

Announcer:

The Art of Leadership Network.

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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. Welcome to episode 476 of the podcast. It's Carey here and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. We've got Clay Scroggins back on the podcast. We're going to talk about why he was one of the many who left full-time ministry, how to tackle the rapid changes facing leaders, how vulnerability is critical to great leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Today's episode is brought to you by Pro MediaFire. You can actually get a custom website and web maintenance by going to prowebfire.com. Tell them I sent you, you'll get a discount. And by Leadr. Go to leadr.com. That's L-E-A-D-R.com and use the promo code, Carey, to get 20% off on your first year of their people development software.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I've known Clay for a long, long time, and it is so good to have him back on. We are going to talk about, well, a new book he's got, but also a whole new chapter in his life. We talk about, well, the Great Resignation as we talked about. If you're in the church space, Barna is saying 38% of pastors are seriously thinking about stepping out of ministry. Clay's one of them who actually did that last year, so we talk about it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And everybody's got their own reasons, we describe why, but I think it's been super, super healthy to have these conversations. Clay is the bestselling author of *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge* and *How to Lead in a World of Distraction*. For over two decades, he worked at North Point Ministries starting as a facilities intern, as he says, vice president of nothing, and eventually becoming the lead pastor of their largest campus.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He's now a sought-after leadership speaker engaging audiences that include the Atlanta Hawks, Mercedes-Benz, Chick-fil-A, the Federal Reserve Bank, and Terminus. He graduated from Georgia Tech with an industrial engineering degree and he's got a master's and a doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary. So it's going to be so good for you to listen in on this conversation. We got a lot coming up for you on the podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

When you think about what you're going to do with your website in 2022, there's a couple of possibilities. You can have a do-it-yourself website builder. A lot of them are online, it's plug and play. It's a lot of work though and it looks like everybody else. Or you can hire someone to build your website

and you get hassled with all the updates. Or you can get a custom website and maintenance with hassle free updates by Pro MediaFire's web division, Pro WebFire.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The Pro WebFire process is simple. You get some web strategy sessions, you get a custom design and development stage, and then you look amazing online and convert traffic. The best part is once your site is complete, you can choose a hosting plan for a monthly or weekly maintenance so you're never hassled with updating your site again. So if you want an amazing website, reach out to the pros at Pro MediaFire's web division by going to prowebfire.com, tell them I sent you and you get a discount.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And if you haven't yet checked out Leadr, please do so. I mean, the Great Resignation probably took a toll on your team. Well, we're talking about that in this episode. The data is telling us that 50% of people either have or will be leaving their job for another job in the next 12 months. I know, isn't that crazy? They're looking for workplaces where they can be engaged and grow every day. That's one of the reasons people are leaving.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And some of you have new hires. So the question is, do you know how to keep them? Are you just going to do this again? Harvard Business Review says 70% of the reason a person leaves their job is because of their relationship with their manager. And that puts so much of the spotlight on the one-on-one meetings you have with your direct reports.

Carey Nieuwhof:

A leader believes that the one-on-one meeting is the most powerful leadership development tool a manager has, which is why they build platforms to help you lead effective one-on-one meetings, develop leaders at every level of your organization, and engage and grow every person on your team. 500 churches and businesses are already using Leadr. If you want to request your demo today, go to leadr.com. That's L-E-A-D-R.com, no E, and use the promo code, Carey. You'll get 20% off your first year of their people development software. That's leadr.com. Use the promo code, Carey, you'll get 20% off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, let's dive into another fascinating conversation, this time with Clay Scroggins. Here we go. Clay, welcome back to the podcast. It's good to have you.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh my goodness! Carey, thank you. I feel like it's been too long.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, it has been a while. It's been a minute. I don't know when the last time it was that I had you on, but a lot has changed in the world. A lot has changed in your world. In fact, a big pivot for you last year heading into this year. You actually became one of the 38%-

Clay Scroggins:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... of pastors who were thinking about leaving full-time pastoring. I don't know whether you ever leave it though. Do you still think of yourself as a pastor? Because you left North Point Ministries-

Clay Scroggins:

I did.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... after how many years? You started there when you were four?

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah, I wish.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Try to remember.

Clay Scroggins:

It was 18 years that I had been there. So I was 20, 25, 26, somewhere around in there.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow!

Clay Scroggins:

No, 24. 24. But yes, I struggle. Your question, do you ever leave it? That is my struggle. I found in me more of a... that belief that you're called for life to be a pastor, and if you leave it, you are living in sin. Of course, I don't believe that, but I have found that in me. And so it's been a-

Carey Nieuwhof:

But you think now that you're living in sin now that you're no longer the-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... campus pastor, lead pastor of a local church.

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Clay Scroggins:

I mean, I know that I'm not, but I have found it in me, that feeling of, "Is this okay that I'm not going to be doing anything for anyone for Easter or something like that? Is that okay?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. That's a really good question. All right? Because we have a lot of pastors listening, a lot of business leaders obviously, but also probably our share of former pastors. If you search the internet, not that anybody would spend a minute doing this, and look at different bios, I'm sure you can find bios of me in the last two years, some of which call me a pastor, some of which call me a former pastor. It's like I don't even know what I am.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Am I a former pastor? Am I a pastor? I don't get it. I'm not working at a church full-time anymore. I'm not even on the active teaching roster. So what do I do? Well, I help people thrive and haven't lost my faith. In fact, it's growing. But I don't know, once a pastor always a pastor. It's a good thing. So, just catch people up with the story. Last year, you stepped off of the staff at North Point. What happened?

Clay Scroggins:

Well-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, tell me.

Clay Scroggins:

I do feel like a walking cliché in a way, because I feel like, "Oh, you went through a pandemic. Everybody started reflecting on their job and their life and what they're doing, having all those existential questions of, what am I here for? All that stuff. And then you resigned." In a nutshell, that is what happened. But obviously, it's far more complicated.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But not on the inside. I know I'm a statistic-

Clay Scroggins:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... but I'm not a statistic.

Clay Scroggins:

No, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Come on, guys. Give me a break.

Clay Scroggins:

I'm unique, I'm a snowflake, I'm the only one going through this. No. Yeah. I mean, I worked for Andy Stanley for 18 years as I mentioned and he has been amazing to me. I mean, massive influence in my life and obviously loads of people's lives. But I had changed jobs numerous times, I led a couple of our campuses. Most recently, it was leading our Alpharetta campus called North Point, our original one, and then two years ago moved to Buckhead into Atlanta, the city of Atlanta, to lead Buckhead Church.

Clay Scroggins:

And I was professionally restless. Who hasn't been? Right? I mean, everyone has experienced professional restlessness, but it was more pronounced than it had ever been before. I started wondering not is this job great, because it was genuinely my dream job, but is this job right for me? I think that's the struggle that a lot of people have. Loads of people have experienced what I had been experiencing. It's a great job, love it, but it's not right for me anymore.

Clay Scroggins:

So I came to that conclusion, I looped my bosses in on it, and said, "Hey, I think I need to do something different. And that's scary because I don't exactly know what." They were gracious and kind and really helpful in the process. Through all that, I made the decision to resign. I called my dad like a month before to say, "Dad, I'm really wrestling through this and I'm thinking I'm going to do something different."

Clay Scroggins:

And he goes, "Do you know what you're going to do yet?" I was like, "Not really." He goes, "Well, let me give you one piece of advice. Don't ever quit a job until you have a job." Isn't that fatherly advice? Which is-

Carey Nieuwhof:

And what you say. "Sorry, dad?"

Clay Scroggins:

I'm about to. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. I don't know whether you remember this or not, but I remember exactly where I was. I was on vacation on my boat and you and I had a conversation as you were weighing the options. And it's a big decision because you thought, "Well, what I'm going to do?" As I say, I've been in ministry all my life. I have no actual skills.

Clay Scroggins:

Right. Right. Right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, what do you do?

Clay Scroggins:

Right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I can't exactly dig ditches, I can't exactly repair cars. What do you do with your life? So what have you been doing the last... well, as we record this, six, seven months?

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah. I, 2017, released this book, *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge*. That book has been a massive gift for me and I hope it's been a gift for other people. But it's given me so many great opportunities to talk about leadership and I've really found more and more that I really love doing that. I, of course, love talking about the gospel and love talking about Jesus, but I feel like leadership is... there's so much about it that is so spiritual.

Clay Scroggins:

So I've been doing a lot of preaching at churches on the weekend and then doing a lot of speaking about leadership with companies during the weekday. And that's been thrilling. I mean, I've definitely felt a little bit like a missionary might feel, of dropping into a part of the world that I don't feel super comfortable in, but feeling like I've got this great opportunity to try to help people, encourage people. What I tell organizational leaders is, "Hey, you've got your organization to run, but I know you want your people to be better people.

Clay Scroggins:

I want to help them be better people, and when they become better people, they'll be better leaders, and when they're better leaders, they'll make you more money, they'll help your company grow even more. And so let me help take some of the load off of your plate in doing that." That's what I've been doing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. It's interesting because a lot of us are reinventing ourselves and creating opportunities where there aren't. What's been the best part of the move and the hardest part of the move?

Clay Scroggins:

Right now, I'm working for myself, and I think as far as I can tell, that's what I'm going to do. But when you do that, it feels like a straight-up trade, security for freedom. And when things are good and you have some work to do, that's a good trade. But for the first time ever, I've really started to feel that sense of anxiety, of, "Oh no! What happens if I don't have work?" I would say that trade so far has been the best part. I mean, I've loved the freedom of it.

Clay Scroggins:

I've gone to church with my family the last couple of weeks, which has been fabulous. I preached about three months straight on weekends. But the last couple weeks, we just went to church together and that's been great. We still go to Buckhead Church. The worst part, the pressure of what's next, the uncertainty of what's next. That is a hard thing when you just don't know. I can talk about having faith in God to other people, I can talk about trust in God when you can't see to other people.

Clay Scroggins:

I can talk about Psalm 23, that he's the good shepherd and therefore I lack nothing. I can talk about that with other people, but it is a lot harder to apply. That's something that I'm constantly having to apply. What does it look like for me to trust him, that I don't have to see the whole picture on the other side? That's probably been the hardest part.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, you've always worked under the leadership of other people for the last, I guess 16, 18 years you said?

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Andy Stanley, you always had his covering and he was the senior pastor at North Point Ministries. What are some differences when you report to yourself? Because there's a lot of leaders listening who do report to someone else now and they're wondering, "Huh! Wonder what it would be like if I was my own boss?" What's that been like the first... I say that as somebody who's always been my own boss. So I've got decades of that, knowing the ups and the downs. But what about for you, the baptism into that?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I've spent a lot of time talking about self-leadership over the years, as you have too. I mean, at your best, a lot of that is about self-leadership, about leading yourself really well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yes, it is actually. True.

Clay Scroggins:

I've had to apply that more than ever. I mean, I've had to apply those principles of, "Hey, it's really impossible for someone to lead you if you're not willing to lead yourself. It's almost impossible for someone to lead you well if you are not putting yourself in a position where you are willing to do the things that it takes to become a person of influence, to become a person that is helping others."

Clay Scroggins:

I would say that's one of the hardest parts, is just the self-discipline, self-governance of leading yourself well or leading myself well. I mean, secondly, the emotional toll of just... I used to think I wasn't cut out for it because I told myself that for a long time because I worked for a rather large organization. "Oh, I'm not an entrepreneur. I'm better in a big organization," all that stuff. I regret telling myself that because I think I just was telling myself the truth about the situation that I was in, but I didn't actually know.

Clay Scroggins:

So I was unsure whether or not I would be able to emotionally handle the uncertainty of not knowing where work is going to come from. I would say so far I'm handling it okay, but it is not easy. I do feel like you have to be cut from a certain cloth to be able to manage the anxiety of, I think I know what I'm

doing next month, but I don't exactly know what I'm doing in three or four months. And that's not for everyone for sure. I'm still trying to figure out if it's for me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's a good way of describing the last 25 years of my life. It's like, "I know what's happening next month. I don't know about four or five months down the road." I mean, you know generally, but you're right, you really don't know specifically. It's sort of over the edge. Okay. We're going to talk about your new book, *The Aspiring Leader's Guide to the Future*. We're going to talk about how leadership is changing. You make the case that it's changing, I agree.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But because you've had all these years in the church, one of the questions I'm asking this year is, what about our current model of church is broken and what is working? What are some flickers of hope? I'm not asking you to critique North Point. I mean, I have a lot of respect for Andy like you do, but I'm talking about capital C church, the way a lot of us do church. What do you think is breaking or broken or more bent? And what do you think is starting to work or we should pay more attention to?

Clay Scroggins:

Carey, this is one of those areas where I have felt always so in sync with you, I feel like you and I share a lot of similar ideas. We have over the years even. I remember when the big... five years ago or so, trying to figure out online church and does it count and does it matter and is it here to stay? Man, looking back on those conversations, I think we did a podcast on it, on the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast.

Clay Scroggins:

The way the world has changed in the last two years is just remarkable. We have compressed 10 years of change into two years. We were already moving this way, but here we are so comfortable with, "Let's just do that meeting on Zoom." I mean, I just got out of the car, I went to Costco with my father-in-law about 30 minutes ago, and he was telling me that he hasn't been in a store... He's 68. He said, "I haven't been in a store in as long as I can remember."

Clay Scroggins:

And he says, "We only order on Instacart," or whatever the app would be that they use. I think it's Instacart that they use. But that's so different. And they'd never done that two years ago. But COVID-

Carey Nieuwhof:

And he's 68?

Clay Scroggins:

He's 68. Yeah. COVID forced him to learn how to do it and now he's like, "I don't ever see us going back to a store." I felt a little bit critiqued as he was looking at what we bought at Costco. He was like, "I mean, you could have ordered all of that on... You could have just had it delivered. What are you even doing?" So-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Your pops?

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Clay Scroggins:

Thanks for that. I mean, that's just one small example of how the world has just advanced so rapidly. My first thought when he said that was, "And the same is true of church." Right? I mean, that value of convenience is just the preeminent value. And we've got to figure out what to do. Is it a bad thing? Is it a good thing? I don't even know if that's a good question, is it a bad thing or a good thing? Because it just is a thing. It is-

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a thing.

Clay Scroggins:

It's the reality.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's a thing.

Clay Scroggins:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

To use one of Andy's phrases, did you find yourself as a leader? I mean, when you think about campus pastor, you're not talking about 300 people, you're talking about thousands and thousands of people, which in most cases in and of itself would be a megachurch. But did you find yourself, having had the track record that you did, needing to manufacture energy in places you weren't manufacturing energy before? That's a phrase Andy has used. And I love that. I think about that all the time, where are we manufacturing energy? What we mean by that is what used to be easy that now is just so much effort and you're seeing diminished returns.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, absolutely. I mean, some of that is just the natural progression of any larger organization. But I would say the place where I've constantly struggled to feel it, where I feel like I need to manufacture energy, or I have felt that... even the organizational pressure to manufacture energy, is to try to talk people into being in the building. I just got exhausted doing that. And I also am so ready to admit it's better in the building.

Clay Scroggins:

Of course, it's better in the building. I spoke at a conference for 350 Taco Bell franchisees. They did the whole conference virtually and they normally do it in person. They were trying to decide, "Should we do

it next year virtually? Should we do it in person?" And of course, they're going, "It's better in person." But Carey, I mean, do you want to know the cost difference virtually versus having the conference in person?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Clay Scroggins:

I think they spent \$15,000 on this virtual conference. They normally spend \$500,000 on the in-person conference. So is it worth it?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow!

Clay Scroggins:

I don't know. It's so hard to know, is it worth it? I know there's so much of that is not church, but so much of that does correlate to... That's what every person, every congregant is weighing on Sunday morning. Not is it better for me to go? Of course, it would be better if I were there in person. Life is better when I'm in person. This would be better if you and I were in the same room, of course.

Clay Scroggins:

But the fact that you can be in Canada and I can be sitting here in this Southeastern part of the United States in Atlanta and we can do this, I don't know that it would be worth it for us to get together. So that's what every person is trying to weigh on Sunday morning when they wake up, is, "I know it's better, but is it worth it for me to go do that?" Those conversations of, are we making it worth it for them? We've been having those conversations for years now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm glad you raised that. What I hear over and over again is pastors making theological points about why you have to be in person, why you have to be in the room. And I'm not going to quibble with in-person. I think rooms have a role. I think small groups have a role. I think micro gatherings have a role. I think people need people. I'll argue that all day long. However, people have voted. They've been voting for a long time.

Clay Scroggins:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's like you're 68-year-old father-in-law who's like, "Yeah, I'm- [crosstalk 00:22:06]

Clay Scroggins:

[crosstalk 00:22:07]

Carey Nieuwhof:

... ever have to go back to a store. I'm on Instacart." And it's like, "Okay, are we just writing you off then? Is that what we're doing? Because you won't come to my party, you won't come to my house, you won't come to my room, you don't count." Not sure that's the best strategy. Any innovations that you found? This, by the way, is a bit of a wasteland right now, particularly in the church. I think businesses are innovating a lot faster than churches.

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah. And schools.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And schools. Schools are innovating a lot faster than churches. But any flickers of hope in the wider church or in your own experience that you're like, "Yeah, I would pay attention to this and turn up the dial on that."?

Clay Scroggins:

That's such a hard question because I just don't know enough. I mean, that's the other part that I feel slightly guilty about it, is I have all this experience in the church world and now I've been out for about half a year and I'm like, "It's crazy how outdated I already feel." I mean, I love what Judah Smith's doing with Churchome. I mean, I think that concept is the way of the future, of basically saying, "Hey, we can create little micro churches."

Clay Scroggins:

I think neighborhood churches, local in-person gatherings making it really easy for people, as easy as possible, four or 500 people, I love that concept. I think there's a church called Family Church in South Florida that I really like. They're really focused on neighborhood churches. I think there's something about that in the future. But I just I am excited to see the openness that hopefully the last two years has created in us to be able to leverage technology and not just fight against technology.

Clay Scroggins:

But we're going to have to invest in it. I mean, that's the biggest issue, is are we going to actually move money, move people, move talent to give people the freedom and the space to be able to try and risk and give it a shot? I think it's Scott Cormode... I was just looking at my bookshelf of books. He wrote a book called The Innovative Church. There's a line in the beginning of that book where he says, "Our church is calibrated for a world that no longer exists."

Clay Scroggins:

I think that is a really scary... and a statement that we should be paying attention to, because I think it is, I think most of us are calibrated for a world that no longer exists. The same is true for leadership. I mean, leaders are calibrated for a world that no longer exists, which is why the future of leadership is so important.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Let's talk about that. The book is called, for those of you who are watching, The Aspiring Leader's Guide to the Future: 9 Surprising Ways Leadership is Changing. I think we all know it's changing, and if you're not changing with it, you're in trouble. You're pretty honest and open in the book about failure. I

think this is an almost quote, you say you probably had more failures in the last few years than normal, perhaps than everything combined in the previous decade and a half of your leadership. So many leaders, Clay, are afraid to fail. Can you walk us through failure? What's that look like in your life? Then what are you learning about of failure?

Clay Scroggins:

When I was the lead pastor at North Point Community Church, I had two... I think internally it was decided that they were failures. That's where I feel like I really struggled the most with becoming risk averse. But we started a young adult service. We put a ton of energy into it. After a couple of years, we had a couple of hundred people attending, which in most worlds would be wonderful, but-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Success.

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly. But at North Point, the first service had 1,000 people there. Having a couple hundred people after a couple of years, just eventually my bosses were like, "Hey, we can't keep doing this." I mean, that was a tough pill to swallow, so to speak, for me. Then secondly, I created a little skunk works team to try to figure out all this digital stuff. We called it North Point Go, NP Go, trying to really understand what would it look like for us to-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I remember that.

Clay Scroggins:

... help people who were unknown, they were just watching. How do we help them raise their hand and become known? Then how do we help them go from known to actually engaged wherever they are? Do we have a structure? Do we have a strategy? Do we have a system that would enable them to do that? I think I never really got total honesty from my bosses about it, but the feeling I got was that they were a little frustrated with me that I wasn't focused more on in-person attendance, which is totally understandable that they would want to be focused on in-person attendance.

Clay Scroggins:

Eventually, they moved it to another department and took it out from under me. I mean, it was a punch to the gut. That was a hard, hard thing for me. It felt like a failure. I would say those two instances, it just did something in me that I found over the next year that I thought, "Oh no! This isn't going to work long-term in the future for me as a leader, not just for me here." But the leader of the future is going to have to be willing to try and fail and see their failures as learnings and growth and expensive lessons.

Clay Scroggins:

That statement, what do you get when you don't get what you want? You get experience, which is a really good thing, but it's hard because none of us want experience. We want success, successful experience. But learning, you have to be you willing to, because of how quickly the world's changing, how rapidly it's changing, and how we're constantly stuck in this state of being a... In the video gaming world, they call it a Newb. You're new to the game, you're a rookie.

Clay Scroggins:

We are going to be stuck in the newb state for the next, however many years, because things change so rapidly, so fast. So yeah, I just think that fear of failure, we have to pay attention to it as we look toward the future.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You say it made you risk averse. I think a lot of leaders have had that. It's pretty easy, particularly as you get older, to be in the, "Hey, we tried that before," or, "Ooh! I'm not going to put it all on the line again." How are you fighting that battle internally, Clay?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, understanding it has been helpful for me, speaking to the fear, being able to describe the fear. I use this little... I call it a feararchy. But it's a hierarchy of fear and I connect it to... Maslow's hierarchy of needs helped me understand it. But at the very basic level, he says food, shelter, clothing, right? I mean, that's where we were as a society at one point.

Clay Scroggins:

We're not there anymore. Now we're all the way at the self-actualization level at the very top of the hierarchy asking all those questions, am I fulfilled? Do I like my job? There was a day where, did you like your job? I don't know. I'm not going to ask-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Irrelevant question, you have a job.

Clay Scroggins:

Do you have a job? Exactly. Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're going to eat, you live indoor, be thankful.

Clay Scroggins:

But I love that we're there. I love that people are asking, "Does this job fulfill me? Does it make me happy? Does it give me a purpose? Does it allow me to find community?" There's a hierarchy of fear as well. The very basic level, you've got death. But what is that Seinfeld little bit that he has where he says... It was discovered last year that the top two fears in America or in the world or in corporate world or whatever, number one is death. Excuse me, number two is death surprisingly.

Clay Scroggins:

And number one is speaking in public, which means that if you're at a funeral, you'd rather be in the casket than doing the eulogy at the funeral. That's his big punchline. But there's so much insight into that that is fascinating, that people are more afraid of speaking in public than death. Well, why is that? Well, because death is at the very bottom of the fear hierarchy. Above that is the loss of autonomy, above that is the loss of relationship.

Clay Scroggins:

And then at the very top is, I think, why speaking in public is such a significant fear for people. But it's the fear of being humiliated, the fear of embarrassment. You hear people say, "I would rather die than go through that again or stand in front of these people and do whatever." And really, understanding that, oh, that the reason why those two experiences that I had that marked me so deeply, they made me feel embarrassed, they made me feel humiliated.

Clay Scroggins:

But then you've got to get under that and talk to yourself or let God talk to you and say, "Okay, well, why? Why does that humiliate you? What does that say about you?" First of all, is it true that it was a failure? And then number two, what kind of actions does that cause you to take because you believe that? And could you be believing something that's not actually true? So all of that introspection just helped me so much.

Clay Scroggins:

And it gave me the perspective, I would say, to go, "You know what? I'm not going to let that mark me. I mean, of course it's going to mark me, but I'm not going to let it paralyze me, that I'm still got to be willing to step out there and take risks and try things."

Carey Nieuwhof:

How is fear of failure one of the aspects behind the changing nature of leadership? Or is it not? Is that just an incidental along the way? Do you think failure and fear of failure is part of the changing landscape of leadership?

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah. The way the book was orchestrated or the way it was outlined was I gave nine surprising ways leadership is changing. The intention was that each one would stand on its own by itself. But of course, my hope would be, if somebody sat down and read through the whole thing, they would catch some themes, catch some general changes that are happening.

Clay Scroggins:

One of the most significant changes about the future, Kevin Kelly, the founder of WIRED magazine, there's a big excerpt that I use from him that is... He wrote a book called Irresistible 12 of the Most Significant Technological Shifts That We Need to Pay Attention To. One of them is this idea that things are changing so rapidly. So you have a software that you haven't used in a while. You open it up, you're like, "Where's my... "

Clay Scroggins:

A great instance is just before this, you said, "Hey, would you record this on GarageBand?" I've done stuff in GarageBand, but it's been a month or two, and when I open it back up... Excuse me. I think what I experience-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Bless you.

Clay Scroggins:

Thank you. I was like, "Where'd the menu go? Where'd my button go." It had changed since the last time I'd used it. I mean, the technology is-

Carey Nieuwhof:

How dare you update that software.

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly. You didn't even ask my permission or give me a notification that you were doing. Obviously, that would've been annoying had they have done that. But that's the way life is working right now. The way apps are being updated, the way software is being updated, the way information's being created, the way that the technology that's going to affect the next year, we might not even know about it right now, we might not even been using it right now.

Clay Scroggins:

I just installed a smart thermostat in my house. I mean, the examples are endless of the ways that it's constantly changing. And all of those changes keep us in this position where we have to be willing to say, "I don't know." And that's scary. I mean, leaders don't like saying, "I don't know." We all have this sense of what a leader is and who a leader should be, and it's somebody who's competent, somebody who's confident. And asking the question, I don't know, or admitting I don't know is, oh, it's awful for leaders.

Clay Scroggins:

But the future leader has to be able to say it. The future leader has to be willing to try things and fail at things quickly and often and learn from them or else you won't be able to. I think you could get more prepared in the past, I think you could study more, learn more, and then be ready to step out. But the time you spend studying and learning, it's already changed by the time you're stepping out. And that's just different than it was in the past.

Clay Scroggins:

I mean, I wrote a dissertation on the topic of helping people grow spiritually online. I think it got published in 2014. I mean, I can't imagine how worthless it is right now because it's just so different today than it was then and it's going to be even more different in the future.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Now, that's a really good point. I want to talk about some myths that are no longer true about leadership. Either maybe they were never true or definitely, hey, as of right now, they're not true anymore. What are some myths about great leadership that just don't hold water any longer?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I'll carefully wade into this one since you used the water metaphor. But I use the line from Jim Collins in Good to Great, which, I mean, incredible book. I mean, absolute in the hall of fame of leadership books. It's on my bookshelves. I'm sure it's on everyone's bookshelf. He uses that phrase, that before you start worrying about the what, you got to worry about the who, that you got to figure out, who's on the bus? You got to get the right people on the bus.

Clay Scroggins:

I think that concept of getting the right people on the bus is dangerous for the future. I think we have to really pay attention to what do we mean by that because the word right needs to be defined. What do we mean by right? Because too often, right has been like me, because we're all prone to assert greater potential to people who look like us and have educational background like us or experience like us because it strokes our own ego, it makes us feel good about ourselves.

Clay Scroggins:

I mean, it's really a form of loving ourselves well, and we have to pay attention to that, because I don't know that that's going to be what's right in the future. I think in the future, I mean, our world, just the data of the way diversity is increasing in our future, I think... I don't know how it is in Canada. It's probably pretty different in Canada. But in America, within the next 20 years, white people are going to be the minority and that is a- [crosstalk 00:36:57]

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, very similar here- [crosstalk 00:37:00]

Clay Scroggins:

... [crosstalk 00:37:00]. In big cities like Toronto, we're close to where you are. I mean, that is so different than the world of the past. I know it makes us all fearful to talk about it or it makes a lot of people fearful to talk about it because of the unknown. We just think, "Well, I don't even know what does that mean? I'm just going to worry about just getting the best people. I'm not going to worry about all that, I'm just going to..." Which unfortunately, oftentimes getting the best people or getting the right people on the bus is-

Carey Nieuwhof:

People who look like me-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... and act like me and went to the same school and-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... hang out in the same social circles. No, you're right.

Clay Scroggins:

I think that myth is a myth that we need to deal with.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So from the perspective of diversity and even different thinking, intellectual diversity, not just racial diversity and that kind of thing, but just people who think differently than we do, do you think that's related to the pace of change?

Clay Scroggins:

I hadn't thought about that. Do you see that? This is where I'm like- [crosstalk 00:37:57]

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it sure can be a logical connection in my mind, Clay, because if you think about it... I thought a really good insight was we don't have time to prepare as much, because look back at Christmas, everybody was prepared with their plans and then this thing nobody had heard of, in November, Omicron shows up and throws a grenade into the world and people are canceling flights and cruises and get-togethers and putting masks back on and it's like, "Are you kidding me?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Nobody can plan for that. You just can't. Global pandemic aside, the political instability we felt we've... So, that long, steady gaze in a particular direction that a leader would bring from your own perspective, that had a shelf life. I wrote this post years ago called The Theory of the 10-Year Run, that most bands really have about a decade of top hits in them. Now, the Rolling Stones have been going for... Gosh! I don't know.

Clay Scroggins:

40 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

55 years, 65-

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah. 60 years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know, a long time. Before I was born, they were making hits. And they're still on tour. But if you look at their hits, they all happened in about a 10 to 15-year window. And that's it. You go there, everybody wants to hear Satisfaction or Beast of Burden or something like that. But it's a very narrow window. Start Me Up was the last one, really one of the last ones.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So there's this cycle, this shelf life for creativity and your run where you're starting, you're in breakthrough, then you figure it out, you perfect it, and then you start to plane out. You either reinvent yourself or go to obscurity. It's a variation of the sigmoid curve. So yeah, but you're right. We don't have a lot of time to prepare and algorithms can change your online presence in a heartbeat overnight. Now we got the metaverse and a bunch of other stuff to think about. So what are some other myths about leadership?

Clay Scroggins:

And that doesn't excuse us from preparing. I would say we still should repair. But that idea of agility, of being able to adapt and be flexible, I think that skill is going to be needed greater. I mean, I was talking to a guy-

Carey Nieuwhof:

I agree.

Clay Scroggins:

... last week who's a... He's about to be a new dad. I was like, "Look at us, two fathers talking about feeding schedules." But I was like, "Are y'all going to demand feed or are you going to schedule feed?" That's a significant question when you're having your first baby. And he said, "Oh, we are actually just talking about that. I think we're going to schedule feed." And he was like, "But does it even matter?"

Clay Scroggins:

I mean, we don't even know what we're doing. It feels like it's all going to fall apart at some point." I'm like, "You're totally right. It doesn't really matter in the sense that you're going to have moments where you're like, "We have no clue what you're doing." You cannot get prepared for that, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't try to be prepared for it. I'm not saying that you don't agree with that. I hear what you're saying, you do agree with that as well.

Clay Scroggins:

But I think the reason why that support is because you can have a plan for the future, and you should have a plan for the future, but the ability to be open-handed, the ability to adapt, the ability to be agile and be flexible is going to be greater. That need is going to be greater in the future than it has been in the past for sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And a diverse table around you-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... is going to help you-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... seize those opportunities.

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. I do think most people would agree that the five-year plan is dead.

Clay Scroggins:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Maybe have a five-month plan or a one-year plan. Okay. What about some other changes? Go ahead. Keep going if you- [crosstalk 00:41:29]

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I just was going to say that during the pandemic, I heard someone say... During the pandemic, we're still in the middle of pandemic. But someone said, "Oh yeah, there's now only three work days." And I was like "Three work days? What do you mean? What kind of job do you have? I'm going to have seven work days." And they say, "Yeah, there's only three work days. There's yesterday, there's today, and tomorrow. I don't remember what we did a month ago, I have no clue where we're going to be in another month."

Clay Scroggins:

That is exactly what you're saying, that it is changing so rapidly, we just can't prepare. And the diverse set of eyes and opinions and experiences around the table is a way to be more agile because you can pivot more quickly when you've got someone who's saying, "Hey, here's the way I see it," or, "Here's what I understood from the way I grew up," or, "Here's my experience." I have not seen those two connected before until this moment. Can I give you one more that... I mean-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Please.

Clay Scroggins:

I think the idea of conflict is one of those skills that, of course, we needed it in the past, but we're going to need it even more in the future. You think about the things that we're talking about at work that... And not even at work. In the first interview of a job, people are bringing up, "Hey, so tell me how your company handled the murder of George Floyd." And you're like, "I don't even know you and we're talking about racial reconciliation."

Clay Scroggins:

I mean, that would've come years... Or if ever at all. I mean, that would've been one of those you don't talk about religion at the table. I mean, now we're talking about sexual orientation, gender identity. We're talking about all kinds of complicated, complex issues at work and you might not agree with the person that you're working with. I would say on top of that, the social media, helicopter parenting, we're becoming as a society less able to have difficult conversations than we've ever been before.

Clay Scroggins:

And I think this is an area where, number one, the future of leadership is calling for a leader to become more adept at having hard conversations, and as a society, we're becoming worse at doing it, which is why I think it's so important for leaders... Leaders who are trying to develop into the kind of leader that the future is demanding, they're going to have to figure out, "Well, how do I get better at having hard conversations because I'm having to have more of them and they're becoming even more important?"

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So that's a great question. How do you do that?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I'm glad you asked, Carey. I don't know. I mean, I do know. I would say it's hard, I should say. It starts with empathy. It with starts really understanding what the other person's feeling. I saw the principal of our kid's school do this. I went to lunch with him a couple of months ago and I told him, "I don't want anything, I just want to tell you we love the school and we're for you."

Clay Scroggins:

And he was like, "Man! I didn't know what you wanted. Thank you. That's wonderful. Now I can just have a nice lunch." And I was like, "So everybody's mad right now?" He's like, "Oh, everybody's mad right now. Everybody's mad about something." He said, "That's the difference between 2021 and 2020?" When we had lunch at the end of 2021, he said, "The difference is, in 2020, everybody was like, "Hey, we're all in this together.

Clay Scroggins:

Let's fight this other. We got to have each other. Let's unify." 2021 was like, "We're sick of this. I'm just going to be mean." I mean, I saw a person at McDonald's the other day who jumped in through the window and tried to get in a fight with the kitchen staff because they didn't get his order right. I mean, we're seeing people on flights doing ridiculous stuff to flight attendants. They're just angry. They're just like, "I'm tired of it."

Clay Scroggins:

And he said, "What I've learned is, when I'm talking to somebody who's hot under the collar," he said, "I really put myself in their shoes and I've thought, "There's some reasons why they're extra upset right now. Number one, it's their money at work. You're always more into it when it's your own money and it's your taxpayer money or private school money or whatever. Number two, when it's your child. Of course, you love this person more than anything else, anyone else.

Clay Scroggins:

Then number three, you're talking about an experience in which you have experience in the same area. I mean, everybody went to school, so you have your own school experience at the very least to compare it to." But I thought, that empathy, to be able to walk into that conversation with that, is so... It allows you to go, "You know what? I'm going to calm myself down. I'm going to have a little bit more patience."

Clay Scroggins:

But in the book, I outline here's four A's, a four-step process, to affirm what's true, affirm your intentions, to ask some curious questions, to acknowledge what you've heard, and then to advise, to

bring your advice at that point. Most people work backwards through that process. We throw out the advice first, rip off the tags. "You better. How dare you?" Then you end up having to acknowledge your wrong, ask for forgiveness, and affirm that you still enjoy your job. So you're going to go through the process one way or the other, you may as well prepare for it and then go through it, affirm, ask, acknowledge, and then advise.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Even the GOATs will have a coach. So if you're the greatest of all time, you're going to have a coach. And you're right. There is a sense at which, and I'm a bit older than you, where you have the thought, at least in the back of your mind, it's like, "Okay, I should have this figured out by now." And you realize, "I don't have this figured out by now." The GOATs will have a coach. That's a trend you see in leadership?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, the trend that I see that I'm most excited about, and I'll be curious your perspective on this because you have kids that are emerging adults, is I see a lot of reverse mentoring, which I think is fabulous. But the concept is basically, the future is so unclear. It's so hazy. It's so foggy. You cannot see it. You know that statement, what you don't know won't hurt you? Dumbest statement of all time. What you don't know of course will hurt you.

Clay Scroggins:

It has hurt you, it is hurting you now, and it will certainly hurt you in the future. But you don't have to not know. You can get someone further down the road, or in what we're seeing in so many cases, we're seeing people go, "Hey, you're 25, you're 30, you see in a way that I don't see. Help me see." I had a young guy on our staff at Buckhead Church, he helped me see the racial tension in Atlanta in a way that I would never have been able to see it, and it was such a gift.

Clay Scroggins:

So I hope that trend continues where it's not just get a coach, meaning get someone who has gray hair, who's down the road, has a bunch of wisdom, which might be the case, but it's also the idea of get someone who's maybe can translate culture in a way that would help you understand it. I assume your kids help you do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, all the time. I mean, personally, and then my youngest one, Sam, works in my company. I would be very concerned if it was a whole bunch of people in their 50s, not because of ageism or anything like that. It's just like, "Hey, we all grew up in the same time, same era, we tend to see things the same way." And to that diversity that you talked about, which I wholeheartedly agree with, it's generational diversity.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I mean, I learn so much from young leaders. And it's ironic, the people who listen to this platform, this podcast, the people who access my website. I was doing Google analytics the other day. Number one, age group.

Clay Scroggins:

I want to- [crosstalk 00:48:56]

Carey Nieuwhof:

25 to 34.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, no way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah. 25. You wanted to guess?

Clay Scroggins:

I wanted to guess. But that's really encouraging.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Go ahead. Go ahead and guess.

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I probably would've said late 30s. That would've been my guess for number one. But it's amazing, 25 to 34. And what percentage are...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, there's five or six that break it down. So I'm going to say 20%.

Clay Scroggins:

Okay. Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then right next to it is-

Clay Scroggins:

50 and up?

Carey Nieuwhof:

35 to 44-year-olds.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, okay. Good. All right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

35 to 44. You know what number three is now? Again, in the double digit.

Clay Scroggins:

I'm going to stop guessing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

18 to 24.

Clay Scroggins:

No way.

Carey Nieuwhof:

18 to 24. Then-

Clay Scroggins:

I would never have guessed that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... comes 45 to 54 and then-

Clay Scroggins:

And then the-

Carey Nieuwhof:

... 65 and over.

Clay Scroggins:

The boomers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So it's predominantly young leaders. And I'm barely Gen X. Thank you. 1965. Most categories would put me into the Gen X. I would say I'm a boomer, my kids say I'm a boomer. And I think that is diversity of opinion, getting younger leaders around the table, and trying to stay current. At a point, I thought, "Oh, that's a really good practice." Now I'm like, "No, I need that." I just don't see it accurately. I just don't.

Clay Scroggins:

What do you say to people, Carey, when they say, "Hey, I got to..." Especially if I'm speaking in front of people, if I'm leading people of diverse ages. I mean, that's amazing that you've been able to stay so young. What do you tell people? What do you attribute that to? What's the advice you give?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Just young leaders, just stay near someone. I mean, a lot of my friends are similar stage, but we have friends who are younger. Then I definitely make sure that I spend a regular amount of time listening to younger voices, paying attention in my own personal circle, making sure that I have people on my team, that I have people in my life who are younger. Then even one of the really fun parts of parenting kids who are very much in their 20s and now thirties is I listen. I'm like, "What do you see differently?" And I take notes and I learn.

Clay Scroggins:

Your podcast, the episode you did with Kara Powell... I don't remember your numbers.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, a couple of months ago at this point.

Clay Scroggins:

Are you on the 500s now?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Almost. Yeah, we're getting there.

Clay Scroggins:

Wow!

Carey Nieuwhof:

Me and Moses-

Clay Scroggins:

I related so deeply with what she said about how uncool she is no matter what she says. The fact that she's saying it, it's immediately uncool. It's like as soon as it comes out of her mouth, it's expired already. And I wrote a chapter about vulnerability, about leaders learning how to lead with vulnerability, which is, I think, one of the most important traits of any leader of the future.

Clay Scroggins:

And I feel like you do a great job of... I mean, you're hip and stylish and you look great wherever you show up, but I don't ever get the sense with you that you are trying to be something you're not. You're just in your lane, you're very comfortable in your own lane. I would imagine that that is attractive to the 25 to 30-year-old.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I hope that's true. It's taken a long time to get a little more secure. As our mutual friend, Reggie Joiner, says, "We're all a little insecure. We're all a little insecure." But it's one of those things where, for leaders listening, even on wardrobe, I will check in with people and say... Because you don't want to be that guy who's pulling stuff out of your closet you've worn for the last 30 years. If you're some really weird artist and can pull that off, great. I cannot do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But on the other hand, you don't want to be the guy in his 50s who's trying to convince people he's in his 20s. Get a little bit closer, you'll see the wrinkles. There's lots of them. How I dress, the language that I use, and all of that stuff, that is actually who I am. I am interested in new things. On the other hand, I also realize I'm almost 57. I get it. And I think it's that comfort. Actually, your age is really interesting, because I remember when you were the young gun, you would DJ the parties and that kind of thing and-

Clay Scroggins:

Not any more.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... [inaudible 00:53:22] the whole deal. And now you've got teenagers.

Clay Scroggins:

Now I'm going to bed when the party's happening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But I remember your 40s, early... How old are you now, Clay?

Clay Scroggins:

41.

Carey Nieuwhof:

41. Yeah. I remember that 41 to 45, 40 to 45 being the, "Okay. I can still pull off the young leader." And if you're hanging out with 80-year-olds, you'll always be the young leader, which is fine. But the kids don't think you're young anymore. You're a middle aged man with kids of your own and you're like, "Now what do I do?" So I think it's just getting comfortable in your own skin, going, "Okay, I can't do that and I'm not here, but maybe I get to speak into this."

Clay Scroggins:

I love it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is this an example of vulnerability? Just like, "Okay, here's how I actually try to process this stuff, just take people behind the scenes." That's what I try to do.

Clay Scroggins:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because I'm always interested in behind-the-scenes. That's why I want to know how the last six month's been for you. That's why I want to know what are you seeing? What are you not seeing? What else is involved in vulnerability?

Clay Scroggins:

Yes. And I think it's catching yourself in those moments when you're tempted to edit, when you're tempted to-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Clay Scroggins:

... posture and say, "Hey, here's the best and I'm going to hide the rest." It's resisting doing that and saying instead, "You know what? I'm going to let you see the fact that I don't have it all together, that I struggled with what to wear or struggled with how to show up or struggled with how to prepare for this." Angela Ahrendts taught me a great lesson on this. She's former CEO of Burberry and then her last post was she was the senior VP of retail at Apple. You've interviewed her before?

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, I haven't, but I would love to.

Clay Scroggins:

You should have her. She's fabulous.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All introductions appreciated, my friend. Yeah.

Clay Scroggins:

Well, she is wonderful. Tim Cook hired her away from Burberry. It was a huge move. When she was stepping onto the executive leadership team at Apple, I believe she was the only woman at the time, only female on that team. So I can't imagine how intimidating to be on that team, period, but to be the only female on that team. Her first role was to unify the 70,000 retail employees at Apple. That can't be a hard job, right? And she said-

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's pretty easy.

Clay Scroggins:

She's like, "So I'm like, 'Oh my goodness! How do I even do this?'" She said one of the first things she set out to do is, "I'm going to send out a quick video every Monday morning called Three Points in Three Minutes. Real simple. Just here's what's on top of my head. Here's what I've been thinking about. I'm just going to get it out to you." She said she's shooting one of the first ones she does and her phone rings in the middle of it and it's her daughter who's a college student in London at the time.

Clay Scroggins:

And she was like, "I had to get the phone because I just didn't want to send my daughter a voicemail and she doesn't call the time. I was really wanting to talk with her. Answered the phone, I said, 'Hey, real quick, I'm in the middle video, but as soon as I'm done, I'm going to call you right back. Love you. Bye.'" She hangs up the phone, she gets right back into the video. They wrap it up, the crew's getting their stuff packed up, and she said, "Hey, when we send it out, I want to send it out just like that, with the phone call in it." And the crew's like, "Hey, don't get crazy, Angela. We are Apple. We make beautiful things."

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're Apple. We can fix that.

Clay Scroggins:

"We can edit that. We actually-

Carey Nieuwhof:

We can bring your AI in.

Clay Scroggins:

That's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Come on.

Clay Scroggins:

"We created the software that can edit it." Anyway, and she says, "No, no, no. Send it out just like that." She said, "Next morning I woke up and I had hundreds of emails in my inbox from Apple retail associates telling me, 'Thank you. Thank you for pulling back the curtain and showing us that you are a real person, that you're trying to be a-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow!

Clay Scroggins:

... great mom as well, that you feel the demands of everyday life like we do, and yet you're still trying to bring your very best to work to do life's greatest work. That's what we're trying to do as well." I just was so struck by how simple, but how profound and how scary that had to be on her part to go, "You know what? I'm intimidated, it's Apple, everything's got to be perfect and great and shiny." And she's like, "Nope, I want it to be real." So I would just say I have a 30-year-old guy that helps me with social media.

Clay Scroggins:

He's been tremendous on this kind of stuff, because I'll be like, "Hey," he's like, "Hey, we need a video from you that says this, this, this, this, this, and whatever." And I'm like, "Hey, I'm at my daughter's soccer game right now. I'm not really at a place where I can shoot a video." He's like, "No, no, no, no, no. Do it just like that. Tell everyone." Or I'm like, "Hey, I got to be honest with you. I feel really insecure about doing that because I don't really know if I can talk about that."

Clay Scroggins:

And he's like, "Just say it. Just say it. Just like that. Say that you feel insecure talking about it and then go for it." And I just think that refusal to edit... Now, of course there are times when we have to edit and there are times when we should edit the video, but I just think learn to live in a state where you're real, hey, I'm not trying to be shiny and slick, I'm trying to be fully me and as passionate as I may still feel, but I'm trying to be fully me, I just think that is the future. That's the future of leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to go deeper into that and I don't know exactly where to. I mean, part of that is the MO of this podcast, right? From episode one, I really haven't edited. I always give the guest editing rights. If something came out that you don't want, we'll cut it out. I think that's happened five times. So basically, this is just the conversation. But I want it to feel like dinner, I want it to feel like lunch, I want it to feel like coffee. So-

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, I was going to ask-

Carey Nieuwhof:

... we're kind of meandering, we're... Yeah.

Clay Scroggins:

About 10 minutes ago, I coughed. Will you edit that?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, no.

Clay Scroggins:

See, that's probably an example where it's like, okay, well, if you're editing a cough, you're doing that for the listening pleasure, to make the experience better for the listener. But learning-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we might edit it. But you know what I said, "Bless you," and you said, "Okay," and I realized in my head that couldn't be a good edit, that would be a very difficult edit to make. So I don't know. Toby, what are you going to do? You going to edit that out or leave it in? If we have a technical malfunction, yes, I'm going to cut that out.

Clay Scroggins:

Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let's say we lose signal or your mic dies or something like that, yeah, we're not going to make that an awkward hearing experience. For the leader who's resisting vulnerability, okay, you know this and I know this. There's some leaders who in the name of vulnerability do their counseling session on the air.

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know that's always helpful.

Clay Scroggins:

No. No.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Then there are other leaders who are like, "I'm Bulletproof. I got this all figured out."

Clay Scroggins:

Nothing's ever wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof:

"Follow me and your life will be perfect."

Clay Scroggins:

Yeah, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Nothing's ever wrong. Where's the line for leaders who are like, "Yeah, I need to be a little more vulnerable or perhaps I'm oversharing."? Is there a line that you follow?

Clay Scroggins:

Well, I would say ask the people around you. I think you need to have some real honest mirrors in your life who will tell you, "Yeah, you're probably less vulnerable than you used to be." I mean, we all know that the more famous you get, the more tempted you'll be to be less vulnerable. We typically don't get more vulnerable when we get more famous, we typically get less vulnerable, right?

Clay Scroggins:

And that's what's oftentimes ironic, the vulnerability is the thing that drew people in, and now that they're in, you're feeling more of a need to show them that you've got it all together now. So I would just say, pay attention to that. I would say, secondly, pay attention to... I don't know how great it is to be vulnerable about things that are still in process. So I wouldn't suggest as a leader showing up to your meeting on Monday and saying, "Wow! It was a hard weekend. My wife moved out. I don't know if we're going to make it." That's probably a little too in the moment. I think-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Probably talk to your counselor and a few close friends about that one and then-

Clay Scroggins:

I think so. Maybe not at the team meeting.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... try to figure what your next steps are. Yeah.

Clay Scroggins:

But I think-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, I think that's-

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, go ahead.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Go.

Clay Scroggins:

No, you go.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I was going to say helpful. That's what I try to do. Will this help someone who hears it? And if the answer is yes, then I can probably share it. Or let's say I am having a disagreement with my wife... She does listen to every episode. Thank you, Toni. You're a gem. Well, let's say I'm having an-

Clay Scroggins:

Every episode?

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm pretty sure.

Clay Scroggins:

That is remarkable.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's been a long marriage.

Clay Scroggins:

I know my wife listens to every one of your episodes, but I didn't know that your wife does as well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thank you, Jenny. But if Toni and I have an open loop on something, for me to go and talk about that publicly is probably not... That's not the right time. Because I don't think I'm helping anybody. I'm certainly offending her or wronging her, or whatever that is called I'm doing it.

Clay Scroggins:

That's a good outlier.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I got one more question because you've covered so much. Oh yeah. How about this. Success doesn't have to be a scarce commodity because there is this sense and this constantly dynamic being afraid to

fail, change happening so fast, being vulnerable. It almost feels like success is... You just can't be successful. And you're saying, "No, no, no. That's not true." Is that what you're saying?

Clay Scroggins:

That is what I'm saying. And I'm saying that we oftentimes think of success as there's this limited supply of it and I have to go get it, and once I get it, I've gotten something that other people might not get. And when someone else gets it, that now there's less of it for me to get. We all know this to be true. I mean, research has shown us this over and over again. This is where the gospel really intersects with good, healthy leadership.

Clay Scroggins:

The best kind of leader is the leader that is cheering for the success of others. The best kind of leader is the one that sees the other person's success as his own or her own success, that sees, "Hey, if you're not successful, I can't be successful." A lot of times, in a camp fire, you think about the simple illustration of a campfire, we all go away and collect sticks and then it provides warmth and community and everybody's having a great conversation.

Clay Scroggins:

Nobody's sitting there staring at the fire going, "Was that Carey stick that lit or was that mine? Because I'm going to be so mad if it was Carey's and not mine because that's really annoying." No, we don't do that. We're just like, "Who cares? Just put the stick in the fire, and if there's a great fire, wonderful, we're all better for it." That has got to be our mentality and our posture in the future. Of course, success is possible for every single one of us, but I think we have to see it completely connected to and correlated to the success of other people.

Clay Scroggins:

Frank Blake on Tim Ferris's podcast I thought just told a awesome story about Jack Welch. Frank Blake was the former CEO of The Home Depot in Atlanta. We're really proud of that company. Jack Welch was his mentor. Jack Welch, famous GE CEO, wrote the book Straight From the Gut that I read when I was 20 years old, which made me realize that I wouldn't cut it in corporate America. Jack Welch was a remarkable leader.

Clay Scroggins:

Frank said he'd go up there every year and they'd talk about money, they talk about org chart, numbers, finances, whatever. He said down to the detail of the cost of a product. He said it was so detailed he couldn't believe it. He said but the last time he went, he knew he was already retiring and he knew he was able to ask him anything. And so he asked him, "Hey, Jack, what is the greatest quality in a leader?" And he said, "It's generosity."

Clay Scroggins:

And he said that just shocked him because he just was like, "Whoa! That's not what I thought. I thought strategic planning. I thought great communicator. I thought able to cast vision, able to execute." But the idea that generosity is the hallmark of great leaders, it is a little shocking. It's a little surprising to think, but it's what we all want in each other, it's what we all want in the other person. I want to know that that person's in this for me and not in this for him or for her and vice versa.

Clay Scroggins:

Or to flip that, I need to be the kind of leader that lets people know, "Hey, I'm in this for you. I'm not in this for me." I just think the future is going to demand more of that than the past even did. That's always been an important quality. It's going to be even more important as we look to the future.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I think that's true. And you're getting into, not to be cliché, but abundance versus scarcity-

Clay Scroggins:

Exactly. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... thinking which I really believe. I'd say the early me was probably a little more scarcity, and certainly over the last two decades, it's been a lot of more of abundance and your success does not have to come at anyone's expense and neither does mine if I have any, right? We just have an abundant mentality. And I think that's very kingdom-driven as well for those of us who are people of faith. Okay, Clay. Book is called *The Aspiring Leader's Guide to the Future*, comes out in January. So I think by the time this airs, it'll be out.

Clay Scroggins:

Wonderful.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Tell us where they can find you these days.

Clay Scroggins:

Well, clayscroggins.com is my website. I'm on social media, but... I would just say, Carey, what you do... When I talked to you, you and I spoke on Instagram Live a couple weeks ago about this topic of the future of leadership. I feel so humbled to get to talk to you about this because I've told you this, your blog that you write at the beginning of every year, what are the trends we see? I've always seen you as this... You've got this ridiculously innate ability to predict the future and to see what's coming before it's coming, except for all the things that you wrote and didn't see it coming, that you did not see coming.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm missing the important things in life.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh my gosh!

Carey Nieuwhof:

But I catch all the trivial things, Clay.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh my gosh! That's my problem, Carey. Here I am, I'm in the middle of going like, "I really want to tell Carey how much he means to me," and I think of this stupid, funny connection with the book that he wrote called *Didn't See It Coming* as I'm telling him about how well he sees stuff coming. Anyway, I genuinely mean that, that I'm so humbled talking to you about this because so much of what you do is you see the future.

Clay Scroggins:

You can't predict the future. If you could, you wouldn't be doing what you're doing now for sure. But it's so important for us all to hang our own dart board up on the wall of, where do I see this going? Because that Gretzky quote, "Don't skate to where the puck has been, skate to where the puck is going," we need to be developing into the kind of leader that the future is going to demand.

Clay Scroggins:

And the only way to begin doing that is to put something up on the wall and say, "I think this is where we're headed and I'm going to start becoming that kind of leader." And you've been doing that for years, and so it's very intimidating to talk to you about this topic. But I just cannot tell you how much I appreciate you giving me a little bit of your limelight.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I really appreciate you, Clay, and our friendship goes back a long time. I respect you as a leader. It's a great book. I had the privilege of reading an early copy to endorse it. And I think it is changing. I know you probably wrote this with young leaders in mind, but I would suggest it's good for any stage of leader. I think a lot of future planning is just connecting the dots.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You mentioned *Seinfeld*. That's one thing I've realized, because people say, "How do you see the future?" It's like, "Well, I don't know that I do." But if you notice what comedians are, is they're noticers, they notice things. Nate Bargatze, so many others who you turned me on to, I think, for the first time years ago as a young comedian. Comedians, they notice things that we miss.

Clay Scroggins:

Yep.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The clues are there and you've done a really good job of pulling the clues together and I try to do that as well. So, clayscroggins.com.

Clay Scroggins:

That's great. Thanks.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Clay, I know this won't be the last time. Thank you so much, my friend.

Clay Scroggins:

Oh, loved it. Yep. Thanks, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, fascinating as always with Clay. And hey, hang on because I got a big announcement in just a couple of minutes. I want to share with you an invite that is brand new. We're doing something really big and I want you to be part of it. But just so you know, you can get the show notes over at careynieuwhof.com/episode476. Want to thank our partners for this episode.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You can get a custom website and web maintenance by going to prowebfire.com. Tell them I sent you, you'll get a discount. And go to leadr.com, that's L-E-A-D-R, no second E, and use the promo code, Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, to get 20% off your first year of their people development software. Before I tell you who's coming up next, we have something really big happening. I've got a mastermind, it's free, and you can register at influencekickstarter.com. What's it about?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, whether it's for yourself, your church, or your business, as you know, trying to build an online presence can be intimidating and even discouraging. It can feel like you're taking a shot in the dark. But here's the thing, your message deserves to be heard, right? And your influence determines how seriously people take that message. Some of you have an email list, but nobody opens your email. Some of you are posting to social, you get three likes and almost no views.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's like, "Well, how can I change that?" Well, in the mastermind, I'm going to talk about the art of online influence because your online influence decides who joins you and who stays with you on your mission, who gives to your cause, and the quality and quantity of people that you have the potential to impact. So on March 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, I'm hosting a free mastermind on how to build an influential online presence.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Building influence doesn't have to be intimidating, doesn't have to be complicated, doesn't have to be gimmicky. It doesn't have to ruin your integrity. You can do it well. And I'm sharing a lot of stuff I've never shared publicly before. For example, we'll talk about how we built this to over 20 million downloads plus some of the other things that we have discovered online. So if you want to register, bring your whole team, it's free. You can go to influencekickstarter.com.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's influencekickstarter.com. You can head on over there. Now that you know, podcast listeners, yeah, we're going to continue to do this too. Next episode, we've got Jennie Allen. I flew down to Dallas, we met in her studio. So we have a beautiful YouTube shooting of this one, but of course, you can hear it here as well, wherever you listen to your podcast. She's a New York Times bestselling author and she talks about community, the friendship she's had, the struggle she's had, what do you do when you naturally resist community? It was raw, it was real, it was powerful. Here's an excerpt.

Jennie Allen:

It's not fun to tell people that you want to respect you that you had a panic attack like last week, right? When I wrote it, it was a week earlier that I'd had it. That's not fun. But I do believe that in saying it out loud and writing it, the fear went away. I had been up at night, enough to have a panic attack, which I hadn't had in 10 years, and I've had lots of anxiety in my life, right? I mean, I started at home. There's a lot of anxiety. A lot of children, lots of ministry, lots of work. The enemy was using it and building it in my head every night to a level that I had a panic attack.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And you know, subscribers, the drill, right? You'll get it automatically. If you're new, and a lot of you are, and you haven't subscribed yet, please do. Also coming up, an incredible interview with Philip Yancey, Ian Morgan Cron, Joshua Becker who talks about minimalism a lot, Levi Lusko, and Deon Nicholas, and a whole lot more coming up on the podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Make sure you check out my mastermind. It's happening March 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, just for an hour a day, going to have lots of Q&A. You can register at influencekickstarter.com. It's absolutely free. Thank you so much for listening. 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.