for how the author of time managed his time when he came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. This is mind boggling to me, Christian or not. I think it's pretty hard to dispute that Jesus of Nazareth was the most productive person who ever lived. And yet, I don't know a management book-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you can make that argument, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, right? Like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are biographies of the life of the most productive person ever. How arrogant of us not to think that we can look to those biographies for tools as we

redeem our time. And then last thing I'll just share, third problem I have with these other time management books, a lot of them fail to connect all the pieces of the puzzle together. I actually think you did a good job of this from what I've read so far in *At Your Best*. And this is my goal with *Redeeming Your Time*. *Deep Work* is great, *Getting Things Done* is great, *Essentialism* is great. But all of these are pieces of the puzzle that have got to be connected together. And so my audacious goal with this book is connecting the pieces of the puzzle together. And I believe Jesus is the glue and the example that puts all those pieces together in the puzzle.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a fascinating perspective when you think about it, and there is a lot of scripture in your book, which I really deeply respect. I wrote mine the way I wrote mine because I still left part of my heart in the legal world. And I wanted to be able to hand them to completely pagan people, not pagan, but you know what I mean, right?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like completely non-Christian people, who would say, "I'm not reading a Christian book." And yeah, that seems to be making its way out in the world right now, which I'm very excited about. I got to ask you though, as a CEO yourself and as an entrepreneur, what have been your biggest personal time challenges? Most of us write these books because they're a prescription to ourselves, was that true in your case?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah, totally. This is a really easy one to answer. The third of the seven principles in this book that I think we could see in the life of Christ and the gospels is what I call dissent from the kingdom of noise. And this has been the hardest-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I love that.

Jordan Raynor:

... and I would argue, most important for my career as a tech entrepreneur. I have to make time to dissent from the kingdom of noise, so that I can just discern what's essential on my to-do list. Carey, you know this, in a startup, resources, financial and of course time, are crazy constrained. And thus, the most important thing you do as the leader is choose the few initiatives that are really going to move the needle in the business.

Jordan Raynor:

And I would argue that is impossible to do when we are constantly intaking information. We are drowning in what C. S. Lewis called the kingdom of noise in his great book, *Screwtape Letters*. And so I've just had to learn really practical habits for exiting, dissenting the kingdom noise on a regular basis, so I could think, so I could be creative, so I could prioritize my to-do list. And most importantly, so I could listen to the voice of God and what he's telling me to focus on in my work and my life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, we got business leaders and preachers listening. I don't think that preachers are immune from that. I think we can fall victim to that, where we just get caught up in the tyranny of texts, and emails, and knocks on the door and "Hey, can you? And hey, can you? Can I have five minutes of your time?" And we don't even hear from God. How did you start to combat that? What do you do to tune out the kingdom of noise?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, so we do a few things. One of the simplest ones is I just refuse to fill the crevices of my day with noise. What do I mean by crevices of my day? When I'm standing in line with Starbucks, I try to be the one person not intaking information on my smartphone. When I have a seven minute errand to run, I don't press play on the podcast, even if it's my own or the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. I just sit there, and be quiet, and think, right?

Jordan Raynor:

Another practice that I started years ago, I go for a morning walk every morning. When I was running this tech startup we just talked about, I would walk a half a mile from my office to my favorite coffee shop downtown. I wouldn't look at my phone. I would just be quiet, and think, and sort through of all of the things me and my team could be focused on today, what's the essential thing? But the solitude and the silence was a prerequisite for being able to identify the essential out of all of the noise surrounding me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is really good. What about devices? Do you disable all notifications on your devices?

Jordan Raynor:

100%, yeah, 100%. So my phone's always on do not disturb. I only ever have one tab open in my browser. And for years, I was really good about disabling notifications at work, so that I could do deep work in the parlance of my friend, Cal Newport. But then I got convicted that, man, I don't want to just do deep work, I want to cultivate deep relationships at home. And so what was a game changer for me was having really good digital hygiene after I got home from work. And so for me, when I end my work day at 5:00 PM, I close my laptop. I take my phone and put it into our master bathroom from 5 o'clock until 7:30 PM, so the two and a half hours I'm with my kids. And effectively, I've converted my cell phone into a landline for two and a half hours, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, use it in case of emergencies, right?

Jordan Raynor:

That's exactly right, my phone's on do not disturb. The ringer is on, so if my parents, my elderly parents need to get ahold of me, they can get ahold of me, or my assistant, whatever. But otherwise the temptation to check Instagram, or text messages, or an author's best seller ranking. Not that we ever check that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, no, no. We never check that stuff, ever.

Jordan Raynor:

Never, ever, has been mitigated, right? My phone is the landline for two and a half hours. And then 7:30, I check my phone for about five more minutes. I don't check email, just check text really quickly. And then I put my phone to bed an hour before I go to bed. And I don't touch it again until two and a half hours after I wake up in the morning. So I spend a ton of time away from my device.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, you and John Mark Comer, very similar regimes. His might be a little more radical than that. So let's break that down, and I know you address this in your book. But FOMO has got to be a part of that, dude. A lot of people won't do it because they're like, "Well, Jordan, thank you. That's really nice for you." First of all, let me just point out for people who don't know your life situation. You are young and you have young kids, right?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How old are your kids, approximately?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, seven, five and one.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. So I mean, you're in the thick of it, man. It doesn't get thicker than three kids under the age of seven, for sure. Okay. So it's not like, "Oh yeah, there's this empty nester who can just do what he wants with his life." You're in the fray. And so you're working by day, you're home with your family at night. So there's the context. What about FOMO? What about like, "Well, I don't know what's going on, on Instagram." And don't you have a responsibility to market your book? And don't you have a responsibility to check all those emails? What is your day job these days, by the way? It seems to change every little while.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, so for the last two and a half years, I've been spending majority of my time creating content books, like Redeem Your Time, my podcast, The Call to Mastery. But I still have responsibilities in the world of tech startups. I'm the executive chairman of a pretty well funded tech startup called Threshold 360. I served as CEO for two and a half years of that venture. So I have a very busy, very full life.

Jordan Raynor:

And I have heard all of the objections imaginable to confining digital distractions, right? People expect me to respond to their messages immediately. I'm afraid I'm going to miss something urgent. Yeah, I'll tell you what, for years now I have been checking email and texts one to three times a work day and I have never, ever once missed something urgent. And for the majority of that time, I haven't had an

assistant screening my emails for me. Here's the deal, Carey, we all think we are way more important than we actually are, we do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

100%, I've been really wrestling with that lately. It's like one day I'm going to die and people are going to be like, "Oh, that guy." Nobody really cares, right?

Jordan Raynor:

I think I told this story the last time I was on the show, I can't remember. But when I stepped down as CEO of this startup called Threshold, I became executive chairman. I stepped down on a Friday, passed the baton, came back week later for my first one-on-one with my successor. And I walk in the door and I'm just like, "Oh man, it's going to be a disaster. It's going to be a disaster," right? So I'm like, "Ah, how are things going?" I go to my director of sales, "Hey, how are things going?"

Jordan Raynor:

He's like, "Great." I missed the beat. I go to my director of engineering, "Hey, any big problems?" He's like, "No, it's been a pretty smooth week." Yeah, it was one of the most humbling experiences of my life. But it reminded me that I don't need to constantly be on call for the world to keep spinning. I had a guy by the name of Ronnie Andrews on my podcast recently, CEO of a public company, answers to investment bankers and the like. Ronnie turns his cell phone off, off, airplane mode from Friday afternoon until Monday morning. You were talking about radical-

Carey Nieuwhof:

So no one can reach him.

Jordan Raynor:

Not a person. And I said, "Ronnie, how many urgent things do you miss?" Zero things, zero things in the years he's been doing this. We've got-

Carey Nieuwhof:

[crosstalk 00:17:52] listeners, not assuming that everyone listens to every episode and every word. I took July off and my auto responder said, "Hey, I'm trying to practice what I preach. My assistant will be looking through my inbox over the month, I will not be. If it's really important though, I'm going to delete everything that comes in, in July. Hit me up in August." How many people have circled back in August? You know how many? One, one-

Jordan Raynor:

One person, one person.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wasn't zero, it was one. So of all those hundreds of emails that came in, in July, one thing was important enough to talk about in August. And it's like, gosh, how do we spend our time, right? So let's get back to the person who's going, "Well, you don't understand, you're not a pastor. You're not in my position. You're not running a startup, executive chairman of a big tech company, way to go. Okay, you can

probably get away with that." What would you say to that person who thinks they're so indispensable, they have to be glued to their phone?

Jordan Raynor:

I would say I've been CEO of tech startups where the mandate was to grow 50% a quarter. And the way I got that job done was not responding to my emails constantly. It was making time to do the deep work necessary to serve my customers, my team, my investors really, really well. We've got to do the same thing. Let me offer an analogy. Let's say for a second that instead of the mailman coming to your house once a day and dropping off mail in your mailbox, they start showing up 150 times a day. But they didn't stay at the curb, they got out of the car, went up to your front door, rang the doorbell. And you got up from what you were doing, opened up the door, grabbed the mail. Maybe you open it, maybe you don't, but at least you steal a glance at who sent it. We would all agree that you would be certifiably insane.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, and get a restraining order, 100%.

Jordan Raynor:

And that is exactly what we do with text messages and email. This is insane, and I argue in the book that it is impossible to do deep work and to cultivate a truly deep life without figuring this out, without taking control over when you check your messages. And to get really practical, again, Carey, this book, as you know has 32 hyper practical practices to help us live out this stuff. So I'm just going to give you one, because this has been one of the most life changing ones for people who've read the book.

Jordan Raynor:

Three steps to take control over when you check your messages. Step one, don't answer the door 150 times, proactively choose when you're going to check your messages every day. And listen, if you're in a role because you're a pastor or a sales director where you've got to check your email a lot more than I do, that's fine. What matters way more than the number of times you check messages is that you choose when you're going to check your messages, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, it was a conscious decision, not, "Oh gosh, I was in the bathroom, so I'm back on email." Yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

That's exactly right, that's number one. Step number two, build a list of VIPs that will have access to you at any time, not just the predefined times for checking messages. So for me, my VIPs are my assistant, my investors, my three core members of my team, my kids' school and that's it. And what you do, if you got an iPhone, add them to the favorites list on your iPhone. If you're an Android user, add them to your people list. That way, when your phone's on do not disturb, calls from those people, and those people alone, will come through. Last step, step three, you got to set expectations about your response time.

Jordan Raynor:

You can't just go from responding to text and emails immediately to responding every four hours. You've got to send a very simple message to the VIPs in your world. Say, "Hey guys, listen, in an effort to better serve you and my work, from now on, I'm only going to be checking email and text at," whatever times

you want, 10:00, 1:00, 3:00, whatever, as many times you want. "But you're a VIP and so you can access me anytime, but the way you do it is calling my cell phone at (123) 456-7890. You do those three steps, you're not going to miss anything urgent, nothing. Because the VIPs, the people who really have urgent stuff that you actually care about, are going to be able to reach you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know whether you've seen this or not, Jordan, but our books went to press too late to include it. But in *At Your Best*, I was like, "I wish someone would do X." And then iOS 15 comes out, it does X. So you can now program do not disturb with different modes. You can have a work mode where your family rings through, or your director of sales rings through, or your associate rings through. You can do a home mode now. That just came out in the last 30 days, which is incredible.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But it's exactly to that point, if you're worried about, "Well, my daughter's in school and she's vulnerable and I want to make sure she got home." Then you program for certain hours or all the time, that your daughter gets through to you. And then you don't have to worry about the rest of the world.

Jordan Raynor:

That's exactly right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is it true? Have you found that if you access email less, you send it less? I'm sort of thinking of the old axiom that if you're always fighting fires, perhaps you're an arsonist, you know that idea, right? Where, "Wait a minute, the more I'm on email, the more it consumes my life." Do you find that the less you tend it, the less you tend to get?

Jordan Raynor:

Absolutely, because it forces you to write email, like mail, instead of chat, right? So many of us use email as if it's instant messaging and that's not its purpose. It's called email, right? So be right now, in this current season, when I was a CEO of this tech startup, I was checking email three times a day. Today I check it once a day. I write my emails a lot differently when I check email once a day, because I know it's going to be 24 hours before I get back to the thread.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you walk us through that?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can we get super nerdy?

Jordan Raynor:

And I think I learned this from Tim Ferriss in The 4-Hour Workweek years, and years, and years ago, writing emails in the if this, then that construct, right? Give you a great example. Send an email to somebody on my team named Chris, trying to schedule lunch with, "Hey, Chris, would love to have lunch. If Tijuana Flats works for you on Tuesday at 1 o'clock, please send a calendar invite accordingly. If that doesn't work, please email Kayla, who's CC'd and she'll help us find another time." I'm done with the email thread, right? I've done it once.

Carey Nieuwhof:

One and done.

Jordan Raynor:

But if I'm checking email all day, I would just shoot him an email real quickly and say, "Hey dude, how about Tuesday?" And then he'd reply back and say, "No, that doesn't work for me." And we'd send nine emails. It's crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

"How about 1 o'clock? How about 1:30? How about 1:45?" Yeah, that whole thread, right?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, okay. That's really good. Anything else about the fear of missing out? Because I think we are addicted to our devices, it's very, very clear. And I mean, this is something I struggle with as well. I'm much older than you, but I'm also at the point where, yeah, I'm pretty tech dependent. And I've found that the less I depend on it, the healthier I seem to get. What would you say to leaders about social media? Where do you put your phone at night? What about things like that? How important is that?

Jordan Raynor:

I'm going to take this in a slightly different, but related direction. Because I think a lot of our FOMO isn't just about emails, it's about information. We love being the first to know some interesting piece of news. We love being the first one to post about some celebrity that we haven't thought about in 20 years, the fact that they just died on Instagram. We just love it. We love being the first to get there. And I just, by the grace of God, have realized this is silly. And the news and social media is making us... This is my opinion.

Jordan Raynor:

There's lots of data about this. Dr. Jean Twenge, who was on your podcast, talked about this. The news is making us anxious and the news is 99% totally meaningless to our lives and work. And by the way, this is coming from a recovering news junkie. My first job ever out of Florida state, I ran a tech startup that was basically a news aggregator. So I used to love the news. And six years ago, I quit cold turkey. Today I listen to zero news, no news podcasts. I read no news websites, nothing. And I spend almost zero time on social media. And here's what I found. I'm surprisingly not ignorant because-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, how does that work?

Jordan Raynor:

How does that work? Here's how it works. My friends curate the news for me. They tell me about everything that truly matters to my life and work. I'll give you a great example, Carey, I know you and I are both big fans of Tim Keller, when Tim posted on Twitter, which I never access, that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, eight of my friends texted me the news within 10 minutes of the tweet being posted. I hear about pandemics. I live in Florida, I hear about hurricanes, which are important to my life. I hear about media trends and rumors of every West Wing reunion because I'm a huge West Wing fan.

Jordan Raynor:

And I hear about all of these things without having to spend a moment waiting through the just ridiculous news cycle that is cnn.com and social media services. And here's the deal, a lot of people are like, "Ah, this practice is really selfish." No, it's not. I hope my friends will join me on a no information diet, but most of them won't. Most of them will continue to feast at the all you can eat information buffet. And guess what? They're going to willingly, naturally, and unknowingly, largely curate the best information for me and for you. My advice, let them.

Carey Nieuwhof:

See, that's really fascinating because I have struggled with news consumption as well. I don't watch TV news. So that's one thing, unless it's an election night or there's a really big thing. The TV's not for that purpose. I have very carefully curated sources because I don't want to get into inflammatory on the left or on the right. I don't want to get into that. So I tend to go with other forms of journalism that aren't quite as fractious.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But it's a business model that pays you to get outraged, that pays you to look. And even the weather network, which I rely on, because I'm outside all the time and I'm a cyclist, it's like, "Be aware of wind risk. Sign up for our notifications." I'm like, I'm pretty sure most of us got through life without knowing exactly how windy it was going to be next Tuesday. I don't know that I need that kind of information being pushed to my phone. But we live in this really challenging space. What has that done to your head space? What has that done-

Jordan Raynor:

Oh my gosh.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... in the last six years.

Jordan Raynor:

Well listen, I've been on, by far the most productive six, five year run of my entire life. I built two businesses that have created more than 120 jobs. I have signed seven book deals, right? I have-

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a lot of books, dude.

Jordan Raynor:

It's a lot of books. I've 'raised', started to raise a seven, five, and a one-year-old, baptized one of them. And listen, I'm not the hero of this story. Bible makes clear that God alone produces results through our work. But part of the way he has done that through me, is by showing me the tremendous value of dissenting from the kingdom of noise. And listen, I know a lot of people listening to my no news consumption are like, "This guy is crazy."

Jordan Raynor:

Let me offer a much more reasonable practice here, it's another practice from the book. Maybe you love the news. Maybe you love the news, I would encourage you, at least stop swimming in infinity pools of content, right? Infinity pools are Instagram stories and news websites that seamlessly scroll from one meaningless story to the next, right? Opt for finite pools of content, a daily news roundup podcast, or email newsletter. At the risk of sounding like a 90-year-old, a physical newspaper, right? In our crazy-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Where someone actually sat down and curated and said, "This is what you need to know." I mean, that's what the evening news used to be, "In 30 minutes, here's what happened in the world today. Now you're caught up to date, finished. Get on with your life."

Jordan Raynor:

That's exactly right. And I love the New York Times Masthead, it's all the news that's fit to print. It has to fit into a container and that is at stark contrast with the way that media's saying, we just got to be cognizant of that. And I think once we realize this, once we realize that, oh yeah, these things never end. Most people are like, "Yeah, that's crazy. Let's opt for more finite pools of content to swim in."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, anything else on digital hygiene? Because I think that's so important, or anything else on the kingdom of noise, Jordan? I'm so glad you went there because it's a challenge, dude.

Jordan Raynor:

There's so much on this topic. Again, out of the 32 practices in this book, nine of them are in chapter three on dissenting from the kingdom of noise. But I think we've hit on most of them. I'll just end with this, parent your phone. You tell your phone when to go to bed, right? Put it in its place. Let it go to bed hours before you do. Let it stay in bed hours after you get up, so the first thing in the morning, you're alone with your Lord. You're alone with your own thoughts and you just have space to think.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You also say, this is a quote from the book, "Depth is the silver bullet for effectiveness." I think a lot of us would basically agree with that. The question is, any other practices, you've hinted at it for going deep and being able to do the deep work? I think it was David Allen, I forget who it was. It was one of the productivity gurus that we love and admire, who said, "Deep thinking..." Oh it was actually Charles Duhigg. It was Duhigg who told us on this podcast, that deep thinking is the killer app. And I think he's

right. That's how you've been able to do what you've done at such a young age. What are some other practices for deep thinking?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. One of the ones that I found really valuable over the last few years is writing to think, right? So we already talked about taking control over when we check our messages in order to turn down the noise. Then once you have that, you have all this free head space and you're like, "What do I do with this? How do I think deeply?" For me, I found that writing out my thoughts in full prose is essential when I need to get really clear about something. And this writing isn't for anybody, nobody else is going to see it. It's just me journaling really quick unstructured notes to myself in Evernote. But that, usually done on a really long walk, tends to be a game changer for me to make creative connections and just think deeply about whatever I'm writing or working on in business.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you'll dictate into it, or how do you do that when you're on a walk? Yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. When I'm on a walk, I literally, I'm just walking along the sidewalk and typing with my thumbs. Every few minutes, I'll pull off to the side and write a little bit. C. S. Lewis did this. He would walk miles a day every afternoon, after he had done some writing, he would go on a really long walk. He would take a pen and paper with him and he would walk a little, write a little, walk a little, write a little. And I think there's a lot to be learned from that practice.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It was Nietzsche who said, "There is no thinking without walking."

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Really interesting. You talk about uni-presence, this is in a similar vein. What do you mean by uni-presence, Jordan?

Jordan Raynor:

So if you grew up in the church, read your Bible at all, you have a rough idea of this concept of omnipresence. This idea that God is everywhere all the time. And what I find fascinating, when you look at the gospels, Jesus, for 33 years, traded his godly omnipresence for the human uni-presence, if we can make up words, right? The same uni-presence that you and I share today. Jesus was confined to one place at a time. And all throughout the gospel biographies, you show him being fully present with one important person or task at a time. One of my favorite examples of this, there's a scene in the gospels where Jesus is preaching, he's doing his work.

Jordan Raynor:

And one of the disciples comes in. It says, "Hey, Jesus, your family's outside and wants to see you." And this is where he utters his famous line, "Who are my mothers and brothers?" Whatever. And we miss in

this, the fascinating B storyline to this account. Jesus ignored his family, right? When they said, "Hey Jesus, your parents are..." He kept on teaching. He used it as a jumping off point to teach. Jesus, didn't say, "Hey, guys, you know the rule, God, first family second, work third." He kept on teaching, right? He was fully present and focused. Elsewhere in the gospels, you see him being fully focused on his friends and ignoring other distractions. Jesus just consistently displayed this remarkable ability to embrace his uni-presence. And if Jesus couldn't be in more than one place, mentally, at a time, neither can we.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, let's talk about rest.

Jordan Raynor:

Oh yeah, let's go there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, how do you do that? You've accomplished an awful lot. I think is it the final chapter of the book is about embrace productive rest? It's toward the end anyway.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. It's towards the end. Six of seven, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, okay. Tell us about that.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, I wish somebody had told me this earlier in my career, that rest is counterintuitively one of the most productive things that we can possibly do. And in particular, these three God designed rhythms of rest, breaks throughout our work day. Every other hour is your ultradian rhythm's kind of cycle. Number two is nightly sleep, getting an eight hour sleep opportunity every night. And the third is weekly Sabbath. And as I have been practicing and prioritizing those three rhythms of rest, I have been more productive than ever before. But it's not just my testimony, there's loads of data that shows that these three rhythms are wildly productive towards our goals. But they're also productive for our souls, because their means of reminding ourselves that we're not keeping the world spinning and that the world will go on, even when we sleep for eight hours a night.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can you break those down a little bit?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let's talk about the first one. I don't even know the term. Can you say it again? That was new to me.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So I refer to it as bi-hourly breaks, B-I-hourly-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What did you call though, ultradian rhythm or something?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, ultradian cycles. So scientists-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ultradian cycles, what does that mean?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. So scientists will tell you that your body tends to pulse in two hour ultradian cycles. So if you're listening to this and you're a fan of Cal Newport's Deep Work, or you're at least familiar with this concept, you're going to appreciate this. So if you sit down at your desk and do 90 minutes of intense, deep work, such as recording a podcast with Carey Nieuwhof right? If you rest for 15 to 30 minutes after that 90 minute cycle, you will be far more productive, efficient, and effective in that next 90 minute block, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jordan Raynor:

There's a really, really good old book on this called The Way We're Working Isn't Working. It's probably like 15 years old now, it's terrific. And so for me, what I found is the age old adage that I think Churchill used to preach, which is, "If you work with your mind, rest with your hands and if you work with your hands, rest with your mind." So throughout your work day, whatever you're doing, do the opposite of that as you rest and try to recharge and get back to full energy for the next block of work.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, so that's good. So you're saying within every two hours, you need to take some kind of a break?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, that's exactly right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's Juliet Funt's A Minute to Think. She's like, "People stacked themselves in back, to back, to back, to back meetings." And you're saying that's a bad idea. So walk us through a workday. What would that look like for you these days or back when you were CEO of the startup? How would you schedule that? Because people are probably, again, I'm going to play devil's advocate here. It's like, "You don't know how busy it is. I got staff knocking on my door, I got people texting me all day long. I can't even breathe. And then I got to go home and do it all over again." So yeah, how would you recommend-

Jordan Raynor:

I'll take you back to the days when I was running a company with 120 people, right? I would get to the office, first 90 minutes, I would sit down and do some deep work. And then I would take a 15 to 30 minute walk to the coffee shop that I was talking about before. Take it, just think about what's going on with the day. I was resting with my feet, right? I was just going, getting a cup of coffee, coming back and then I'm right back into it for the next 90 minute block of deep work.

Jordan Raynor:

Some other breaks that I loved when I was CEO of the tech startup, I would just play foosball or hang out with the engineers in the programming room, right, doing something fun, not necessarily talking about work, or I would go walk to lunch with a member of my team. But I would take at least three of these breaks throughout out that work day, right? Oftentimes four, because I found that they made me much more productive and much more impactful when I was on the next sales call, right? Or when I was on the next meeting with our investors, right? I was way better in the room when I have had a great break before that meeting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I completely agree. And I have done that, anecdotally, for years, where it's like, "Don't stack me in back to back meetings. I'm going to hurt myself or hurt somebody." Or I'm just not present for the third meeting. It's like I'm there, but I don't know what's going on. Anecdotally or based on your research, what is going on there when you take those breaks? What's happening to your brain? What's happening to your soul as you go for that walk, as you play foosball, in my case, as I blow some leaves in my backyard or whatever it happens to be, where I'm taking a break in the middle of the workday? What's happening inside you?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, what's happening inside me is I'm feeling heck of a lot less anxious. And I'm just feeling rested. Anecdotally, and there's no data to support this, right? If I'm at 70% energy after a block of deep work, if I just go downstairs and do the dishes for 15 minutes, I'm back to 95%, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jordan Raynor:

And that break is far more restful than reading a book or doing something with my mind because I work with my mind. Again, if you work with your mind, rest with your hands, if you work with your hands, rest with your mind. So if you're a carpenter, right, and you're working with your hands, probably not going to be very restful for you to go chop down some wood, right? You probably want to do a crossword puzzle and vice versa.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, so let's talk about eight hours of sleep at night because a lot of people would push back. But again, you're in the thick of it. You're a guy in your 30s with three kids under the age of seven and you have a one-year-old, you're prioritizing eight hours sleep as best you can. Can you say how that works?

Jordan Raynor:

And I'll just say this, both my wife and myself, email me if you don't believe me, I'll show you the Fitbit data to prove it, get seven and a half to eight and a half hours of sleep every single night, every single night.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, okay.

Jordan Raynor:

And this is relatively new. We've been doing this over the last three years. Before that, I thought I was fine on six and a half, seven hours of sleep. And I've had to go back and apologize to everybody I served during those years because here's the deal, and trust me, I hate what the science has proven here. But the science is indisputable, right? The vast majority of human beings, to operate at your best, at 100%, you got to be getting an eight hour sleep opportunity every night. There was a study I cited, I think it was from Duke in Redeem Your Time, that said that you are six times more likely to win an Olympic gold medal than you are to be one of the rare people in this world that can operate at 100% on less than eight hours of sleep.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Jordan Raynor:

That hit me like a ton of bricks. I was like, "Oh my God."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's insane, isn't it? Isn't that insane?

Jordan Raynor:

It's crazy. And again, please, please hear me. I know exactly how hard this is. I have a very full life, I have three kids, I have a one-year-old, this is insanely hard. Let me tell you the biggest thing that made the biggest difference for me and my wife.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, please.

Jordan Raynor:

We set a bedtime.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right, everyone, get your notebook open. Get your notebook open, here it comes.

Jordan Raynor:

Get your notebook open, set a bedtime. Here's the funny thing, when I was writing Redeem Your Time, a buddy of mine sent me this Wall Street Journal article with these like 80 products you could buy to get better sleep. There were some absurd things, \$80 socks and a \$1,000 Louis Vuitton sleep mask. Here's

the deal, you know what's free and far more effective? Setting a freaking bedtime. Listen, before I did this, we would wake up at the exact same time every day. I think most people's wake up time is fixed, but our bedtime was variable. We would say something along the lines of, "Yeah, I go to bed based on what's on TV that night," right? Like-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, exactly, or we're bingeing and we just wanted 15 more minutes of this episode.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, we're bingeing and we just want to finish [inaudible 00:44:07]. This is insane. If you really want eight hours of sleep, this is simple math. Your wake up time is fixed, count back eight and a half hours if you want to get eight hours of sleep and that's your bedtime. And once my wife and I recognized this very simple thing, yeah, we were able to make it work. Now, it's not easy. We got a lot to do at night. We got to make lunches for the kids for school the next day and sign homework folders, whatever. But we have just learned the tremendous productivity increases that sleep provides. Sleep helps us make creative connections between ideas. Sleep helps us think properly, it helps us be less anxious. So we're just all in and we're fighting for it every single night, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What time do you go to bed and what time do you get up in the morning, generally?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, we are in bed at 8:40 PM and my-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh wow.

Jordan Raynor:

Oh yeah. And my alarm goes off at 5:00 AM.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, well that's good to know. So to bed at 8:40. There's a number of younger leaders, parents I know, who are going to bed before 9 o'clock. And it's funny because you think of it as we go to bed around 10:00. What I've discovered during... So let me ask you this, did you have to work up to eight hours worth of sleep or did it come instantly?

Jordan Raynor:

No, it did not come instantly. At first, I couldn't sleep eight hours, honestly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, so what did you do about that?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, I just kept at it. I just forced myself-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, that's funny.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have done the same thing in this pandemic, since I've been grounded and I'm no longer navigating time zones, which is about to change this fall, before Christmas. But first I was like six and a half to seven hours, couldn't sleep a whole lot more. But I have gradually crept up to eight or nine hours of sleep and I'm loving it and-

Jordan Raynor:

Do you find you're more productive and creative?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think so. My wife and I, there's a little bit of just difference there. She doesn't like to go to bed too early. I would go to bed at 9 o'clock. If I wasn't married, I'd be in bed at 9 o'clock. I'd probably wake up around 5:00, 5:30 and then I'd be good to go. So what's happening now is I've traded in my 4:30 AM mornings for 6:00 AM mornings. But I think I would like to experiment by going to bed at 9:00 or 9:30 and bumping that up a little bit. You know what she does say? I don't know whether I'm... Well, I did write a book in the midst of all that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I'm really proud of it and the company's having a record year. So I would say yeah, that's probably true. What Toni says, my wife, is when we're engaged with people, when we have people over at our house, I was always the guy who used to be falling asleep. 10 o'clock at night it's like, "Okay," first to leave. And now our friends stay up quite late sometimes, so I'll be going at midnight still. And she's like, "You are so engaged, you're so dialed in, you're so present." Some of that has to do with sleep, I'm pretty sure.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What are some of the other benefits you've noticed?

Jordan Raynor:

So I'll tell a entertaining story to illustrate my favorite, this idea that sleep helps us make creative connections. Are you a Rolling Stones fan by chance, Carey?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I am.

Jordan Raynor:

Okay, all right. So Keith Richards, guitar player, one of the lead songwriters for The Stones, had this habit for years. He would sleep with a tape recorder and a guitar right next to his bed, so that if in the middle of the night he woke up and had a great idea for song, he could just write it down, right? Very GTD, David Allen style. I love it. So one night he goes to bed in Clearwater, Florida, right down the street from me here in Tampa, wakes up the next morning and his tape recorder had run all the way to the end. And he's like, "I don't remember recording anything, that's bizarre." So he goes back, he rewinds the tape. He clicks play and unconsciously, in his sleep, he had written the first verse and chorus of Satisfaction, the Rolling Stones greatest hit-

Carey Nieuwhof:

They're greatest song ever, yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

... of all time, right? And he's not the only one. McCartney allegedly wrote Yesterday and Let It Be in his sleep. Larry Page dreamed up Google, he didn't know it was Google, but this idea of downloading all the web pages from the internet in his sleep, right? And sleep scientists will tell you, these are not anomalies, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Jordan Raynor:

All of us, it's not going to look this dramatic, our subconscious minds are making creative connections that our conscious minds could not make while we were awake. It's why people tell you to sleep on a problem. You're not supposed to stay awake on a problem, you sleep on the problem. And as leaders, what are we doing? We get paid to make creative connections between ideas, right? To make uncommon connections between ideas. We got to have sleep in order do that. So listen, I could sit here and list off data point after data point about the scary side effects of a lack of sleep. But for me, what's way more motivating is the positive upside of an eight hour sleep opportunity every single night.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I got to ask this question, how did you get your kids to sleep?

Jordan Raynor:

Whew, that's tougher. That's tougher, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it is. I know, I know, I know. A lot of parents are like, "I'd go to bed early, but my kids are up all night."

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So the best \$20 I've ever spent are these little lights that are in my kids' rooms, that shine different colors based on the time of the morning, right? So they know they don't get out of their

room until the light turns green, right, at 6:00 AM and they're allowed to come out. So I don't know if it makes them sleep more, but it certainly makes mom and dad sleep more and get our full eight hour sleep opportunity every night, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So all I'm going to say is if you think you cannot get more sleep, Jordan Raynor is your case in point. Three kids seven and under, he goes to bed at 8:40, gets eight hours sleep and is massively productive. That's great, let's talk about-

Jordan Raynor:

And my wife, and my wife. I want to [crosstalk 00:50:12] that because-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it's not you're sleeping while someone else is toiling away.

Jordan Raynor:

Both of us, that's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right, that's fantastic. And it's made a difference for her too?

Jordan Raynor:

Oh yeah, she'll tell you, she's just way less angry and way less irritable, I guess I should say, at the kids when she's gotten her full eight hours, for sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I agree, I'm at my most kind when I have the most margin.

Jordan Raynor:

Totally, totally.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If I'm under pressure with time, if I'm under pressure with sleep, if I'm under pressure with money, I'm not as good as when there's margin there. Okay, what about Sabbath? That's the third rhythm. I'm so glad we're breaking this down, because we got so many tired leaders listening right now. So let's talk about Sabbath.

Jordan Raynor:

I grew up in the church and I didn't know a single family that observed the Sabbath. I thought the fourth commandment was just kind of like the speed limit. We just all kind of knew we were supposed to ignore it, I don't know.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Don't make your employees work, but go to a restaurant, so they can work for you, yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

Exactly, yeah. But no, when I did think about Sabbath, I viewed it as this life sucking legalistic chore. And the shift I've made is really embedded in Jesus' words in Mark chapter two. He said, "Sabbath is made for man." It is a gift for us. Sabbath, as I've started to experience that gift over the last five or so years, I've just realized it's the most life-giving thing I get to do every single week. "It's an island of get to in a sea of have to," as Kevin DeYoung once said so beautifully. And so yeah, for me and my kids and my wife, it's just this joyful day of ceasing. Yes, ceasing productive things, not doing productive talk whatever. But equally, if not more so, it's about feasting on the good things God's given us and it enjoying the fruit of the work he's given us to do. I love it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What does Sabbath look like for you? Just in broad strokes, what would it feel like? How do you observe it?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. I think a lot of young parents are like, "Hang on a second, isn't parenting work? You don't get a break from this." Which is true, but there is a way to make Sabbath really, really great with young kids. So for us, it starts with work, ironically, right? So Saturday afternoon, we do all of the work we need to do for Saturday and Sunday. We pack our bags for church on Sunday, we do all the dishes, all the laundry, pick up the house, get everything out of the way, so that we could focus, essentially, on resting, right?

Jordan Raynor:

And then once that's done, we order takeout from one of our favorite restaurants in town, we order some sort of epic dessert. Right now, we're all in on Crumbl cookies, which are these enormous cookies delivered to your door, which is just awesome. And we just feast, physically. Eat a bunch of great food, go to bed, wake up the next morning. I spend a little bit more time in God's word than I typically do on Sunday mornings. The kids wake up, they get to enjoy two Sabbath Sunday only things. They get to watch a full length movie. And then, please don't judge me, I make my seven and five-year-olds, a cup of coffee, full cup of coffee that they get to enjoy on Sundays, which is fun for their Sunday school teachers.

Jordan Raynor:

And yeah, man, we drive to our favorite donut shop in town. And on the way there, one of my favorite Sabbath traditions, we just spend the whole 12 minute drive talking about what we're thankful for. Just thanking God for the good things in our week. Come back, got plenty of time to go to church, go to church, feast on the word with our church family. Come back on Sunday. And usually Sunday afternoons are pretty low key. I mean, sometimes Kara, my wife, and I will go on a date. But most times we're just hanging out in the pool, playing a board game. My friend, Jeff Hack, who runs a brewery in Atlanta says sometimes Sabbath is as simple as a kiddie pool and a beer. I'm like, "Yeah, that's right."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That works, that works.

Jordan Raynor:

That's right. so for me, the kids are hanging out in the pool, I'm drinking a good beer. And yeah, we just end the day with our stomachs full, obviously. But more importantly, our souls filled with the word. And just this reminder that we are children of God, that are loved, even when we are not being productive, right? And I think it's that truth. And that understanding that leads us to want to be wildly productive the next day. Not because we have to, not because we can earn any more of God's favor, but because we want to do our work as worship to the one who gave us that eternal rest.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I mean, this isn't news, but I love the way you said it, that Sabbath is a gift. A gift that I have spent most of my life, not opening. And that in the last couple years I've really been taking more seriously. And I'm a baby, I'm in Sabbath kindergarten. But you're right, I would hate to get to heaven and God say, "Well, I gave you a gift, how come you never opened it?" It's like, "Oh yeah, I was too busy, right?" But that's awesome.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, I'll say too. I'll say this last thing, last word on Sabbath. We were vacation in Rhode Island this summer and I saw a mentor of mine that I hadn't seen in about five years, basically when we started Sabbathing. And we were talking, we talked for about an hour and he texted me after I left his house. He said, "Hey, you just look way more rested than the last time I saw you. And it's not the rest that a vacation brings, what's up?" I was like, "Sabbath, Sabbath." And here's the deal, over the last five years, I have taken way less time off than I did the five years prior to that. I take maybe a week off a year to go on 'vacation'. But here's the deal, I get 52 vacation days a year and a day of Sabbath rest is 10 times more restful than a week at Disney with kids, right? So-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because you're done at Disney, you're exhausted.

Jordan Raynor:

Done, done, done. And since we live in Central Florida, that's all we do. So Sabbath's been a game changer for us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ah, okay. I want to, before we wrap up, talk about saying no. It feels like an inexhaustible well, that I can keep diving into because it's a daily challenge in my life. You've got some great strategies, ideas on saying no. So walk us through what that looks like and what you would tell leaders who have more opportunities than time available to do when they say no.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. First, I want to share a little bit of my perspective on this. I think as a Christian, I try to take a different approach to this topic than the rest of the world. Kind of conventional business wisdom on this topic is, "If you can't say, hell yes to something, say no." Yeah, that just doesn't jive with the example of Jesus in the gospels. There were a lot of times when Jesus said no, but there were also times when he sacrificially said yes, when he didn't want to, right? If you really want to look at this, go look at Matthew chapter 14, I think provides a great case study of this.

Jordan Raynor:

But that said, I do think we all need more help saying no than we do need saying yes. And so in Redeeming Your Time, I shared eight questions that I try to ask when discerning requests for my time. And I'll just share a couple of them with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, if you would, that'd be great.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, I'll just share a couple. One of them I love is am I trying to do good or make myself look good by saying yes to this request for my time? A lot of times, if I'm honest, I'm just trying to look good, right? Like I get invited to speak in a conference and it's not really aligned with my goals, but I say yes because it looks cool and I like being asked to speak at conferences, right? Or I get asked to go to this private event with 50 young leaders, which is like, awesome, I'm so honored to be invited. But I'm just saying yes, because I want to be seen at the cool kids table and that's not a good reason to say yes, right? We are called to do good works, we're not necessarily called to look good. And so I'm just always trying ask that question.

Jordan Raynor:

Another one I love is would I say yes to 100 similar requests for my time, right? Let's take the proverbial coffee meeting. If somebody comes to me and say, "Hey, Jordan, I'd love to get coffee for an hour to pick your brain on something." I'm not just saying yes or no to that coffee meeting, right? I am, in a small way, contributing to the habit of saying yes or no to meetings that have that exact same profile in the future. So anytime something comes across my desk, whether it's a speaking opportunity, or coffee, or a request from a member of my team, I ask, "All right, if the exact same scenario happened again next week, would I say yes to this 100 times?" And honestly, nine times out of 10, that question is what enables me to say no pretty crystal clearly, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, whereas if your daughter says, "Dad, you want to go to the park?"

Jordan Raynor:

Yes, a million times.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Say yes 150 times to that, yeah. There are certain people it's like, "Hey, can we jump on a 20 minute phone call?" You'd be like, "Yes. And we'll do it tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after." That's a really, really good filter. Okay, obviously your book is a detailed tome, it's super helpful, it's incredibly practical, 31, 32 practices. All the principles you've outlined. What is one thing we haven't covered that you want leaders to know, as we wind this down?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah. I think I want leaders to know what I'm trying to get my kids to understand at a really early age. Every single night without fail, when I put them to bed, last thing I tell my seven-year-old and my five-year-old, one-year-old's too young to understand. I say, "Hey, girls, you know I love you no matter how

many bad things you do?" And they say, "Yes." "You know I also love you no matter how many good things you do?" And they say, "Yes." I say, "Who else loves you like that?" And they say, "Jesus."

Jordan Raynor:

I think as leaders, we've got to hear those words spoken over our work and our efforts to be productive. The God of the universe loves you regardless of how productive or unproductive you are. That brings this deep soul level rest, the ability to rest from work. But paradoxically, it's also the thing that leads us to be wildly ambitious for our work, right? Because when you're working for somebody's favor that you have yet earned, that's exhausting, right? But when you work in response to unconditional, the favor of God, that's intoxicating, right? You want to be productive, not because you need something, but just because you want to make your father proud.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I got one more question and I think I'm going to go there. You and I wrote books on productivity that came out around the same time within about a month of each other, actually the same publisher, Penguin WaterBrook, et cetera. And one of the things a lot of leaders deal with is jealousy, insecurity, et cetera, which has been a lifelong battle for me. So here's the reality-

Jordan Raynor:

I'm glad you're going here. I'm glad you're going here.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Are you glad I'm going there?

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because I'm like, okay, there's a bunch of time management books being released, but you and I are a vying for top spot on an almost daily basis on Amazon, for the number one new release. I want to know how you process that. And I heard Adam Grant talk about a similar thing with Malcolm Gladwell, where they were secretly envious of each other and trying to outsell each other. And he said, they became worthy rivals and eventually friends. How are you processing that?

Jordan Raynor:

Oh man, this is such a good question. And I'll just be real vulnerable and say, this is a challenge. This is hard. Everything in our culture tells us we have to win, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

And you know what I'm thinking a lot about these days, when I duke it out with Carey Nieuwhof and everyone else? I'm thinking about Simon Sinek's great book, The Infinite Game. And remembering that

the mission matters way more. What I care about deeply is that leaders would redeem their time for the purposes of God in this world. And I shouldn't care if Carey Nieuwhof helps them do that or if Jordan Raynor helps them do it. And if I do care too much, to the point where I am angry or jealous, then I got to be honest with myself that I'm not doing this work for God's glory, I'm doing this for my glory, right? And that's an ugly, sticky place to be. I'll say one more thing on this topic and then I'd actually love to hear you answer this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You bet, I will.

Jordan Raynor:

Another thing I think about in terms of professional jealousy, a lot of times when I find myself getting jealous, I have to remind myself that I'm not playing the same game as other people, right? Like for example, Carey, you speak beautifully, powerfully to leaders, that's your audience. I speak to a much broader, but also a more narrow audience. My audience is the church, right? If you pick up Redeeming Your Time and you're not a follower of Jesus, there's a lot of value there, but I didn't write this book for you. And I'm not going to apologize for that.

Jordan Raynor:

I wrote this book for the church. I feel like my call is to equip the saints, right? Again, I'm making that transition from entrepreneur to pastor. So when I look at other people, I got to ask myself, they're playing a different game than me. Kobe Bryant would never get jealous of Tiger Woods, so why would I get jealous of somebody playing in a totally different market and a totally different game than I am? This is silly, it's ridiculous. Anyways, few raw thoughts as to how I'm thinking about this right now. How about you?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I think that's incredibly mature. Can I ask you how old you are now?

Jordan Raynor:

35.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're 35? 35.

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So 35-year-old Carey had an encounter with God that was very challenging because I was insecure and jealous of another preacher. And I was definitely at the point where I had to deal with it. And I remember reading the book of James and it's like, "Is any of you envious? Is any of you jealous? This is from hell, this is from the devil." And I'm like, I remember reading the Bible, but the Bible read me. And I'm like, "Oh my gosh, that's me." I went and read that passage for days, every morning. I'd sit at the

table and read that passage and finally released it until the ugly black thing of jealousy and insecurity came out of me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And since then, I'm not going to say it's not a struggle, but it has been a lot easier. So I would've said, I think you're way ahead of where I was at 35. I just got to say that. And what I've had to do, Andy Stanley was so helpful, a message he preached years ago. I think he wrote about it in one of his books. He just said, "Celebrate what God has given others, leverage what God has given you." And I have tried to make that a mantra. So one of the things I did to make sure this wouldn't happen to me is it's like I could have played the zero sum game, the non infinite game, the finite game, because I've read that book as well and listened to Simon talk about that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I could have said, "Jordan Raynor's not coming on my podcast." I could have said, "I'm not interviewing David Allen, because my book's better than David Allen." But you wrote a fantastic book, dude, a great book with lots of things that I didn't cover and didn't think of covering. David Allen is a genius, he's a guru, Cal Newport. So it's like, am I going to have a scarcity mentality or am I going to have an abundance mentality? And as we record this, your book is coming out very soon. And I know you are going to knock me off of number one and you know what I'm going to do that day? Oh, I believe that, man. I believe that. I'm like, I'm going to celebrate that. I'm going to celebrate Jordan. We have a friendship and it goes beyond who is number one, or who is number two, or who's number eight, or who's number 879 on some list somewhere very deep in the annals of Amazon. There's 10 million books out there, like come on.

Jordan Raynor:

This is so good. And I would just share one more thing because I think all leaders, not just authors struggle with this. Authors struggle with it more because the rankings are public and updated every other hour.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, every hour. And they're not quite accurate because I'm sure I sold more than that. But anyway, keep going, yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

Exactly. But now, here's the deal, even when you reach number one, you're there for a day, right? It's such a dumb game to play, it's-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it is a dumb game.

Jordan Raynor:

... not rational, it's not rational.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we were talking before we recorded too. I had some friends who released books the same month as mine and a couple of them hit the New York Times list. And I thought, "How am I going to be?" Because my book was the category of sales that could have hit the list, but it's magical. It's like, I don't know how it goes there. And I had a friend who hit the list and I promoted his book. So what did I do? It was just a tinge, just that little phantom pain of jealousy. I'm like, "You go text him and congratulate him." So I did it publicly, but I also did it privately.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I'm just like, "Dude, I am so excited for you. That's so good." And I feel like every time I celebrate someone else, that little selfish part of me dies a little bit more. I don't know whether that resonates with you, but I think if you celebrate people publicly, it just kills that envy. And it's not a scarcity mindset and we are playing, not for top spot, but for a much bigger infinite game. And if it makes a difference in the lives of however many people, then you're good for it. But I mean, you saw that in business, definitely, I wish you could say, "Hey, in ministry, nobody struggles with that." Lie, lots of people struggle with that. "He's a better communicator, she's funnier. He's more fit than I am," whatever it happens to be. So I'm just glad we can talk about that.

Jordan Raynor:

I'll leave with this. The parable of the talents, right? Some people are five talents or my buddy, John Mark Comer is a five talent servant. I don't know if I'm five. I might be two, but guess what? At the end of the day, both the guy with five talents of the guy with three talents, two talents, whatever it was, got the same blessing from the heavenly father. "Well done, good and faithful servant." It is not about winning. Success is stewardship, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Jordan Raynor:

Stewarding what God has given us as best as we possibly can. Not being the best, but stewarding just as well as the next guy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have studied that parable so many times and going back to the Greek, it is the exact same wording in the Greek translation. So it's the guy with five, the guy with two, same words. "Well done, my good and faithful servant." It's not like, "Well you got four and this guy got 10. So theoretically, he's more 2X than you." It's like, "Hey, good job." Which also means if I'm the one talent guy, all I have to do is show up with two. I worked hard, I put my one in the ground, I put my one to work and here's two. And what would've happened? We know. It would've been, "Well done, good and faithful servant." So-

Jordan Raynor:

Amen.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... hey, this is good. If that helped anybody who struggles with insecurity or jealousy, I'm glad. And you need to know, I am thrilled you wrote this book. I'm cheering for you. It's called Redeeming Your Time: 7

Biblical Principles for Being Purposeful, Present, and Wildly Productive. Must say there's a big part me that loves the wildly productive part.

Jordan Raynor:

There you go. And don't forget, listeners, Carey's coming back onto The Call to Mastery in a couple of months. So we're excited about that. We're going to be talking about At Your Best. So we're flipping the mic. It's going to be a good talk.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We should talk about it too, because the other thing, and it didn't work out because I'm actually in Maine with my team when this was going to work, yeah. But abundance versus scarcity, you had reached out to me, you're doing a podcast with Mark Batterson that'll release what, in January? It was originally going to be-

Jordan Raynor:

Yeah, December, January. We haven't decided, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... you, me, and Mark were going to do the podcast together, about our three books on productivity. Again, abundance not scarcity.

Jordan Raynor:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I had to bow out, simply because of calendar. But I appreciate the invitation and I will be subscribing to that podcast, just so you know.

Jordan Raynor:

It's going to be a lot of fun, it's going to be a lot of fun.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, Jordan, this is great. It won't be the last time, thanks so much. Congrats on the book. Thanks for helping so many people and thanks for investing in the kingdom and in my leaders and listen today, who hang out over here. We are all better for it.

Jordan Raynor:

Thank you, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, thanks, Jordan, for a fascinating conversation. I love the way that ended too. I thought, "Should I ask him the question?" And yeah, we have been going back and forth in the Amazon rankings. But you know what? I really think this is a good season in life to think about an abundance mentality. And I think that's really, really important. You can figure out that you own a lane and say, "Hey, hey, I wrote the

time management book." Not a lot of humility there. Jordan's book is fantastic, I hope you will check that out. And I thought that it was a fun conversation. So thanks for listening to the very end as we learn most of you do, which is fantastic.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We have transcripts for you. You can find those at [careynieuwhof.com/episode462](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode462). In the meantime, if you haven't subscribed, please do so. Also, coming up, we have Nicky Gumbel, Donald Miller, Mark Sayers, Nona Jones is coming back, Craig Groeschel, Bobby Gruenewald. Who else have we got? I'm so excited to have Jennie Allen and Clay Scroggins back on the podcast. It's going to be an incredible year. Thank you for leaving ratings and reviews. And if you haven't yet checked out what we're doing over at [careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com), my website, I would encourage you to do that. So I'll just give you an analogy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I have listened to the Tim Ferriss Show for years, and years, and years, but only recently begun to head over to his website. And I am blown away by how much I was missing over at Tim's website. Sometimes you'd just have, "Hey, they're my audio friends and I go running with them, or I go to the gym, or cook dinner with them, or do drive time with them." But you never check out a podcasters' other work. And if you haven't done that yet, just go to [careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com), we got a lot there for you. I send out a daily email as well to over 85,000 leaders, just a little dose of daily leadership. And we got some really exciting things coming up next year as well. So you can check that all out over at [careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com). Thanks so much for listening and we'll catch you next time on the podcast. I hope our time together today has helped you thrive in life and leadership.

Announcer:

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