

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 465 of the podcast. It's Carey here, and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. So excited to have Tim Elmore back on the podcast today. Lots to talk about. Do you know that we are approaching 20 million downloads on this podcast, going to drop any week? And we got a way to celebrate, listen to the end to find out how you can win some free stuff on us. Because when we hit a milestone, you guys benefit, you know that. And this 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 today by going to medishare.com/carey and by Red Letter Living. Learn more about their 40 day challenge and get 10 to 40% off church packs. And pastors, you get a free book all at redletterchallenge.com/carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So Tim Elmore is back in the house. He is the founder and CEO of Growing Leaders, an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization created to develop leaders. And since starting Growing Leaders, Tim has spoken to more than 500,000 students, faculty and staff on hundreds of campuses across the country, as well as numerous organizations, including Delta, Chick-fil-A, the Home Depot, The John Maxwell Co, Home Bank, and so many others. And he's taught around the world. His work has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, forbes.com, Investor's Business Daily, The Huffington Post, MSNBC, The Washington Post and so many others. And it's a pleasure to have Tim back.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're going to talk about the leadership landscape. And as you know we're now moving into year three of crisis leadership. It's hard, Tim actually makes the case that leadership, regardless of the pandemic, which never seems to end, is actually much more challenging than it used to be. We'll talk about the lasting impact of crisis on the next generation and then get into a fascinating conversation about paradoxical leadership. So super excited for this episode.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And we want to thank our partners as well. You know it's open enrollment season and that is your dreaded yearly task of figuring out how are we going to pay for healthcare? Well, we all want two things when it comes to healthcare, trust and affordability. With a 98% customer satisfaction rating and an average member savings of 50% you can trust Medi-Share and it's affordable. So they offer access to over 900,000, almost a million healthcare providers and have a long track record. And another thing I love about Medi-Share is that they offer free and unlimited professional virtual counseling sessions to their members. So right now is the time to make the switch, before the year ends. Find out how much you could save by going to medishare.com/carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And today's episode is brought to you by Red Letter Living. Today's pastors have more pressure than ever. The pandemic has forced a huge learning curve with technology required church leaders to

develop creative ways to connect with and shepherd their people. So if you and your staff are feeling burned out and under pressure, you are looking for ways to unite your team, Red Letter Living can help. Here's what one pastor had to say about their 40 day challenge experience, "God is at work. I haven't seen this much excitement about something in a long time, and I'm so encouraged with the number of non-members who are joining in." So if you're looking for growth, if you're looking for unity and you're looking for a way to refocus your church on what matters, check out Red Letter Living's 40 Day Discipleship Challenge. You can learn more about their 40 day challenges and get a 10 to 40% off discount on church packs, and pastors you always get a free book. So head on over to redletterchallenge.com/carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I'm excited to bring you this conversation with Tim, we go all over the place. And yeah, if you're hearing a bit of background noise, if you're really listening, I mean, I normally listen to podcasts when I'm out and about, I'm running, I'm on a bike ride, that kind of thing. But yeah, if you hear some surf and airplanes, yep, still the California studio. Got one or two episodes left here and then it is back up to the snowy north. It has snowed quite a bit. So going back home for Christmas. Anyway, my conversation leaders, with Tim Elmore.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I want to start here. I've heard a lot of people say the last two years have been really, really hard, particularly on younger leaders and teenagers. I mean, school's been disrupted and interrupted, remote work is hard on highly the relational people. You've done a lot of research into Gen Z over the years. What do you think the impact has been on the next generation so far? I mean, here as we move into a new year, it's like, "Oh, this thing still isn't over? Are you kidding me?" What do you think is happening, Tim?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. When I think about the effect of the last two years on Generation Z, I think 2020 was the great accelerator. Whatever was happening slowly just got accelerated. So in regard to Gen Z, I think the mental health issues they were already struggling with, actually got deeper. And I'm not a prophet of doom, I think good things happened as well. Many kids just up and got serving and doing charitable acts and that sort of thing. But in the fall of 2020, the CDC, that we were all following in America, posted a page that said in August of 2020, one out of every four young adults contemplated suicide in the last month.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Tim Elmore:

Not one out of 50, one out of four. That's just-

Carey Nieuwhof:

25%. Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

... unacceptable to me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah. So now maybe they didn't pull out a gun or anything like that, but it crossed their mind, "Maybe I'd like to just end it all." So I do think we look back and we were all saying, "We need to do better at technology." And suddenly we had to do better at technology. We all said, "We need to do diversity equity and inclusion better." Suddenly we had to do diversity equity and inclusion better. I think it just sped everything up, and Gen Z, bless our hearts, in high school and college, were just realizing, "It just got deeper. Some of the challenges I'm facing."

Carey Nieuwhof:

I mean, it's interesting, I spent time... I studied history for a few years in university, Tim, and one of the things I've often thought about, and I think we're living through a moment like that now, I mean the First World War lasted for four years and Second World War for five or six, depending on how you measure. And then the Depression was the better part of a decade. And the only thing that broke that was the Second World War, almost every historian would tell you that. That would've continued indefinitely, if it wasn't for a war time economy. And you think about how that shaped previous generations, grandparents, great-grandparents that kind of thing. Do you think we're in that kind of a psychological psyche shaping moment right now, because this is now moving into year three of deep disruption?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, I do. I do. And I'm just one guy, but here's why I say that, every generation over the last five or six generations can point to a life shaping either tragedy or marvelous event, that was a shaper. For instance, for the Millennials, it was probably September 11th, for us in the US. 9/11 shaped the Millennials. For the Xers, a little bit before them, it was probably Watergate and a president in our country resigning. We'd never seen a president resign. For the Boomers it was probably the assassinations of the 1960s, JFK, MLK, Robert Kennedy. But I think for Gen Z, it's this pandemic. They will never forget at this. It will have shaped them. And just like The Great Depression kids of the 1930s, I think they'll look back and say, "I either developed grit," like The Great Depression kids did or they'll say, "I don't know if I ever got away from this preoccupation with my safety, with my health." And of course, we're pushing for grit. You know what I did, Carey?

Tim Elmore:

I did a book during the pandemic. And I actually interviewed a bunch of people in retirement villages that were 85 to 95 years old, people that lived through The Great Depression.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Tim Elmore:

And every one of them had a similar narrative. They said things like, "Oh, mom and dad worked with our neighbors. And they saw us through. We got together as a community and we worked together." I heard

stories of people that developed resilience and resourcefulness because of the tough time. So what I'm hoping for is if we can lead these kids well, maybe we'll have another generation like those builder generation kids that look back now and say, "Oh, man, I got tougher. I got better because it was harder. I was in a gymnasium for Pete's sake, socially and emotionally." So that's my hope. And we're just going to have to lead them well, to get to through this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Interesting as you share that. And I didn't know you wrote that. I'm going to have to look that up. That sounds absolutely fascinating to me. But it occurs to me, everybody drew together and I think most of us have heard stories like that. I don't know why, and again, you do the research, I ask the questions. So tell me, I could be totally off base on this, but it almost feels like over the last couple of years we haven't drawn together, we've pulled apart.

Carey Nieuwhof:

In other words, it's like it's an, "As for me and my house." It starts with, "I'm going to get toilet paper and I will do it at your expense." Rather than, "Oh, I have a roll, I'll share or something." It sounds stupid now two years later. And, "Oh, I'll just build my backyard out," which I did. Or, "I'm going to take care of myself." Or, "I'm going to get that revenge travel in..." Or, "I'm going to be the mask guy or the anti-mask guy." Or whatever. I mean, do you see that kind of like... I wish I could say I saw a lot of us coming together, but I'm not sure I've seen a lot of that in the last couple of years.

Tim Elmore:

No, you're spot on. Now, this is qualitative data, not quantitative. But as I did focus groups, I heard stories that I got emotional about. One 90 year old guy told me that back in the 1930s, during The Great Depression, he remembers neighbors meeting together, standing together on the street and talking about the fact that, "You're going to grow lettuce, we'll grow carrots. Someone else will grow tomatoes." And they harvested the vegetables they all grew in their individual gardens then went to the Methodist Church down in the basement, and they all shared their vegetables together. Even the people that were able to grow nothing, got to take some of the vegetables, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh. That's so foreign to us today."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it really is.

Tim Elmore:

It does seem like we're polarized and we're making sure we get ours rather than making sure the community gets theirs. Somehow we just-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I got a whole basement full and I don't know about my neighbor, right?

Tim Elmore:

That's right. Yeah. It's true.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Gosh. That's really convicting. And there was an Old Testament moment, I can't give you exact chapter and verse where David did a raid and it was like, "Do the people who go to battle get to share the spoils or does everybody do it?" And it was a defining moment. And he said, "No, everybody gets it." And I don't know that we're there. Tim again, forgive me for not knowing you wrote that. What's the book called and obviously you can get it at everywhere books are sold.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, sure. It was called The Pandemic Population. And it's specifically talking about what do we learn from past pandemics, from past struggles that we can in turn apply today as we lead, particularly the next generation? So yeah, thanks for asking.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Good for you. So that was your lockdown project, was it?

Tim Elmore:

That was fun book... Yeah, that's right. I had nothing else going on. So I thought I'm going to research this and do it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, good for you.

Tim Elmore:

So that was fun.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. You open up your new book and you talk... Tell us a little bit about the new book. Just give us and tell us why you wrote it.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Okay. So the new book is called Eight Paradoxes of Great Leadership. Now I'm so intrigued when I see patterns in culture, you're the same way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Tim Elmore:

One reason we love each other is we love-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Look at the dots and how do they connect?

Tim Elmore:

... to look for patterns. Yeah. That's right. Exactly. So this actually started three years ago in a green room, right before a conference. I was talking to a bunch of other leaders, business leaders. And I

decided to just turn this group of people into a focus group, and I asked them, "Do you all think that leading today is harder than it was when you first got a leadership position?" And Carey, every single one of these leaders said, "Absolutely-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Tim Elmore:

... it is." One of them said, "110%." They got emotional. And I said, "Now, that's funny we would say that because you would think it'd be harder way back in the day, when we didn't know much about leadership, we were new." But everybody stuck to their guns and said, "No, it's harder today." So that started me on a search, why is it more complex, more complicated? Why does it seem harder? Why do we get exhausted just leading a team today? And I'm not saying everybody does, but most people I talked to said, "Man, I'm worn out."

Tim Elmore:

And what I discovered is that there is a higher demand on leaders today by teams. People aren't wicked or evil, but we expect more of leaders. Well, here's a good example, people today bring more education to a team, they're more highly educated than ever before. Gen Z is more educated than the Millennials who are more educated than the Xers, who are more educated than the Boomers. So you come with more education, you think you know what to do. And you're an armchair quarterback on that leader, oftentimes. They bring higher levels of emotion.

Tim Elmore:

So think with me, when I first started my career, the typical mantra of a boss was, "Leave your personal problems at the door. Come and get the work done." That sort of thing. Well, today, I don't know what you're hearing, but I'm hearing, "Bring your whole selves to work."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Tim Elmore:

And that means your emotion and your baggage and your personal life. And I'm not saying that's bad, I'm just saying that's harder for a leader to boost someone that's got a way more on their mind than just getting the work done. I think we bring a higher sense of entitlement today. And I probably sound like a grandpa right now, but we feel entitled to more perks and benefits today than we did 20 years ago from the workplace. So anyway, all that to say, I think leaders haven't seen it happen in a day, but over time we just have more expected of us. And I think part of the solution is our practicing some paradoxes that enable us to read the people before we lead the people and be exactly what they need right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What do you think is driving that? Because I do not disagree with you. I think it is harder. I think people do come in with expectations. You even raise that in your book, you call it entitlement. There's a greater sense of entitlement, "I want vacation not my..." I mean, when I started years ago in leadership, it was like well, you were lucky to get a week your first year. And there was a debate. Do you remember this?

There was a debate about whether you got vacation in the first year or whether you had to work a year to then earn a week or two of vacation.

Tim Elmore:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And people, we have a lot of young leaders on this show who listen to this show and they'd be like, "Excuse me, what planet are you talking about?" But that was like 25 years ago, there was an actual debate of do you have to work a full 52 weeks to get a single day off? And it was a debate.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, you people will say, "That's against human rights or whatever." But no, that was me in my 20s. So why do you think it's changed so much?

Tim Elmore:

Well, let me roll it back real quick, we just made some changes at Growing Leaders. We're now giving unlimited PTO, so unlimited personal time off. So instead of work a year and then you'll get a week, if you're lucky, it's unlimited. Now what we have to do is hire responsible team members where we know they're going to own that job they have and we're not worrying about them taking and too much time out.

Tim Elmore:

But we're hearing Gen Z team members say, "We'd like to work four-day weeks." And I don't think it's because they lack a work ethic, I think they just want to consolidate and get the stuff done so they can enjoy a chunk of time, that's off. We're hearing Gen Z team members say, "I want to get paid the same day I work."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Whoa.

Tim Elmore:

In other words, "At the end of eight hours, I get paid the same day." Let me tell you why they're saying that. They're saying it because many of them are making... They're just having a tough time making ends meet and they need the cash at the end of the day. And I feel badly for them because of that. But-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I thought you were going to say Bitcoin investments.

Tim Elmore:

... boy, this could be a new... Yeah. Well-

Carey Nieuwhof:

"We're investing daily."

Tim Elmore:

... that could be part of the issue right there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's traded 24/7.

Tim Elmore:

That's right. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Just a bad joke, Tim.

Tim Elmore:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Keep going.

Tim Elmore:

No that's okay. Okay. So to answer your question, why is this? I don't think there's one reason. It's probably a perfect storm of reasons, but one for sure is we have a smartphone in our hand today, every day, all day. And we are exposed to social media where we read the dirt on anybody, even our leaders, especially me or you the leader. So I think part of it is we feel like we know more than ever. We are, we're exposed to more. So I think part of that just makes us demand more like, "I'm in the know. I'm not in the dark, I'm in the know." So I really do think we're going to... The point of the book is we're going to have to lead in a different way. That's probably not rocket science for any of your listeners. But I think part of that difference is developing social and emotional skill sets that we didn't need as much 25 years ago, but we have to have them today to differentiate ourselves from the mediocre team or the mediocre organization.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I just want to underscore that for a minute. I was having a conversation with one of my sons this morning and we're in California. I've been here for about a month and my kids flew in over the last week to join us. And it's funny, because I think of myself as fairly tech savvy and I have all the devices, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But when they came in, they just had a whole different mindset. So we're staying by the ocean, just north of San Diego and within 24 hours my oldest son had figured out how to rent a motorcycle for a few days. And then all of a sudden we were going out to the desert and we were going to go find the Joshua Tree. And then they were renting an Airstream trailer that they found on Airbnb and all this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And again, I have the same phone and I could have found the same things, but I was saying to my youngest son, "I just don't think of that stuff when I travel. To rent a motorcycle or whatever. I might look into doing an excursion or something like that." We wanted to go see kayaking, blah, blah, blah. But it is a different mindset. And when you're native to the technology, rather than adapting to the technology, you're going to find different sites. You're going to see things differently. And I think people bring that to the workplace as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And funny that you guys did unlimited personal time off, we, having read Netflix's No Rules Rules. And I interviewed Erin Meyer on this show, the co-author of that book along with Reed Hastings, we debated it as a team and said, "Yeah, okay, if you have responsible people," and there's a whole ecosystem to it, I encourage people to please read the book or listen to the whole episode, at least. But yeah, we have no limit to vacation and we don't really have an expense policy and it's do the responsible thing, but there are things that are shifting as well. Now, you said something really interesting. You have this whole list in the book where you talk about all the leaders who stepped down. There has been a Great resignation, and we've talked about that, it seems ad nauseum on my channels. But you're saying there's been a great exit for a lot of prominent CEOs too. Can you tell us what? And then can you tell us why? Why is that happening?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah. It's uncanny to me. So beginning in late 2019, and then certainly through the year 2020, there was a great revolving door of CEOs. In fact, Fortune magazine covered a feature article called The Great CEO Exodus of 2020. And it was right after the first quarter of that year, we saw, really a ridiculous amount of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. The CEO of Disney stepped down, the CEO of IBM stepped down, the CEO of Hulu, Uber Eats, Harley Davidson. The list just went on and on and on. And as I read this data, I thought, "What is going on?"

Tim Elmore:

But I think it goes back partly Carey, to what we just talked about. I think a lot of leaders said, "I can't do this anymore. I've earned enough cash and I'm going to throw in the towel. I've done my time." And so way before retirement age, they thought, "I'm going to repurpose my life." And I'm not saying that's evil, I'm just saying, boy, I think the time now, it's not time to step back. It's time to step up. And I'm imploring people in this book, The Eight Paradoxes of Great Leadership, let's practice these social and emotional intelligence skill sets that will keep us in the game and make us just better for staying there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, it's a great framing. And there are a lot of business leaders who listen to this podcast and they're like, "Yeah, I've got stock options." And then there's a whole bunch of pastors who are like, "Yeah, on the financial picture I'm not doing quite as well as the Fortune 500 people. I think I'm here for a while longer." But again, the work I do with Barna, they just had a recent poll that showed that 38% of pastors are now thinking of leaving ministry, not their position, but full-time vocational ministry. And that's up from 29% 10 months earlier. So what you're saying is a really important point.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, you make a similar argument. Mark Sayers will be on the show or has been on the show to talk about leadership moving from complicated to complex. And you both use the exact same terminology.

And to be honest, I always thought of those two words as almost synonyms, but you make a distinction between complicated and complex. And I think it's salient to our conversation today and to the leadership landscape. What is the difference between complicated leadership and complex leadership?

Tim Elmore:

Okay. Yeah. Well, both are hard. So if you're taking notes, listeners H-A-R-D, but here's the difference, a complicated day or problem might be, let's say a kid in a math class, who's looking up at the chalkboard and the teacher has written an equation up on the chalkboard, he dozes off for five minutes, wakes back up the problem is still complicated. No harder, no easier than it was five minutes ago. Complex is let's say you're an air traffic controller and you doze off there for five minutes. Well, now you wake back up five minutes later, I mean, the problem has just gotten, it's just evolved. You know what I'm saying? And I think that's what's happened, problems have evolved, not just stayed the same. It'd be one thing to say, same problem I had last year and I'm getting closer. It just evolves if we step back.

Tim Elmore:

I talked to leaders, Carey over the last year that said, "I feel like I made a year's worth of decisions in one month." And part of it was the COVID thing, the new variant, then another variant, mask back on, stay away. No, come in. And I feel a lot... You'll love this, I talked to one CEO that said, "I feel like I have to be a cheerleader, a coach, a motivational speaker, a strategist and a therapist. All in one." And probably that's hyperboly perhaps, but I'm just feeling like a lot of leaders are going, "I don't know if I can do this any longer." And by the way, I think some leaders are going, "I want to get a pandemic proof job. So maybe I'll become my own boss and do a consulting and don't work for anybody. Don't work for a church." And I think some people are actually doing that, "I'm getting a pandemic proof job that I can work out of my house and do it solo."

Carey Nieuwhof:

And that might pandemic proof you, but it's not going to complex proof you. The world is-

Tim Elmore:

That's right. I agree.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... infinitely more complex than it was. And when you start thinking about metaverse, you start thinking about Web3, you start looking at the decentralization that is right around the corner, that's only going to become more complex, which leads us to your premise, that what we need or what we need to become is paradoxical leaders. Can you define that? What is a paradoxical leader, Tim?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, first and foremost, paradox is a word we all know, but maybe we didn't use it yesterday in a conversation. So a paradox is a seemingly contradictory proposition that when two parts or three parts come together, we think, "That couldn't go together." But after further digging, you realize, "Oh, that does go together." So one example I often use is I live in Atlanta, Georgia. During the quarantine, when we all went home in 2020, there were fewer cars on the road driving around, but accidents, car accidents went up. And that seems like a paradox, how could that be? Well, you know

what happened? Because there were fewer cars on the road, people drove more recklessly. They felt, "I don't need to be careful." So I mean, now when you understand that you go, "Of course."

Tim Elmore:

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. And we may not touch on all eight, but I want to get to the majority of them, Tim. And when I read what you were writing, it really resonated with me. So when you think about the eight paradoxes of great leadership, I think the first one might be confidence and humility. Which when I read that, I'm like, "Oh, yeah, that actually resolves a lot of the tension that I have felt trying to talk about." I talk about the leadership insecurity a lot, and you get the confident leader, you get the, what's the word I'm looking for? You get the narcissistic leader, but then you also get the humble leader who says, "I'm humble," but they don't really accomplish anything. Or they're actually just very uncertain. So walk us through that, because I think that's a place to start. How do you lead inside the paradox of confidence and humility?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. It's a great question. So let me see if I can summarize this in a minute here. I think leaders have to possess inspiring confidence. I don't think people join a team unless they feel like the leader's confident he or she can take us to a new mountain. But I think the great ones express that confidence with palpable humility.

Tim Elmore:

In today's complex world, people look for anyone with a clear sense of confidence. And yet at the same time, people demand that leader's confidence doesn't blind them to their own humanity. In other words, if I see a leader that's always confident I go, "Whoa, what are you smoking? You're not that good." You know what I'm saying? And we start thinking, "Oh, my gosh, he's not even aware of his own flaws, his own humanity." But when I have confidence, we can do it, but my humility expresses, "But I know we can't do it unless we work together. I need your input. I need you to speak into this." Oh, my gosh. It's so winsome. So Carey, in every one of these chapters on each of these paradoxes, I give a case study. And my case study on this one was Bob Iger-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. From Disney.

Tim Elmore:

... the former CEO of Disney. When Bob Iger took over, you might know his story well, he wrote an autobiography, but Bob said, "I did not know what I was doing. I had never led an enterprise like Disney, that sold plush toys, theme park tickets, animated movies." They're into everything. And so he said, "I had to meet with the people I was leading and ask them, "What the heck are we doing?" And so you can imagine how humbling that was. He would sit down... So imagine you sit down going, "I don't know what I'm doing." But he said-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I feel like that everyday, but go ahead. Keep going.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, yeah. No, that's a whole nother podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I tell my team, "I don't understand the problem, you solve it."

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. That's right. Yeah, exactly. So I've got a quote from Bob, let me bring it up and I want to read it because it's so helpful. Bob said, "You have to be humble. And you can't pretend to be someone you're not or to know something you don't. You're also in a position of leadership though. So you can't let humility prevent you from leading. It's a fine line and something I preach today. You have to ask the questions you need to ask, admit without apology what you don't understand and do the work to learn what you need to learn as quickly as you can." Well, Bob Iger was able to do something that Michael Eisner was unable to do. You might remember Michael Eisner was the CEO-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Before him. Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

... right before Bob. So Michael was kicked off the team as CEO by the board at Disney, because he started showing, if I can just be candid and blunt here, a pompous, arrogant, I know everything attitude. And the board said, "No, you don't. You're out of here." So Michael had been in dialogue with Steve Jobs to try to purchase Pixar, but it was two egos, if I can just be blunt here. You can imagine the ego in the room-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, gosh. Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

... that was when those two guys met. So it was like this contest every time. And it ended up in an impasse every time. So when Bob Iger took over, he lets a little time pass. He lets the dust settle from the Eisner regime, but then he calls up Steve Jobs and says, "Steve," I'm paraphrasing. But he says, "Steve, it's Bob Iger. I'm the new guy in town at Disney." He said, "I know this may sound like a crazy idea, but I know you and Michael tried to talk through partnering and it didn't work out. I just can't help but think Steve, that we just might be better together." And Steve Jobs's first words back were, "That's not a crazy idea." And so because he entered with humility-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Tim Elmore:

... and starts with, "This might be a crazy idea." Someone else leans in and goes, "That's not a crazy idea." And so the two of them start talking together. Well, Bob's humility was just winsome. In fact, so winsome, he became one of Steve's closest friends and when Steve Jobs died, you remember not long

ago, there was just a handful of people at that memorial service and Bob Iger and his wife were two of those people. And I think it was his humility and his confidence that won this technology icon over named Steve Jobs, and they bought Pixar. Now, here's the cool thing, sorry about monopolizing this-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, this is great.

Tim Elmore:

... conversation here, Carey. But here's what made this confidence, humility thing so extraordinary. So Disney actually purchases Pixar, which is quite a feat in itself. But then as they welcome Pixar onto the larger team, they put Pixar in charge of all of Disney Animation. So, "I own you, but would you tell us what to do?" That is confidence and humility right there, and I just am blown away when I see a leader that's able to something like that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, that's a great story. And I think it was under Iger that there was explosive growth at Disney, too. They got into the streaming world and-

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Marvel.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Marvel and all the acquisitions. Did-

Tim Elmore:

Lucas Films.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, Lucas Films. I was going to say I think Star Wars came under his regime. I know we have a lot of Disney fans out there who will correct me if I'm wrong. Because they know a lot more about it than I do.

Tim Elmore:

That's right. We'll get post.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So confident humility. I mean, there's a well worn quote by C. S. Lewis who says, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less often." So for a leader, who's not 100% sure, okay, well, what is humility and what is appropriate confidence? So let me pack this out for you, when I was starting out as a communicator, one of the things you have to work through is, I probably have a natural gift for communication, but in my 30s I would be told, "Oh, that was a great sermon." And I would say, "No, it wasn't." Or it would be I'd just blow it off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I realized as I matured and got older, "Okay. That's false humility." Because what if it was a good message? What if God actually used it? On the other hand, arrogance is, "Look at how amazing I am and look at how great I am." And I can swing in that direction as well if I'm not careful and stay grounded and the whole deal. So when you think about humility and confidence, is there any further clarification or definition you want to give leaders? Because there is a false humility that isn't helping anybody. And then there's a confidence that can be too much of a strut, that again is going to become counterproductive.

Tim Elmore:

Well, I do want to answer your question but the first thing that comes to my mind makes me smile. I have never met a Canadian that's not humble.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh.

Tim Elmore:

I think part of your humility Carey, is you're Canadian. You're just [crosstalk 00:35:12].

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're right, I'm not that good, I just was born on the other side of the border.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, yeah. Not that good. That's right. Yeah. Yeah. That's right. And I rarely meet an American that's not too confident. I think we just are overconfident in the United States. No. But in all seriousness, here's what I would say, I've come to believe that my confidence makes my leadership believable. But my humility makes my confidence believable.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow. So here's what I mean by that, yeah. Yeah. I don't think people really believe I can lead them unless I got a sense of, "I think we can pull this off." They've got to hear their leader say that or they're going to be scared. But my humility steps in right away and lets them know, but I'm not so arrogant that I think I can do this all alone or I can do this quickly or easily. So I feel like when you have both, you become a human being that perhaps knows, "Together, we can do this." So can I give you my personal homework assignment on this one?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Please, yeah.

Tim Elmore:

I gave myself an assignment, every one of these paradoxes. This one came to me from two board members that I respect and I was talking to them about this very thing and they said, "You should try this." When I'm in a meeting, Carey, and I'm in a debate of some kind, I now try to speak as if I believe I'm right. But I want to listen as if I believe I'm wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ooh, that's good.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. So I always want to speak, I mean, I don't want to ever speak and make people go, "Do you even believe what you're saying?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right, right.

Tim Elmore:

But if I listen, I sometimes have a hard time listening without just making it a time to think what I'm going to say next. So if I'm listening as if I believe I'm wrong, I'm really tuning in to that other person. I'm really thinking, "Man, you've probably got something to share." Do you know what that communicates to someone? Oh, it communicates value and, "Oh, my gosh, I'm 22, but this 62 year old guy is listening to me." So I just feel like that's been wonderful for me with my family, with my team at Growing Leaders. And generally when I'm at a supermarket, any given day and talking to a stranger.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a great mantra. And I've seen this in church leadership in particular, but humility that goes nowhere isn't helpful. You know what I mean? You have to have direction behind that. And I think humility is great. I will follow a humble person over an arrogant person any day. And boldness that doesn't listen can easily be misdirected. Okay. So let's, if we would, and if this is a go nowhere just say so and we can move to another paradox. But insecurity is a big issue for a lot of leaders. Any thoughts on insecurity? Because somewhere underneath this tension, this paradox between boldness and humility, I think is insecurity. And most of the leaders I know are insecure and that's been a battle for me too. So how does insecurity fit in?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Oh, gosh. That's a loaded question, I'm going to do my best. First of all, I wholeheartedly agree with you, Carey, emotional security is a must if you're going to practice this paradox. Has little to do with your IQ, has a lot to do with your EQ. So just to be clear, I don't need to be smarter to be a better leader. Well, I might need to be, but that's a whole nother podcast. But I don't think the problem is, "I'm not smart enough to be a leader." We used to say 50 years ago, when I say we, the universities that research leadership used to say, "The person with the highest IQ, they get to be the PhD leader in the room." Today, I know a lot of organizations, great ones that would say, "The CEO is not the smartest person, but they're so secure in letting talented people, even more talented people than they are, speak into an issue and they're not threatened by it." So that's why this is so cool and so needed.

Tim Elmore:

So I truly believe it when I say, "I'm not the smartest person at my nonprofit, Growing Leaders." I'm not. I'm secure enough to say, "Steve is way better at X, Y, Z. Sean is way better at A, B, C. Marcia is way better at H, G, F." Or whatever. Those kinds of things. So my strength isn't in, "Ooh, I got a great idea. Everybody's going to listen to me." It's I'm okay saying to all of those people, and by the way, even at home to my wife, "Sweetheart, you are so better than I am at this. Could I be your support and have you do this?" So I even think being a spiritual leader in the home doesn't mean I'm the boss of everything. It

means I'm secure enough to assume responsibility for the health of this relationship and to make sure we get some work, even if my children and my wife actually are better than I am at getting certain things done. That's what I would say to that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I'll give you an example of that, if I can for just seconds, see if it resonates or not, but we were talking before we started recording, I went to a Lakers game last night, first Lakers game I've ever been and it was interesting. I'm here with my kids and their girlfriends and my wife. And I've gotten to know Rob Pelinka over the last year. So that's been great. And I interviewed him on my podcast, just because it's so fresh. I know it's Episode 393. And we all on the way north to LA last night listened to the interview with Rob and re-listened, in my case. But I thought, "You guys are going to meet Rob tonight and I want you to have a little bit of background," and that kind of thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And the thing as I re-listened to his interview that struck me, was his humility. He had credible ability. He was Kobe's agent, he's GM of the Lakers. And I'm not a sports guy. So I think I probably upset a lot of people by going to the Lakers game last night and not appreciating what a treasure it was, but it was a treasure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I'm sitting there in the stands, we had incredible seats. Thank you, Rob. And he came over just to say hello for a few minutes, game days is really, really busy and I'm watching him lead and you got LeBron and you got Anthony Davis and J-Lo and Ben Affleck were there that night. They were sitting a few rows ahead of us.

Tim Elmore:

Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And you've got this show and then you've got world class entertainment and the world is watching and I'm like, "How do you lead that?" So I am watching basketball, but I'm thinking, "How do you lead that?" And as you're describing, confidence and humility. It occurs to me that really Rob's humility is such, and I hope I'm not embarrassing Rob, because I know he listens to the show, but it has to be humility to do that. Because if you're going head to head with LeBron James or you're going head to head with a bunch of other people and you have to sometimes, like in negotiations or whatever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But I would think that one of the reasons he is widely respected for being as good at what he does as he is, that it's that humility. And in many ways, I wonder if you're insecure, you think, "Well, humility is going to make me weaker." Actually. It makes you stronger. End of excurses. I don't know, does that resonate at all? I'm just trying to put-

Tim Elmore:

Absolutely, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... a picture together, and I know I've heard so much about that episode with Rob over the last year from so many listeners in so many different areas, hopefully that puts a little picture in people's minds of what that could look like, confidence and humility. In addition to the helpful pictures that you painted, Tim.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. It's spot on, I think. Yeah. Rob obviously is secure enough that he doesn't have to project his self worth. He can be humble. And yet everybody knows, that guy's large and in charge-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

... of one of the greatest sports franchises in the NBA. That's cool. I love it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Yes. And I want to be more like that. So let's talk about vision and blind spots. That's another paradox of great leadership. So we all have blind spots, but you also have to have vision. Walk us down that one, Tim.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. So this one would be one that a typical leader might say, "That's impossible." Vision and blind spots? Blind spots are bad, vision's good. But I actually believe that, well, I believe because I know the people I've spoken to that are CEOs or senior pastors or leaders of some organization, they have said both were leveraged by leadership. So here's how both are leveraged, vision, you know is necessary. Vision gives a team direction to pursue, but blind spots may be the very motivator that enables them to do it in a brand new way.

Tim Elmore:

So think with me about all the leaders that you might have talked to, that would say, "Man, if I had known way back then what I know now, I would've never started this thing." How many times have we said that? And what we were really saying is, "I had a number of blind spots that I was just dumb enough to keep going and try a new thing that nobody had ever tried or invent a new product that nobody had ever invented, try a new service that nobody ever tried. And it was the very blind spot that gave me an innovative way to do it." So maybe the best way to say what I'm trying to say is with my case study here. So my case study on this one is Sara Blakely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah, Spanx.

Tim Elmore:

So you probably know Sara's name, Sara... Yeah. The founder of Spanx. So she just sold a good portion of her company and gave every employee \$10,000 and a free trip anywhere in the world. It's just amazing

what she's done. But Sara's story is a story of vision and blind spots. So more than 20 years ago, about 20 years ago, she graduates from Florida State University and her first job out of college Carey, is selling fax machines. You remember fax machines? Door to door-

Tim Elmore:

... store to store. Yeah, I know. I know. But she was in the hot Florida sun with stockings on, pantyhose on and high heel shoes. And she said, "They looked bad. They felt bad. I knew there was another way." Fast forward, she invents this thing she calls Spanx, which was a combination of stockings and a girdle, shapewear. It was a new industry, shapewear.

Tim Elmore:

Now she invents this product, finds a manufacturer to put it together. But then she starts thinking, "How am I going to get this distributed all over the country?" And she ends up calling an executive at Neiman Marcus department store, gets a quick meeting, a 10 minute meeting, flies over, five minutes into this meeting, and by the way, it's a female executive. She made sure it was a lady. She's talking to this lady and she's explaining Spanx and she's realizing, "I am not getting anywhere. This is not convincing her. She's heard 50 presentations today." So Sara stands up and says, "Would you follow me?" And the lady says, "I beg your pardon?" She said, "Would you follow me into the restroom please?" And she walks into the restroom. I'm not joking. And right there in front of this lady, she tries her Spanx on. Sold. Sold. Ladies and gentlemen, sold. Well, because immediately you see what they can do.

Tim Elmore:

And so the female executive says, "We're going to beta test this in a dozen stores." Sara calls up all of her friends that happen to live in the cities where those stores are located. She sends them money and says, "Buy out all the Spanx." She's not stupid. She's good. Well, they start selling. And first thing you know, Bloomingdale's and other department stores start selling it and she takes off, and she's now a billionaire.

Tim Elmore:

Tim Elmore:

Well, Sara looks back and even says, and I quote her in this book because she's in Atlanta, Georgia, she's in the same city I live in. She'll say, "It was the very things I did not know that catapulted me toward my goal. I now say thank God I didn't know those things." Carey, you know this, if you know too much, you have what Donald Miller calls the curse of knowledge. Remember he used to use that term. Maybe he still does, the curse of knowledge. Knowing too much causes you to get stuck in the way we did it in 2020, when we need to know how do you do it in 2022? Or 2023. So sometimes the stuff we learn is the very enemy of what we need to learn. So that's why this paradox is so vital for leaders to practice, blind spots and vision.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So let me ask you, because I agree with that and it's a great name to something that I've talked about, not publicly, but just privately with leaders I coach and they'll often ask me about the early days of my leadership where within five years we had sold historic buildings, amalgamated three congregations,

entered into a multimillion dollar building project, inter-denomination where that wasn't done. And looking back on it now it's like, I call it I was stupid. I didn't know you couldn't do it. And people would tell me, "You couldn't do it," but I just went ahead and did it. And it worked. And same with the leadership podcast, it's like, "Well, I'll just try it. blah, blah, blah." And then it just works. And what happens now is as you get better at something you start to analyze, you have dashboards, you have KPIs, you have all that stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Are there a set of disciplines, Tim, to help keep you stupid? If I can put it that way to keep you with that entrepreneurial, "I don't really know whether this is going to work," and what makes this more complicated to get back to what we talked about earlier is now you have data and case studies available that we didn't have 25 years ago because information was scarce then. So now you can analyze yourself to death. How do you cultivate that discipline, two, three decades into leadership?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah. It's a great question. So in the chapter I do talk about this and I talk about the art of maintaining rookie smarts. You were just describing rookie smarts. You had some rookie smarts in podcasts and church and so many other things. Everything outside of law, which is what you studied. So you were a rookie at all these other things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Tim Elmore:

So am I.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mostly don't know what I'm doing.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. No, there's a lot of truth to that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're pivoting this year.

Tim Elmore:

No. I know. There's that humility coming-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, and I really, when we onboard people on our team and they're, "So it seems really big on the outside." It's like, we actually don't know what we're doing. That's the reality, but it works and we're connecting and we're having fun and we're hopefully making a difference. So what are the disciplines to keep rookie smarts?

Tim Elmore:

Okay. Yeah. So there's a handful of them, and I don't know if I remember all of them, but there's a couple of big ideas that might be helpful right here. One is I think, as I continue in the same industry that I'm in, I need to continue to meet with and interview people that are in other industries. Some of the best ideas that are introduced to what you do or what I do are going to come, not from the same industry, we've all gotten stuck. This is how we make widgets, on the assembly line.

Tim Elmore:

So I think, well, the classic story that you know very well, because you just interviewed, Erin is the Reed Hastings' story and Netflix. So you know that story, Netflix, Reed came up with it, I think and you may correct me here, but Reed came up with it in 1997 when he'd returned a video cassette back to a blockbuster video store and got this huge fine. And of course on his drive home, he had two thoughts in his mind, number one, "How am I going to tell my wife I just got this big fine for this lost video cassette?" But then number two, he thought, "There's got to be a better way to do home entertainment."

Tim Elmore:

And that was when Reed began to see that the internet was getting big and that maybe we could do flicks on the internet, hence Netflix. He takes the idea to Blockbuster and they go, "Nah, we got this." What a bad move. Now what the problem was, was they had mastered video cassettes. They hadn't mastered the larger picture home entertainment. Had they had the eye on the outcome, not the method, they might have been open. So rookie smarts taught Reed, "Oh, well, I'll get another industry." And it was basically online videos and you know the rest of the story, the rest is history. But what's crazy to me is he actually took the idea to Blockbuster and they turned him down. And now I don't even know if there's maybe one Blockbuster video store in all of the world right now or something like that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I heard that there is-

Tim Elmore:

It's crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... one left, but yeah, the chain went bankrupt over a decade ago and everything and it's fascinating. I've got to have Scott Beck back on because he scaled Blockbuster, but it was after he sold Blockbuster to, I think it was Viacom or something like that, a decade in-

Tim Elmore:

Interesting. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... and it was that conglomerate that made that decision, which is good. Okay. Man, this is fun. I want to touch on one or two more, stubborn and open-minded.

Tim Elmore:

Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Ooh. Stubborn and open-minded.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah. This one is, when I've talked to people, this is often the favorite because they go, "I need this desperately and I don't know how to do it." Because isn't it true? Carey, we tend to be one or the other. We tend to be very open-minded people or we tend to be very stubborn people. And for me, I tend to be a little bit more stubborn. That's just my hard wiring. What would you say you are more, open-minded or stubborn?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Definitely stubborn. Stubborn child. I come from Dutch stock, so anybody who's got Dutch stock. There's wooden shoes, wooden head, wouldn't listen. So there's definitely an aspect of that, but one I was born in Canada, but it's Dutch back for centuries and centuries. And so one of my goals, one of my stated goals is, now that I'm well into my 50s is I want to become more open every year. There are certain convictions. There are times where I've gotten too, I can look back on a couple of decisions in 2022 where I'm like, "I was too open-minded on that. My gut told me this wasn't going to work and I let other people win." And I'm like, "Eh, we should have just done it the way I thought we should have done it."

Carey Nieuwhof:

But then on the other hand, that's always the case, your gut isn't accurate. And I also realize, I think in the changing leadership landscape, as we talked about in the beginning with the demands and everything that come in, if you're a closed leader, you are not going to keep other leaders on your team, as our mutual friend, Andy Stanley says, "Leaders who refuse to listen will eventually be surrounded by people with nothing to say." And I think that's very true.

Tim Elmore:

Yes. Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I'm very actively trying to manage, so you got an active student here, my gut, my, "Mmm, I think we need to go this way," versus, "But I'm open." And I also realize that there's often a three decade gap now between me and my staff and they just see things differently than I do. So help me in the middle of this mess. What do I do?

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Well, I would say I could summarize this one best by saying leaders will never reach a goal without being strong-willed. In fact, that may be a better word than stubborn, strong-willed. Okay. Without a strong will, obstacles are going to stop them. At the same time, they be arrogant to think they have all the answers. They must be open to voices of counsel, to flex, to adapt to new and changing realities. So Coach K at Duke University said it this way. I love what he said. He said, "The most incredibly interesting thing about being a leader is what adjustments you make and how you make them while keeping your core principles alive and well." So I think when you're stubborn, you have a chance of reaching your

goal. When you're open-minded, you have a chance of taking others with you. And that's what this boils down to.

Tim Elmore:

So it's hard, but my case study on this one is Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A. So real quick, his story is quite amazing. He had one restaurant for 10 years, not 50, not 100, not 200, one restaurant. And he just really tweaked the recipe, both for his food and for his organization. Truett Cathy is a brilliant example of stubborn and open-minded. You know the stubborn part, he had a certain and set of values that he would not compromise. One of them that everybody knows Chick-fil-A for is closed on Sunday. They are not open on that day. For some fast food restaurants, Sunday is the number one sales day of the week. I mean, McDonald's would never give up Sundays, at all. But he said, "No, that's not a day you're going to work for me. You're going to be home with your family in worship. I'm not going to tell you how to worship, who to worship or what family to spend time with, but you're going to be not working for me."

Tim Elmore:

Well, that created scarcity. Everybody knows you can't go to Chick-fil-A on Sunday. Let's go every other day or whatever. And I think that's what they're doing. So Truett Cathy has a set of core beliefs that he's stubborn about, but everything else he was so open on. He was open about his people. In fact, I would say this, people is a great example. One of his core was, believe in your people. He would err on the side of believing in his people. But if anyone of those people crossed a line, with his values, they're out of there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Tim Elmore:

They're gone. Truett Cathy has been known to drive up to another state and fire a Chick-fil-A operator if they were open on Sunday. And that's happened by the way, Chick-fil-A operator open up on Sunday, somebody calls, Truett and says, "Hey, one of your restaurants is open on Sunday." And he went up [crosstalk 00:58:02].

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm going to Arkansas.

Tim Elmore:

So I'll stop there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, yeah, exactly. That's right. So my point is I loved, really actually talking to Truett about this before he passed away, but then talking to Dan, his son and Tim Tassopoulos, the president, Mark Miller-

Carey Nieuwhof:

All great people.

Tim Elmore:

... Bill Dunphy, so many great executives, that just great men. Yeah. And I learned a bunch on this one because this is one I need to do better at myself.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So stubborn and open-mindedness. Okay. Let's talk about one more before we wrap up, high standards and gracious forgiveness. That one really popped to me because I would say too, this is where I love the audience that we have. We try to bring the best of the business world to the church world and the best of the church world to the business world. I would say the business world, if it has an Achilles heel is high standards and very little gracious forgiveness. And the church world is the opposite, it's like lots of gracious forgiveness and no standards. It's like, "Guys, you're really nice, but this is terrible." Tell us about that.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Well, I think you hit the nail on the head just there. We tend to think if you're going to offer any forgiveness, you're going to get mediocre at best, from people. Because they know, they're going to be let off the hook. But you're absolutely right, in many corporations it's do or die, dog eat dog and you dare not try something too risky because if you do it wrong, you're going to get fired. And it's just awful.

Tim Elmore:

So my case study on this one, I actually thought first of using John Maxwell because I worked for John Maxwell for 20 years and I felt like he did this one well. But I actually picked a historical leader that might surprise you. My case study on this one was Harriet Tubman.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Tim Elmore:

The leader of the Underground Railroad-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes.

Tim Elmore:

... during the United States Civil War. Yeah. So real quick, her story might be intriguing to your listeners. So Harriet Tubman was this tiny little lady, probably, 4'11" at best. And she was a slave in Maryland and she got out of slavery. She escaped. But yet instead of just enjoying her freedom in the north, she decided to go back, start this underground railroad. And she rescued hundreds of slaves out of slavery before the Civil War was fought and ended and freed all slaves.

Tim Elmore:

So here's how she did it. When she would gather a group of slaves, I know this is so hard to talk about because it's so wrong. But these were, generally speaking, African-American people that it was just so wrong, but they were working cotton fields in the south, generally speaking. She would bring them out to a place and she'd talk to them about what they were going to do. The route they were going to take up to New York or up to Toronto or wherever they were going. Along the way, she was describing a do or die. You had to be quiet, you had to do this, go here, turn left, stop talking. The whole thing.

Tim Elmore:

Well, along the way, almost every single trip, one of those slaves said, "I can't do this anymore. I'm out of here." And Harriet Tubman would say, "You're not leaving." And she got very radical in her leadership. In fact, dare I say, she would hold a gun to their head Carey, and say, "You try to leave, you're going to get a bullet through your head." And I know this, again, this is so wrong, but here's why she had to do that. She thought, "If you leave, you're going to get caught. You're going to tell everybody else, because they're going to talk it out of you, and we're all going to get killed."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah.

Tim Elmore:

So she would have that high standard and hold a gun to their head to keep the standard. When they would repent essentially and say, "Okay, I'm in, I'm in, I'm in, I'm going to do it." She would sit down with them. This is a powerful story. She would sit down with them and say, "You're totally forgiven. Let's do this together." And she would extend forgiveness. And it was just so amazing. So Carey, I actually developed a habitude off of this great truth. And if you don't mind, I want to-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Please.

Tim Elmore:

... share it real quick right now, because I think it will be a handle for listeners. I call it the Golden Gate paradox. The Golden Gate paradox. So you're sitting in California right now, you know just north of you, is the Golden Gate Bridge in-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hmm beautiful.

Tim Elmore:

... San Francisco. That bridge was a feat of engineering that happened in the 1930s during The Great Depression. Because it was built during The Great Depression, a lot of guys signed up for the job that weren't bridge builders. They were just everyday guys out of work. And so they had a lot of, can I just say it, lay people, putting bolts in this big steel bridge and guys were falling to their death. It a very scary enterprise, as you can imagine.

Tim Elmore:

So the workers start talking to the foreman, a guy named Straus and they begged him to stop early on and put a safety net in there. Well, Straus thought it over and thought, "Oh, my gosh, if we have to buy a safety net, we're going to go over budget. So we're not going to be on budget and we're going to take way longer, because it's going to take a long time to build this thing. We're not going to finish on time. We're not going to finish on budget." But thankfully Mr. Straus thought, "I got to do this for the sake of the people." He put this \$300,000 safety net in and back then, you know that was a lot of money. Well, he puts it in assuming now, forget the budget, forget the time. But actually the paradox was, they finished on time and under budget.

Tim Elmore:

Here's why. As those guys start putting bolts in, they no longer had to worry about their safety and survival, they were worrying about succeeding. They didn't have to worry about falling anymore because they would bounce into a net and pop back up. There were 19 people that joined what they called the Half Way to Hell Club, because they had fallen into a net and bounced back up and went back to work. And I hope I'm not losing you in this story, but what was so cool was the very safety net that took time to build was what saved them and put that thing on a fast track to get done on time.

Tim Elmore:

And I feel like there's an application for us today. Leaders have to say, "Here's a high standard. We're going to be Apple. We're going to be Amazon. We're going to be Zappos. We're going to set a high standard. However, I just want you to know, I love you all. And I love you so much that if you'll push meet the standard, if you fall short, I'm going to forgive you." And word gets around that you are forgiven, but that doesn't drop the standard. So I'll stop there. I know we need to end here, but I just want to encourage listeners, both of them are so critical to good leadership, I think.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, that's really good, the high... And I think the high standard, high grace also creates really high trust and high engagement, if you really look at that.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, it does.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because if you're a high grace environment and you're not doing anything, that's really nice, but high capacity people don't stick around. And if you have high trust and high standards or high standards, I should say, not high trust, high standards, you burn people out. People just become, there's bodies everywhere. Literally you were saying on the bridge there-

Tim Elmore:

That's exactly right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... were literally bodies everywhere. But there're bodies everywhere. And I think that's really good. Tim, this is fascinating. It's always good talking to you. The book is called The Eight Paradoxes of Great

Leadership, available everywhere books are sold. Any final word for listeners and then tell us where we can find you online.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah, sure. I would say my last word of encouragement to listeners would be this, if we can practice these paradoxes, it communicates so much more than just good leadership to people. It communicates, "This leader knows me. He understands me. He gets me." Because I'm humble when I need to be humble at 10:00 AM, but confident when I need to be confident at 3:00 PM or whatever. And I think the known team member just is so loyal.

Tim Elmore:

So here's a picture of this, back in 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the president at the time of the United States passed away. He had been elected to four terms of office, he was very, very loved by American people. When his casket was marched through the streets of Washington, DC, thousands lined along the sidewalk just to pay their respects to the president. Several people, Carey, were seeing crying. People that didn't even know the guy, just were crying. One particular man just started sobbing on the street and fell to his knees, weeping over the president. When a man standing right next to him helped him to his feet, he said to the guy that was sobbing, "Did you know the president?" "No," the man said, "but he knew me."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, wow.

Tim Elmore:

I love that picture. "No, I didn't know him. But he sure knew me." I think to myself, "Man, that's the leader I want to be for my people." Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Boy, that's a great metaphor. Tim, thank you so much. So growingleaders.org?

Tim Elmore:

Yes. I'm sorry. Yeah, yeah, growingleaders.com-

Carey Nieuwhof:

[crosstalk 01:07:31].

Tim Elmore:

... or .org. You can find us in-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, .com, .org.

Tim Elmore:

Yeah. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All right. Tim Elmore, it's always a joy.

Tim Elmore:

Carey, great to be with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thank you so much, my friend.

Tim Elmore:

You too. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. Tim always brings so many insights and that book is meaty, if you're looking for a different way to lead. And I think, even if you are part of the Great Resignation, if you're still leading, it's going to take a different skillset. Make sure you check out his book and we've got everything you would want to know from this episode in the show notes. So you can go to careynieuwhof.com/episode465. You can pick it up absolutely free there and make sure you check out what our partners have to offer too. Medi-Share has 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. And Red Letter Living would love to help you get in on a 40 day challenge for 2022. You can get 10 to 40% off, and pastors, you'll get a free book. All you have to do is go to redletterchallenge.com/carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Next episode, end of this year, can you believe it? We've got Nicky Gumbel coming up and we went in some brand new directions here. Nicky had a big announcement recently. He is stepping back as the lead pastor, the vicar, as they would say of Holy Trinity Brompton, where he served for a long time to focus fully on an Alpha and the wider church. But he rejoins us and we go into his background, how his education at Eaton, Cambridge and Oxford prepared him for law and ministry. His family's background as refugees from Nazi, Germany, really great conversation and how he created the popular Bible in one year study. So if you're looking for a way to access the Bible, you might want to check that out. Here's an excerpt from the conversation with Nicky.

Nicky Gumbel:

Many of his family died in the Holocaust. So he had lost, I imagine, although he never spoke to me about it, he'd lost most of his friends and now I've discovered, a great number of his family in the Holocaust. He never spoke to me about it. My mother, when I was 14, my mother took my sister and I for a walk and said, "Your father is German and Jewish and you're never to speak to him about it." And we never did.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's next time on the podcast. And of course, if you subscribe, you get that for free. Also, coming up, we got a loaded new year. We got Rick Warren to kick off 2022, Donald Miller, Mark Sayers, Nona Jones, Craig Groeschel, Bobby Gruenewald, D.J. Soto. Well, and that just gets us out of the first few episodes. If you are new to the podcast and haven't subscribed, I would invite you to do that. And if you have never

left a rating in review and are feeling in a generous mood, please do so. Just wherever you listen to the podcast, leave us a rating. It helps us get the word out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I got a couple of announcements for you. First of all, we got a 20 million download celebration coming up. We don't know when it's going to hit, probably could be between Christmas and New Year's. Could be early in the new year. When we hit 20 million downloads, what we're going to do, we're going to celebrate you, the listeners. And we are going to share \$1,500 in Starbucks on my social media channels. All you have to do is follow me on the socials. I'm on Facebook and Twitter and Carey Nieuwhof on Instagram, when we hit 20 million. And thank you for that. It is unbelievably, even as I say that, we'll post a barcode that you can share at Starbucks checkout.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And then New Year's is almost here. Yeah. Do you say new year or new year's? I don't know. Anyway, you know 2022 is almost here. I want to ask you about your habits. Do you think your current habits are getting you where you want to be or would you like some fresh habits for the new year? And I'm not talking about resolutions that you make and it's like, "Oh, yeah, it's better in January." And really seriously, where do you want to be 12 months from now and what habits are going to get you there?

Carey Nieuwhof:

So no matter how successful you are, every leader I know is really juggling three priorities at some level, time, influence and mission. So with 2022 right around the corner, how are you going to really work to get time, energy and priorities working in your favor? If you're looking for some guidance, I've got a brand new course to help you make progress, I am releasing the complete At Your Best course. So if you've read the At Your Best book, this builds on it. In fact, there's content that's never been seen before, didn't make it into the book, ninja habits, stuff that will get you more productivity than you could imagine. And it is in the complete At Your Best course.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you've got the masterclass, a lot of you got that for free when we offered it, well, that is part of the course, but not the whole course. I held back about eight units that we developed, seven or eight units that are now being released for the first time. So this course starts by covering the basics that I cover in At Your Best, like how to leverage your time, energy and priorities, clarifying what matters most. So you've got to video guide and a study companion. But after of that, it covers seven advanced productivity principles and strategies that I just haven't shared anywhere else. And these are the strategies I personally use every day that help me accomplish everything I need to get done.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There is also a special price for those of you who have read the book or taken the masterclass, you can build those principles and then stack on even more. And if you're brand new to it, well, it's a great introduction too. You can work your way through the material and I promise you a more productive 2022. You say, "Promise. How can you promise?" Well, if you buy the course, it comes with a 30 day money back, no questions asked guarantee. If you are not productive, I will give you your money back, promise. Okay? So enroll today, by going to atyourbestcourse.com. The current pricing and offers expire on Thursday, January 6th, it's a New Year's special, do not miss out. Go to atyourbestcourse.com and you can get everything there. And remember, watch for us on the socials, 20 million downloads coming

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your way. Thank you so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you thrive in life and leadership.

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.