

Speaker 1:

The Art of Leadership Network.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Welcome to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. It's Carey here. I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. And we have Stephen M. R. Covey on the podcast today. I read his book, *The Speed of Trust*, about a decade ago when it came out. So influential in how I lead my team. And he, of course, is the son of Stephen R. Covey. And we're going to talk about how to scale an organization beyond its founder growing up in Stephen Covey's home. Yes, the Stephen Covey of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and how to create high trust teams.

Today's episode is brought to you by Pro MediaFire. You can get your communications and creative work done for less than a staff hire by going to promediafire.com/carey. And by Compassion International, meet a practical need for a child in poverty this holiday season. Yep, not too early to think about Christmas by going to compassion.com/givingtree/carey. More about that in a minute.

But man, I'm so excited to have a conversation with Stephen Covey. Stephen M. R. Covey is the New York Times and number one Wall Street Journal bestselling author of *The Speed of Trust*. He's also the author of the new book *Trust and Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others*. He brings to his writings the perspective of a practitioner as he is the former president and CEO of the Covey Leadership Center, where he increased shareholder value by 67X and grew the company to become the largest leadership development company in the world. He has a Harvard MBA and he co-founded and currently leads FranklinCovey's global trust practice. He sits on numerous boards, including the Government Leadership Advisory Council. He's been recognized with a lifetime achievement award for Top Thought Leaders in Trust from the advocacy group Trust Across America-Trust Around the World. And he's a highly sought-after speaker who has taught trust in leadership in 55 countries to business, government, military, education, healthcare and NGO entities.

And today we're going to sit down and we are going to pick his brain on all things trust, Stephen Covey, what it was really like to grow up in Stephen R. Covey's home and so much more. I don't know about you, but *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* has been a formational book for me as it has for millions of others. So I hope you enjoyed this conversation. Welcome to all of you who are new. If you enjoy it, leave a rating and review. And we want to thank everybody for making this podcast what it is. Every single month it grows and that's because you keep sharing the message.

So a question for you. For those of you who lead churches, small businesses and nonprofits, have you been hit by the challenge of inflation and staff leaving for higher paying jobs? Because staff turnover is at an all time high. In the communications, media and creative departments, it's now 30% annually. Well, there is a way to get your communication and creative work done for less than the cost of a staff hire. With Pro MediaFire, there's no cost of health benefits, payroll tax, and no risk of scrambling for help with a two-week notice. So if you want Pro MediaFire's help with any of the following: custom website design, complete social media management, graphic design, video creation, digital growth strategy, get a free consultation today. Here's all you do. Go to promediafire.com/carey. That's promediafire.com/C-A-R-E-Y. Simply, my name.

Also, leaders, I love Compassion. I love what they do. Our church is partnered with them when I was the lead pastor of Connexus. We partnered with them. We still do. My wife and I, we support a couple of kids around the world. But what you may not know is that in all 26 countries where Compassion works, they partner exclusively with local churches to release children from poverty, in Jesus' name. The local church is the hero.

So if your church wants to partner with the local church, well, the holiday season is a perfect time to get started and it's not too early to plan. Compassion has a really cool opportunity called the Giving Tree. It's a simple way for your church to share the love of Christ with children in need by decorating a tree with ornaments that represent a variety of gift options. Each gift is designated to meet the practical need for a child in poverty. You can check it out.

So here's what you have to do. You got to think about this for a second. Go to compassion.com/givingtree/carey. So that's compassion.com/givingtree/C-A-R-E-Y. You can request a free ornament kit from the website, set up a tree in your church lobby and invite families to be part of changing lives that they're giving. Will link to that in the show notes as well.

Well, without further ado here is my conversation with the one and only Stephen M. R. Covey.

Well, Stephen, welcome to the podcast.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Hi Carey. Hey, great to be with you. Excited to be on this podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I'm super excited you took the time. So you got a brand new book. For those who are watching, it's called Trust and Inspire. And it's all about how truly great leaders unleashed greatness in others. But I want to pull the camera back a little bit to get started. So you dedicate the book to your parents, Sandra and Stephen R. Covey. A lot of people would know your dad's work, as well as your work, from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, which probably has to be one of the best-selling leadership books of all time. Is it not now at this point?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

I think it is.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It is, yeah.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

It's got some 40 million copies and in I think 48 languages. So yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

40 million copies.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

And the interesting thing about it, Carey, is that it was published in 1989 initially, but it continues to sell huge, huge amounts every year. So it is...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, when I look at the top 100 leadership books, it's almost always in there and that's amazing. It's like we had Gary Chapman on and the same thing with The Five Love Languages.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He told me, we were at an event once, and he's like, "Yeah. It sells more copies every year. And we don't know why." But that's a great book and...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

It's because of word of mouth. And the word of mouth happens because, I mean, speaking of Five Love Languages, it's so relevant. So practical. People hear this, what's your love language? And they, "I want to learn about this." They get it. And so they pick it up. And I think The Seven Habits has had a similar thing. I think it's more relevant today than ever before in a topsy-turvy world to kind of get a sense of who I am. And the idea of a private victory proceeding a public victory, independence proceeding interdependence. And just this whole process, I think it's extremely timely and relevant because it's based upon principles that are timeless.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Beginning with the end in mind, working on your business, not in your business, all of those things are...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Definitely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... so, so helpful. So I want to start with childhood. I don't go there with every guest, but I would imagine that growing up in Stephen Covey's home was not a typical childhood experience, or maybe it was, because he writes about you and your siblings in The Seven Habits. You're probably still at home back in the day, or he's remembering a time when you were. Did you know early on that you had a different kind of mother and father?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Probably. Yes. I think that it was all I knew at the time. So in a sense, I didn't know any different initially. And at the time when I was growing up, my father was less known than he was later. And so I didn't... And he wasn't writing the stories, the books yet. But I knew both my dad and my mom were good... They were good parents, because all the other kids in the neighborhood seemed to love to come over to our house. And they would say things like, "Your dad, your mom, they're so great." And I just assumed everyone's dad and mom was great. But that's not always the case, not often the case. And so over time as a young boy growing up, I started to realize that I've got it pretty good. I've got great parents and not everyone does. And that's a blessing. And so over time I came to realize that. Maybe I didn't know it initially because that's all I knew. But over time I started to realize I'm pretty fortunate here to have such great parents.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You tell a story at the beginning of Trust and Inspire, and I think it's a full circle, because your dad told a similar story in one of his books about... I think you were about seven years old and he wanted you to cut the grass and took a very different approach than I would've taken with my kids. I would've been,

"Why didn't you cut the grass?" But tell me, tell us about the way he approached it, because I thought it was just brilliant.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. That I kind of... Say this is what I mean by trust and inspire, what I experienced as a child. And what it was he wanted... It was actually to water the lawn and take care of it. This is back in the days before automatic sprinklers. So that was a big deal back then. And we had three separate patches of grass and three separate sprinkler systems. And it was a big yard. This was a pretty big yard, a lawn. So basically rather than just dictating and saying, "Hey, do this, do that. I'll direct you," just kind of mandate or command it, instead he said, "I want to turn this job over to you. You own it. You're responsible for it. So let me train you about what the job is. And all I care about is the outcomes, the results. I want the lawn to be green. I want the lawn to be clean. Green and clean. Now how you do it is up to you. You decide. All I care is about the outcomes."

"Now, if I were you," he said, "I turn on the sprinklers because that would be the most efficient way to do it. But you don't have to. You could use a hose or even buckets or spit all day long, as long as the yard is green and clean." So he was empowering me and delegating outcomes, results in me, not methods, not supervising methods and not supervising me, but rather empowering me. But then he also built in some accountability into this. He said, "And let's also do this. How about if once a week we walk the yard and then you can tell me how you're doing. I'm not going to judge you. You judge yourself. You can judge yourself against green and clean."

And so he built in accountability, built in kind of the outcomes, the expectations. And then he turned it over to me. And again, I'm seven. I mean, you're seven. You're just playing ball in the neighborhood. And at first, Carey, at first I did nothing for five days in a row after turning it over to me. And it was the middle of the summer and it was scorching hot. The lawn was turning more and more yellow by the day. And there was garbage thrown everywhere from a neighborhood barbecue we held. So it was anything but green and clean. And my dad said that he came this close, just so close at just taking the job right back, thinking...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Pulling a dad move.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. Yeah. "He's too young. What was I thinking? He can't do this." But he did and he stayed with it. He said, "Well, let me go back to what we agreed." And he said, "Hey, why don't we walk around like we agreed and you can tell me how it's going?" So we began to walk around and I looked around and I realized, "This is not green and it's not clean. It was yellow. It was messy." And I began to break down and cry. And I said, "Dad, this is just so hard." And he said, "Well, what's hard, son? You haven't done anything yet." But what was hard was me kind of learning to take this responsibility, to own it, to take responsibility, an initiative to own this. And I said, "Would you help me, dad?" He said, "What was our agreement?" I said, "Well, you told me you'd help me if you had time." He goes, "That's right." "Do you have time, dad?" "I've got time." I said, "Oh good."

I ran into the house. I got a couple of garbage sacks. I came out. I took one. I gave him a garbage sack and I said, "Dad, would you go pick up that garbage over there because it kind of makes me want to vomit?" And he said, "Hey, I'm your helper, whatever you want. You tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it. I have time." So I began to instruct my dad on what to do. And it was at that moment that I

realized, "You know what? This is my job. I own this. Look, I'm directing my dad. He's my helper. I'm responsible. This is my job." And that moment, it kind of got written into my heart where I took responsibility and I owned the job. And the rest of that summer and many summers beyond that, the lawn was green and the lawn was clean. I owned it. I didn't need to be reminded about it. I took responsibility as a young seven-year-old.

Now my dad would tell this story in Seven Habits and other venues where he'd talk about this being a good example of stewardship delegation or a win-win performance agreement. And it was those things, but I was seven years old. I didn't know what those words meant. But Carey, here's what I knew as a seven-year-old, I felt trusted. I felt my father trusted me and I didn't want to let him down. And I was inspired by that and I rose to the occasion and I developed capabilities and I learned responsibility and I took initiative and responded to the trust he gave me. He treated me according to my potential, not just according to my behavior. Because at first I was doing nothing and I responded to it and rose to the occasion. And I just realized, in retrospect, as I look back on it, I had a trust and inspire parent. Someone who believed in me, who saw my potential, who communicated to me my potential so I could come to see it, who then gave me opportunities to develop it, and to really unleash me in a way.

And he later said, when he thought about this, when he was going to just take over the job, take it back, he said, "What's my goal here really?" And then he said, "It's to raise kids, not grass. So that's my real goal. And I want my son to learn how to take responsibility more than I care about the yard." And so it's a great example. And again, it's low stakes because if the lawn is not as green and clean, that's not life or death. But the principles apply not just to doing yard work, but really to any task, any outcome we're trying to achieve through people where we empower people, where we extend trust to people. If you clarify expectations and agree to a process of accountability, then you build an agreement and the agreement can govern as opposed to you having to hover over and micromanage a person. Because no one likes that. No one likes to be micromanaged. But they like to be responsible with clear outcomes and within a process for accountability that they've agreed to, that they were part of creating, brings out the best in all of us.

And I think that that's just a good model of a trust and inspire leader as a parent. And I think you can apply it to really all walks of life. And in some cases, the outcome, the green-and-clean lawn, the equivalent of that might be more important than it was to my dad, the actual outcome of our lawn. But the point is you always want to get the result in a way that grows the people. And that's what Trust and Inspire is about. Command and control is just getting the result through people. You use people to get results. And push to the extreme you could use them too much and go too far. And they're just a means to an end. Trust and Inspire is saying people are an end in and of themselves. We want to get results in a way that grows people. I experienced it at a young age with my dad. I'd say the same thing about my mom too. She was very much trust and inspire.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I want to ask you about your mom. And I just got to say for the record, I know the book was out before I had my kids, but I wish I had taken better notes because I would love to go back 25 years and use that as strategy with my kids rather than command and control. What did you learn from your mother?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Many things. But my mother was fiercely loyal to her kids and she believed in her kids and she helped them come to believe in themselves because of her confidence that she had. And you just felt it. And I mean, you having a hard day at school and she was right there. She'd take your side. It's interesting. My dad and my mom would kind of... They were very complimentary. My dad would say things like, "Take

responsibility. You own this. Don't blame the teacher." My mom would be more like saying, "Oh, that teacher. What's wrong with them? I'm in your corner. I'm with you." And you liked both. You loved how my mom made you feel that she was in your corner. She had your back. But my dad also was saying, "Hey, don't be reactive. Take responsibility." And the combination of both, and my mom was also teach the same principles. But with my mom, you just knew that she believed in you, she affirmed you, she had confidence in you, and she had your back. She was fiercely loyal. And you loved feeling that way as a child.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you totally would. So a lot of leaders listening are in the public spotlight. A lot of them are pastors. They're CEOs. They're small business owners. And that means they're kind of on when they're in public. And as you said, your dad became better known as you got older, but you had some element of public spotlight growing up and you watched your parents steward that or handle that. What did you learn from your parents on handling the public spotlight? And then what would you say to leaders who are listening who are trying to navigate that tricky ground of raising their kids in the aquarium, so to speak, where everybody can see in through the glass? Any tips or things you learned along the way about doing that?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. A couple of thoughts on that. I think it's an important question, Carey. The first is that we're all human. None of us are perfect. My parents weren't perfect either. And so when you're not trying to pretend and put on a front that's inauthentic, that's not real, just for the sake of appearance. And sometimes when you're in the spotlight, it's kind of easy to say, "I've got to have this public persona that's perfect." And then there's sometimes a disconnect with your private life, where it's not so perfect and none of us are perfect. And so just being real and authentic and human all the time and not one person in public, another person in private, but the same person as best you can. An imperfect human being but one that's trying, trying to get better and improve.

My dad and mom shared an experience that my dad wrote about in *The Seven Habits*. I'll just give a shorthand version of it where one of my younger brothers, so now they're becoming a little bit... better known. He was kind of a late bloomer in life. A little bit behind his age group at first. And so he was a little bit socially awkward and everything. And at first my parents were a little bit embarrassed that he was not developing as clear. And they let the social pressure of being known as... Because my dad was at this point starting to get some reputation. And yet here's a child that was struggling a little bit and wanted to convey that, "Hey, we're good parents and we know how to raise kids."

And so they're a little bit... They let the social pressure. My dad writes about it saying that, "We started to be concerned about what other people thought. And then we came to and realized, it doesn't matter what other people think. How do we see our own son? How are we seeing him and communicating that to him? And if we see him as slower in developing, then we're perpetuating this very thing. Let's look at his unique gifts and strengths and talents and believe in him." And they just said that they quit worrying about external appearance and they focused on just seeing the potential in him, seeing the greatness and the talents and treating him according to his potential and not worrying about what other people thought. And it changed everything.

And he was. He was just a late bloomer. And he bloomed and he was extraordinary. He became in high school this all-state football player, all-province equivalent football player and a track star and a leader in the student government and a perfect student and great friend. I mean, he blossomed completely. But my parents kind of had to go through their own process of not worrying about perception on the

outside of being perfect, but instead just believing in their child, communicating that belief to them, and helping them see it in themselves and develop. And so that was kind of a learning thing that my dad writes about in Seven Habits that he had to focus more on the benefit of his child, not on how other people might perceive everything. So that's a great insight.

But the other insight I'll give you. So my dad really did get good at this, to where he had real integrity. And one way of looking about honesty and integrity, honesty is when your words match reality. You're telling the truth, your words match reality. Integrity is when your reality matches your words. You are who you say you are. And so that's integrity. That your reality is... You are who you say you are. You do your best to walk the talk.

In my father's funeral, here's what I shared about him that is maybe the kindest thing I could say, but also the most accurate thing. And it's simply this, Carey. That as good as my father was in public as an author and as a teacher, and he was very, very good. As good as he was in public, he was even better in private...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh wow.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

... as a husband to my mother, as a father to us kids. He was who you thought he was. Sometimes people can stand up in front of an audience and give a great presentation or sermon or facilitation, whatever it might be, and just wow an audience and then they walk off stage and they're like a different person in how they treat other people. Well, my father was... He was good on stage, even outstanding. And he was even better off stage of how he treated everybody, everyone with respect, everyone with kindness, who had taken interest in everyone.

I get people to this day, 10 years after his passing, that come up to me and say, "Can I tell you a story about being with your dad? I was just the AV guy and yet he talked to me and listened to me and he asked me about my family. But more than anything, I felt like he cared and he really listened. Then I ran into him at another event and he remembered me and asked about my child and the things I told him." He goes, "I just can't believe this." And I hear this frequently, Carey. And so my point is you just try to be authentic, the same person. We align our public life with our private life and our inner life. None of us are perfect, but we're trying to be, not to seem. And that is a process of being. But it's very easy to want to seem one way when we're not. And I think it's a bigger idea to say, "Let's try to be who we are and be authentic and align our public, our private and our inner lives."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I think I've read The Seven Habits a couple of times. But I'm pretty sure it's in The Seven Habits, I'm a little rusty on it, where your dad talks about the funeral and what people are going to say and to look ahead to that moment about what you want people to say at your funeral and then reverse engineer your life and your character and your habits accordingly. Is that right? Is that an accurate remembrance?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

He does. It's part of Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind.

Carey Nieuwhof:

With The End in Mind, yeah.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

And he said, "Look, at your funeral, what would you like people to say, and from different walks of life, about you? And that kind of reflects really what maybe your most important values are because would you want them to say he focused on just making money? Or would you want them to say that he focused on making a difference and contributing and these different things?" And he later kind of amended it from his funeral and said, "Okay. It's your 80th birthday." Just so that it wasn't...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, okay. So you get to hear it. You get to hear it.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

... the end of your life. A little bit more positive of, "Okay, your 80th birthday, there's a special celebration. And you got people that are going to stand up and talk about you from different walks of life. What do you want them to say?" And that was his more happy, happier way of doing the same idea, but...

Carey Nieuwhof:

He's always so encouraging.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Go ahead.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Just to begin with the end in mind, what is it that's most important to you? And he would say things like, "No one on their deathbed ever wished that they would've spent more time at the office." Because probably what matters most to people is relationships, not things. And then he also was fond of saying, "Life is about contribution, not accumulation." Just a mindset of always contributing, focusing on the relationship. And he modeled it.

Again, I don't want to present my dad as perfect because he struggled too like all of us. And you don't have to be perfect as public figures. You just have to be real and authentic and trying and coming back to what... If you teach something, you need to believe it and do your best to live it. And on another occasion, Carey, my father was asked, "So Dr. Covey, do you live The Seven Habits?" And he said, "About 80% of the time. Because I try a hundred percent, but I fall short. But when I fall short, I try to course correct as best I can. But about 80% of the time." And he is kind of saying, "Look, I struggle too. But I believe it and I come back to it time and time again."

Carey Nieuwhof:

What were some of his struggles? Looking back on it, what were some areas that, to the extent that you're comfortable sharing, you would say, "Yeah, that was something my dad had to keep working on for years"?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. Well, early, this is when he was younger as a parent. He was not as patient. He struggled with patience and he got frustrated. And I remember we'd go on family vacations and his goal was to leave at 8:00 in the morning and everything. And we'd end up leaving at 2:00 in the afternoon because no one was ready and everyone... He was trying to get out and he would have all these great plans. And he just gets so frustrated of no one being ready and had taken so long and this and that. But he handled it pretty well, but he would get frustrated. And he was always a great listener. He always had that capacity. But learning patience was something that was significant for him. I shared the one learning that he had to learn to not worry about appearance and what people thought, but rather just focus on what he believed was the right thing to do. And that's not an easy thing. Things like that and...

Carey Nieuwhof:

How makes him human, right?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

He's human. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I can relate to that. The "Hey, we're leaving at 8:00, 2:00" and patience and all of that. But I think what's encouraging and inspiring is we all can think of leaders who wrote something like *Begin With the End in Mind*, imagine what people are going to say in your funeral, but then you hear the private version and it's not good. They never really synced up with what their public talk and private walk was all about. And it's really refreshing to hear Stephen Covey's son say, "No, actually my dad was those things." And it's very, for the most part, as far as you get on this side of eternity that you can say that with conviction and integrity is really inspiring and encouraging.

I just met with a group of leaders this week. And my wife and I have been married 32 years and we certainly have been through the wringer. And she wrote about it and I've written about it. But they walked away saying, "It's really nice to see that it can end well. Or at least 20 years down the road, it doesn't have to be a disaster." And I think we need more of that in the world today.

So I want to pick up, Stephen, because your dad wrote a book, he was a great leader, he had a team around him, et cetera, et cetera. But then under your leadership, I mean, you've led a number of organizations. The Covey brand has grown to become the largest leadership development company in the world. You are also now leading CoveyLink, the Covey Leadership Center, FranklinCovey Global Trust, so on and so forth. So that's remarkable because it got bigger after your father stepped out of active leadership and even after his passing. Can you talk a little bit about that progression and how you had that vision and what some of the steps were to become the premier leadership development company in the world?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. The first thing was that it was built upon the things my father focused, which was principles. And principles are universal. They apply everywhere, as opposed to just merely practices. And now look, you can have good practices. They help illustrate a principle, but the practice is going to vary by context, by culture, by situation. But if you're teaching principles such as integrity and fairness and kindness and empowerment and purpose and contribution, principles that apply everywhere, trust that apply everywhere, then you can really go global with it.

Another key idea was that it's always done from the inside out. Meaning that we all look in the mirror, we start with ourselves as opposed to outside in and where it's everything else. And that matters, the outside. The context matters and the structures and systems matter. But that can be disempowering for someone that he's not in charge of those things. If you go inside out, then that's very empowering. So those two key ideas, focus on principles of leadership and do it from the inside out, enabled us to say, "There's some big ideas behind this and we can go everywhere." And then my dad really trusted and empowered us.

And we had to figure this out, Carey. We had to figure out a good business model to grow this business. And I at first ran the Covey Leadership Center. After a while, I mean, some other people had done it and then they turned it over to me at some point. And we had to figure out a business model, because at the time we had such a wonderful mission to make a difference in the world and in people's lives that we were doing everything. We were involved in any imaginable positive initiative and being stretched way too thin. We didn't have outside capital. We had negative cash flow. We have a lot of debts. We didn't have high margins in our business. And we were going to run out of cash because we were just spread too thin trying to do everything. Being involved in communities, as well as in home and family, as well as in schools, as well as in business. And again, undercapitalized, underfunded, trying to do everything, low margins.

So we kind of had to become clear that if there's no margin, there's no mission. And we have a fabulous mission, but we want that mission to go forward. We also need to run ourselves as a responsible business. So we had to figure out a business model. I think that was one of our breakthroughs is figuring out the business model where we could license and certify and empower clients. Really trust clients to do this themselves without having to bring us in which enabled us to scale. Today, it looks easy because everyone's doing this, but at the time it wasn't. It was kind of a breakthrough.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So explain that pivot a little bit, because you're right. I mean, I was taking notes. It's like, "If there's no margin, there's no mission." I'm like, "Boom. Yeah, there it is." So what was the pivot that was sort of the breakthrough? Because I can see that a lot of particularly benevolent organizations, altruistic charities, churches, and you're not a church, but very altruistic goals. And you're right. Principles scale beyond personalities. But you ran into this model problem that a lot of leaders are struggling with. So can you break down the breakthrough for us?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. Two elements of it. The first was the paradigm of don't see this as either or. Kind of either we're just a business like any other business. Or we're just a cause with a purpose, a mission like any other charitable or mission-driven thing. Don't view it as one or the other, either or. View it as an end. We are a business with a mission. We are a purpose-driven business. But we are a business and we have to run like a business or else we won't have a mission. And if we're all mission oriented, like we were being for a while, we run out of cash. The bank was pulling away our line of credit because it was too big of a risk. And we were going to end up not having the impact when we were running like a business. But if we would've just shifted the pendulum completely to the other side of just saying, "Now we're going to run like a business now."

And we would've lost our people. They wanted to be part of something bigger. They didn't want to be a part of an ordinary business. So we would say, "No, we're not an ordinary business. We're an extraordinary business with an extraordinary mission that matters. And we want to be around to help guide that mission and reach more people with that mission. And we need margin to do that." So that

was the first was the paradigm. The third alternative of a mission-driven business or a purpose-driven business or a business with a mission. We used all those terms. And that was the paradigm. When we were all mission driven, that was a little bit of a course correction to say, "We got to run ourselves like a business in order to have impact with our mission."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

And then, the second thing was then figuring out that business model itself. And the key there was we learned how... That we didn't just have... At first, it was just my dad would have to go out and give the speech or give the presentation to the client. But there's only one on my dad and there's only so many places he can go. And then it was, okay, my dad and maybe a few others can do what he can do. So we trained some and they got really good and they could do it. But that still was still limited in how many. And to bring us in, you had to hire our people and it was kind of expensive for some people. And then we just said, "Why can't everyone take these principles and apply it? Let's license this. Let's certify people to be able to do it within their own organizations. They don't have to hire us. They can just get some materials from us that will license, letting them do this themselves."

Carey Nieuwhof:

So becoming a certified trainer, right?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Certified trainer. It's common today. In the '80s, this was not common. And so it's kind of a breakthrough of you can trust people. Because some people would say, "Well, when they just copy all the manuals and if you're certifying them, how do you know they're going to do it?" Well, you trust them. You set up the agreement of, "For every person that goes through, they buy materials. And we trust that you tell us who's going through." And people have responded to that. And the point is though, we leveraged ourselves such that we could scale this business. Looks commonplace today. It wasn't at the time.

Even the publication of The Seven Habits book was debated. There were some people that felt like if you publish the book, then no one will hire you for the speech. And you make money on the speech, not on a book. But our thought was, "No, we'll reach more people by publishing the book." And you know what? A lot of people will still say, "Would you come in and talk about this to our company?"

And so that seemed obvious. Seems obvious now everyone's publishing a book. But again, I remember at the time there was some debate that maybe that's given away too much and looks... How could they think that today? But those were some of the things. And so we basically learned how to scale ourselves, scale this as a business, and then we could have global reach. And then suddenly we were running ourselves as a business with a mission and that mission could reach more places and more people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's surprising. It does seem almost axiomatic today that, of course, you can publish it in a book and there's still the opportunity for the talk and everything. But I remember as I built this, what I do now, a decade ago that was an active debate. And I remember having a conversation with one colleague who just said, "You have to stop giving your best ideas away for free." And what's interesting now, I mean,

we do have a few ideas behind the paywall, but a lot of what I say is available for free. This podcast is free. My blog is free. There's over a thousand articles on it, et cetera, et cetera. I'll freely give away a keynote if I talk to a group of leaders. It's like here's my notes, here's my slide deck, et cetera.

And it's a very... I'd love to explore that with you because there's a lot of content creators out there who feel like, "Well, you have to pay to get my best ideas, et cetera." Why does that work? Where somebody will read *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and then back in the day, bring your dad in. Or today, bring someone else in to say exactly what they could have gotten in a \$29 book in hardcover. Why does that work as a business model? Or they'll take the course. Or they'll take the whatever you're handing, the resource, the manual, the PDF, whatever additional content you've got and they will pay for that.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. I think it's because the greatest value in these ideas is not just the idea itself, but the implementation and the application of the idea. And that there's a few people that maybe can read a book and really apply it extremely well in their lives or in their organization. But most of us probably need some help and it's a process of getting better at that. And so for everyone that can apply it themselves, without it, there's at least 10 that would probably say, "Boy, we could use this and we could have some help and really getting good at this and applying this, implementing this."

And I think that... Yeah. So for everyone that maybe you lost some business, I think you're getting at least 10 of creating interest to bring in business. So it's an abundance mentality mindset too. Not a scarcity mentality. Scarcity might be sound economic theory at some scale, but it's not. Scarcity is not good leadership theory. Abundance is far better leadership theory. There's enough for everyone. And the gap between what we would like, the principles we're teaching and our actions and behaviors, it's big enough. We need to close it, work on it. There's enough for all of us.

Even my dad used to endorse all kinds of books. And sometimes people would say, "They're a competitor to you." And he'd say, "Do you think I care? There's enough for everyone. There's enough for all of us. There's a lot of... We want to help move people forward. And these are good ideas and that will help move people forward to have better lives." And so, having an abundance mentality. And that's part of what I write about in this new book *Trust and Inspire*, is that one of the fundamental beliefs of a trust and inspire leader is that I believe that there is enough for everyone. It's an abundance mentality. So my job as a leader is I elevate caring above competing. See, if I'm in a scarcity mentality, then I got to compete for everything, compete for scarce resources, compete for attention, for time, for all these things.

And there's nothing wrong with competing in the marketplace. That's iron sharpens iron sometime. That's a good thing. But we want to compete in the marketplace, but we want to collaborate and care in the workplace with each other. And one of the keys to that is the idea that there's enough for everyone. There's enough of love, of caring, of compassion, of empathy, of trust, of respect, of understanding, of creativity, of innovation, of recognition, of contribution, of everything that's good. There's enough of. So I don't need to compete. I need to complete others and so forth. And that's a mindset of paradigm. I learned it from my father first. And it's not his idea. It's out there, but he just packaged it in a way that was accessible. The idea of an abundance mentality.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Mm-hmm. So this is your third book on trust. And I have probably referred, I don't know, hundreds, thousands of people to read *The Speed of Trust*. I found that so...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... so helpful. When trust is high, cost go down and speed goes up. When trust is low...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

You got it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... what happens? The opposite. It's cost go up and speed goes down. It's just a fascinating organizational study. And once I read it, I felt like, oh my whole life just flashed before my eyes. I saw it. It's such a great paradigm. But this is book number three on trust.

And it was interesting because you make the statement at the beginning that command and control is dead. And I got to give you credit. You kind of own me because the version that I had of a command and control leader is somebody who's probably in his or her 70s now, who probably should have retired a while ago, in a suit trying to grab everyone by lapels and go, "All right. You do what I say, my way or the highway." But it's way more nuanced than that. The examples you give in the book suggests that command and control is still alive and well, even if it doesn't have the stereotype like boomer, elder generation, my way or the highway kind of leader behind it. Can you tell us in your view what command and control leadership really is even as it shows up today?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely. Here's how it shows up today. See, what you described kind of the stereotypical command and control of the older person, kind of out of touch. That might be the authoritarian command and control of the industrial age.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

And most people aren't there anymore. What's happened is we become more advanced, more sophisticated. I call it more enlightened. And we've added things like mission and emotional intelligence and strengths and a lot of different elements that are important to have that are better. But too often, our fundamental mindset and paradigm is still scripted in the old model. It's just we're a lot better version of it. I call it...

Carey Nieuwhof:

We're softer now, but still command and control.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. I call it enlightened command and control. And so it's a far better version of it, but it's still only different by degree. Not in kind. We're still trying to contain people instead of really unleash them. Sometimes we try to control situations. And people even instead of truly unleash them, we try to

motivate people through carrot-and-stick motivation instead of inspire them. And so we're trying to get results through people which is not bad, but people are just the means to an end instead of getting results in a way that grows people.

And so again, it's a kinder, gentler version of it, but there's still maybe more of a desire of, I need to be in control. I need to make sure the outcomes are good. I mean, it could be well-intended. And just even the expression, "If you want to get something done, you have to do it yourself" type of thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's an example of it. Yeah.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

It's just very easy. So it's not so much the authoritarian leader, "My way or the highway," but more like, "I got to watch over this project pretty close to make sure they do it right, because I'm not sure that they can or will." And they may not communicate that, but their behavior might communicate that, "I don't fully trust you."

And so it's those kind of things that people don't feel completely trusted. I would say this. That we're still managing people. And I distinguish that in Trust and Inspire. You manage things and you lead people. We try to manage people as if they were things. In today's world, we're going to end up with no people. And a lot of things is they'll go elsewhere. People don't want to be managed. People want to be led. They want to be trusted. They want to be inspired. So that's kind of how it shows up.

And I'll give you one little example. And this is one that some of our audience will resonate with. It was a wonderful pastor of a church. Great man, great person in every respect. Completely trustworthy. He was a good model of what he taught. He's also was very inspiring as a person, his life and his caring about people. And so he did care about people and he connected with them really good. And he actually described himself as a servant leader. The problem was he had a hard time letting go. He had a hard time trusting and truly empowering and truly trusting people.

Now he would do it at a surface level, but boy, it was hard. So he'd turn over responsibilities for a youth activity to the youth committee to take the activity and run with it. But then he'd swoop in at the last minute and kind of take it over and get responsibility and just make sure that it all happened the way he wanted it. And then the youth leaders, the youth would say, "Why is he doing this if he doesn't trust us to do it? Why is he telling us we have a responsibility and then he takes it over?" And so again, this was not his intent, but his style got in the way of his intent. His intent was good. It was to serve. It was to blessed. But he had a hard time letting go. He had a hard time truly trusting. And for good reasons. He was just concerned about the outcome. But he needed to believe in the people and extend more trust to them and give them the space to operate.

And I think it's very easy to fall in that trap. And so in this book, I try to highlight what you need to do as a trust and inspire leader of the three stewardships, to model, to trust, to inspire. And this leader was modeling and he was inspiring, but he wasn't trusting. And for someone else, it might be, they're a good model and they trust, but they don't inspire. And inspire is not just giving a great sermon or giving a great presentation at work. Inspiring is connecting with people through caring and belonging. And then connecting people to purpose, to meaning, to contribution. And that's all learnable. Everyone can inspire. It's a learnable skill. Or in another case, maybe the person's not a good model. Like you were saying, Carey, that we've seen the public person that's good in public, not in private, and they're not modeling the very thing they're teaching.

So any of those three areas, we could fall short. So it's a journey. It's a process to model, to trust, to inspire people. But that's what people want today. They want to be trusted. They want to be inspired. And if we can become that kind of leader and let go of our need to be in charge or need to be in control and recognize that control is an illusion, principles are in control. Not, no one is. And there's actually more control in a high trust culture than there is in a rules-based culture. So it just kind of a complete rethinking of a lot of elements of our leadership of the leaders in charge. And the leader has to guarantee the outcomes. Well, no, leaders get results in a way that grows the people. That's the kind of leadership that's needed today.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, the examples you give are really interesting. You talk about, for example, the big revolution we've had over the last two years of working from home. And right now, I'm reading on a regular basis attempts by CEOs. There was a call from a major North American bank that's like, "We need you guys in the office more often because we can't see what you're doing." So reading a piece in the New York Times recently about companies that... It's a growth industry right now, but basically installing spyware on computers to see whether your remote workers are actually working. Things like that. Are those examples of command and control leadership...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... that are still there?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay. So let's break down. Because I talked to a lot of leaders and they're like, "Yeah. I don't know this whole working from home thing. And I don't know about whether I can really trust my team. If I can't see them, how do I know that they're actually working?" And of course, as you know, the next generation is not putting up with it. They're like, "You want me in the office five days a week. See ya." So how do you create a trust and inspire culture in, say, a hybrid or remote workforce? How do you do that?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

You do it through building the agreement together up front, where you... Just like my dad did with me with green and clean. But now this in a professional setting where you clarify expectations around the trust being given and you mutually agree to a process of accountability to those expectations in a way that the person can hold themselves accountable first for themselves. And you don't have to hover over and micromanage. And that could be tighter or looser depending upon the context, the situation, the risk involved and the credibility of the person.

If the person's kind of new to the job and they need a lot of coaching and help, then maybe the accountability process is more frequent where they report back on, "Here's what's happening. Here's what we're doing. Here's how it's going." So that you can maybe give advice or counsel or coach along

the way more frequently. And the higher the risk, it's maybe going to need maybe more frequent accountability. But if the risk is moderate or lower and the person's really talented and skilled and developed and credible, it could be far less frequent. Maybe they just report back routinely. So you build the agreement. It's not a one size fits all agreement. It's contextual to the situation and to the person of expectations and accountability, just like my dad did with me on green and clean. But the point is the agreement governs and there's control built into the agreement. And it doesn't have to be you as the leader hovering over, micromanaging. And too often that happens.

And you've nailed it, Carey. In this new world of work, remote work, hybrid work, intentionally flexible work, combinations, it requires trust for it to work because there are some people that are working remotely who don't feel trusted. They feel like they're now just being micromanaged from a distance. Because maybe there wasn't an option. Or maybe because society is dictating that, "I've got to do this in order to keep my people." But you won't keep them if they don't feel trusted still, even if they're working from home and they don't feel trusted. And the sales of this surveillance software is up 300% plus.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know. I know.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Which is basically saying, "We don't know if you're working. So we're putting this in place." Now they'll couch it as this is productivity software or what have you. But employees, people can feel when it's not really that and when it's really that you don't trust me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't trust you. Yeah.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

So whether or not you got a hybrid or remote work, you still have the question of, do you trust your people? And you build the agreement together with your people so that you can extend that trust in a smart way. So that the agreement governs and not you having to hover over and micromanage.

And it really is a challenge for all of us today to ask the question, do I really trust my people? Do I really trust my team? Have we built the agreement? And the companies and the leaders that do that best are going to win because they'll win this war for talent. This is the new imperative for every organization today. We've got to build a high trust culture that inspires people. It's the only way we're going to attract the people, retain them, engage them and inspire them. Bring out the best in them is if there's a high trust culture that inspires.

If it's a command and control type culture... And again, enlightened command and control even, I know that most are moved away from the authoritarian. But even if it's kind of like it's still a compliance-driven, hierarchical process of... there's control built in everywhere, as opposed to real empowerment, real extension of trust, real tapping into inspiration, you're not going to keep the people. They'll go to a place where they feel trusted and where they feel inspired and connected to a purpose.

So that's how we're going to win this war for talent is with a new style of leadership. To quote Marshall Goldsmith, "What got us here won't get us there." And maybe the enlightened command and control has worked, but it's not going to work going forward in this new world of work, in remote and hybrid work, with these new generations coming up that want a completely different type of relationship of

how they're managed and how they're led, and where people have choices and options. It's also not going to work in a world where you need to collaborate and innovate constantly to stay relevant in a changing disruptive world, where everything's changing so fast. We got to innovate fast. You can't innovate without trust. You can't command and control your way to collaboration. You can't command and control your way to innovation. Trust and inspire is how you'll do it.

So I call it... I mentioned two places. You got to first win in the workplace with your own people and then win in the marketplace through collaboration and innovation. And you need trust for both. You need a different way to lead for both. And I call it trust and inspire in contrast to the enlightened command and control.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, we have a couple minutes left and I want to drill down on a couple of issues. Because I'm thinking about a leader who says, "Okay, that's great. I want to be able to trust my team. I get it. I get it. It makes sense. But I got some lazy workers. I got some people I don't know whether I can trust." So walk them through. What are a couple of the basics of getting an agreement?

Because I agree with you. I mean, I lead an entirely remote team have for the last seven years. And this is my office and I'm the only person in it. But I don't spend my time worrying that they're not being productive. I'm not installing spyware. We set up that agreement and I measure outputs. I coach them and they over deliver. I don't even care how many hours they work. It's like, you don't measure hours. You measure effectiveness. You measure productivity. You measure that kind of thing. And I want to make sure that they have a healthy lifestyle. But for the leader who's starting out in that realm and trying to figure out, what are some keys to creating that agreement so you get your whole team to buy in?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. Beautiful. I love it. First of all, I love what you're doing, Carey. It sounds like you're building the agreements, you're extending the trust, and then people perform.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They do. It's amazing. And sometimes I have to say, "Put the brakes on. You're getting too tired. Take some time off."

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. You're sometimes telling them...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Slow down.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

... "Take a vacation."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, exactly.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Just kind of the opposite. But look, you're getting their best thinking, their best work, their best creativity. Also, when they're feeling inspired like that, they stay with you. They perform better, but they also feel like their wellbeing's being improved. So it's good for the results. It's good for the people, both.

So it's this idea that... There's two key elements of building this agreement. I call it the stewardship agreement. And a stewardship is a job with a trust. So you're extending trust to people around getting jobs done. So you build the agreement together and it's going to have these two elements of clarifying expectations and practicing accountability and trying to find this balance.

And so, I see there's five elements of a good stewardship agreement. Three belong to clarifying expectations. Two to practicing accountability. So the first is desired results. What is it that we are after? And you said it. Focus on outcomes, on results, not on methods, not on means to the end. Focus on the ends. My dad, green and clean. How you do it...

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's not assigned in every morning at 7:59 AM.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. It's not, "Here's how you have to do it. And you sign in and you got to have FaceTime. You got to work this many hours." I care about outcomes, results. So desire results. What is it that we are after?

And then the second element of a stewardship agreement is guidelines. Within what parameters? I mean, because you can't just say, "Okay, whatever you want. Just get the result." And then they violate ethical or legal norms. Within what parameters? Are there guardrails? My dad told me, "You can't paint the lawn."

Carey Nieuwhof:

You can't paint it green.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

You can't paint it green. That was the guideline. So that was a guardrail to make sure I wasn't just cutting corners and short-cutting this. So within what guidelines and within what parameters. And that's really helpful to make sure that... That in a sense, there's a little bit of "control" built in with that. So that people aren't just wild out there doing things that you've learned are out of bounds, won't work, or too risky, or what have you. You can establish some guidelines.

Then the third element of a stewardship agreement is resources. What do we have to work with? So you're setting people up to win. If you're going to say, "You're going to be responsible for these results within these guidelines or parameters. Here's the resources you have to work with." And they could be human resources, other people they can work with, financial, technical. But you kind of making sure that they're set up to win. And that's all around clarifying expectations. We're getting these results within these guidelines, with these resources. And then we move to the practice accountability part.

So the fourth is how do we know how we're doing? And that's the accountability thing of... That you set it up so that the person evaluates themselves against the standards of the desired results. And they report back to you about how they're doing against what they're doing. And that's where it could be tighter or looser, depending upon where they are in their development and how risky the task you're giving them

is. And maybe it's tighter when there's high risk and they're not very developed yet. Looser when there's moderate or lower risk and they're very developed of how frequent that accountability is.

But the point is they know more than you know about how they're doing. They know if they're really giving their best effort or if they've got a whole lot more they could give, but they're doing the minimum to keep, stay in the job. So let them judge themselves. My dad says, "Green and clean." I knew the lawn wasn't green and clean...

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah. That's pretty clear. Right.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

... and I wasn't doing it. So basically they report back on accountability, but they judge themselves first. Now look, you can say, "Well, guys, how can I help you? Because we got to do better here." You still can play that role, but it's more of a coach, not a manager.

And then finally, what are the consequences of achieving these results? And so that's the consequences could be rewards and the positive things, and even potentially the negative things that if we don't achieve this, then it's not going to work here at this company. We've got to get these outcomes in the long run to succeed. So it could be natural consequences. It could be specific consequences, positive rewards, negative of... That if I'm a salesperson I've got to sell. And if I don't sell, I'm not going to remain as a salesperson at some point. But it is not a surprise to anybody. We build it in to the agreement. So those are five elements of a good stewardship agreement.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So good.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Desired results, guidelines, resources, that's all around clarifying expectations, then accountability and consequences.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. And accountability, like Chris McChesney, we talked about it, and you've worked with Chris. I mean, he was on talking all about The Four Disciplines of Execution, 4DX. And that's something my company has used and...

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Beautiful.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... it's so clear. I wonder, this is the theory of mine. I don't know whether it's true. You've done a lot more research on this than mine. But it seems like a lot of command and control leaders. One of the reasons that they end up swooping in and correcting and everything is they've never been clear about the standards. They're not clear about the goals. They just keep it all inside and therefore their team doesn't even know what they're trying to accomplish. It's like, "Well, I thought we were supposed to do this." Is that true of the command and control leaders?

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely. Because, again, information is power and they want to kind of be in charge and this and that. So they don't take that time to really build the agreement up front with clarity, around expectations, around results, around guidelines, around resources. And because they like to control it, own it and keep it. And so that they're the boss and they're in charge. But if you don't take the time to build the agreement up front, you'll pay the price down the line and you'll revert back to what looks and feels like command and control to people, where you're now not trusting them and you're hovering over them, checking on their project more frequently than what they thought, because you're worried about it and they're not as clear. So you pay a price when you don't spend the time up front to build the agreement.

So it takes some time, but then you go fast. I like to say this with people, "Fast is slow and slow is fast." So if I kind of just try to dictate and move fast, I'll tell you when you need it, in the long run, people won't be empowered and it'll take you a lot more time to catch them up and to educate them and move them along. If you take the time up front, go slow up front, in the sense that you've taken the time to build the agreement, expectations, accountability, the training, the development as needed. My dad took two weeks to teach me how to do green and clean. He didn't turn it over on a half-hour training session. It was a two-week process. And so you take the time up front, you go slow, then you go fast. My dad never had to talk to me again about taking care of the yard the rest of my life.

And again, that's a simple example I know, but it teaches the principles of what happens. So building that stewardship agreement is vital. And too often, we skip that because we're always focused. We got to be efficient, be efficient with things, be effective with people. Manage things, lead people. But because we get so good at management, oftentimes, unknowingly, we start to manage people as if they were things. And not going to work in this new world. That won't get us there where we need to go. It's a new world of work. We need a new way to lead, trust and inspire.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, Stephen, thank you so much. It's been a rich interview. The book is called Trust and Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others. And I would recommend the whole series, including The Speed of Trust. It's been just great to spend some time with you. If people want to find, obviously books available everywhere, where can they find you and your work online these days? Simple website or social.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. So social media, LinkedIn, Stephen M. R. Covey, Twitter, Instagram, @stephenmrcovey. But also go to our website, trustandinspire.com, trustandinspire.com. The and is spelled out. And there's some resources, tools there that you might find helpful. If I could just share one last thought I have, Carey?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, please do. Yeah, please.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

That I think our listeners and viewers will find useful. That the starting point... See, when you read the... I thought of this when you gave the subtitle of the book. Trust and Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others. It starts by us having the paradigm, the mindset that people have greatness inside of them. So my job as a leader is to unleash their potential, not to try to control them or contain them. So it's a stewardship I have to see the greatness in people. Not just the high potential.

See, by definition, if we have high potentials, it's kind of implying that others aren't. Maybe we don't see the greatness.

And I love how Thoreau said it. "It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see." So start by seeing the potential in people. And start by seeing that potential and then communicating that potential to others so that they can come to see it in themselves. And then by developing that potential, by giving them opportunities and training and things to develop those talents. And then by unleashing that potential by truly empowering and giving them the opportunity to run with it. So you see, communicate, develop, unleash potential, unleash greatness that's inside of people.

And we're like seeds. People are like seeds. Our job as a leader, we're a gardener, not a mechanic. A mechanic is... It's a mechanistic system and that's more command and control. A gardener is an organic system. That the life, the power is in the seed. Our job as a gardener is to create the conditions for the seed to grow and flourish. Our job as a leader is to create the conditions and remove the barriers for the people to grow and flourish. But the life, the power is in the people. We're just trying to create the conditions for them to grow. But it starts by do I see it? And then, do I help them come to see it by communicating it, by developing it, by unleashing it. That is the starting point for a trust and inspire leader.

I have a growth mindset, not just for myself, but for everyone. And I think that that is how we should look at each other. Let's treat people according to their potential, not just their behavior. And they'll become that person. And we have a stewardship as leaders to help bring about that person. And I just think in my own life, my dad, my mom, they were trust and inspire leaders for me. I'll bet, Carey, you've had trust and inspire people in your life.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Friend, coach, mentor, pastor, leader. I'll bet, most of our listeners and viewers, most if not all, had someone in your life who's been a trust and inspire person for you, who believe in you, saw your potential, gave you an opportunity, took a chance on you, helped you come to believe in yourself. Maybe they believed in you more than you believe in yourself. What that did for you? That we probably have all had someone like that. Or maybe multiple people in some cases. Think about what that did, how you responded to it. Did you need to be managed? No, you were on fire.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, it wasn't the command and control people who inspired us. Nope.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Yeah. You brought up the best in you. And look how you saw yourself differently from it. Now, so I ask our listeners and viewers to reflect back on such a person for you. I would invite you. Thank that person even years later. Perhaps, maybe you've thanked him already, but thank him again. You can say, "Stephen talked about trust and inspire. And to thank the trust and inspire leader in their life."

And then my final invitation to you is to ask this question, for whom could you become that kind of leader? Just like someone was for you, can you think of someone for whom you could become that kind of leader? Maybe it's a child. Maybe it's a friend. Maybe it's someone at work. But if you could do it with one, you could do it with another and then another and another. And I think becoming trust and inspire

sometimes how will become further down this path on this journey is by even starting with one relationship. Just like someone was for you, what if you could be that for another? So I invite you, find another person for whom you want to become a trust and inspire leader. Start there.

So I hope you enjoy this and trustandinspire.com. I hope you love the book. And I'm really grateful, Carey, to you for this opportunity to be on your fabulous leadership podcast.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Thank you so much, Stephen. It's been a joy and nice hearing about your background, the growth of Covey under your leadership, and so many insights. And this is going to be something that's going to help me be a better leader. So I want to thank you so much for your time today and thanks for the new book as well. Appreciate you, Stephen.

Stephen M. R. Covey:

Absolutely. Thank you, Carey. Great to be with you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Trust is so important. And if you want to reduce turnover and you really want to make a difference with the people that you lead and actually feel good about the team that you lead, trust is critical. We've got notes in the show notes to everything that we talked about in this conversation. You can find those over on my website. Go to careynieuwhof.com/episode520. You'll find everything there. And that's also the hub for all of my writing for The Art of Leadership Academy, where we now have almost 1,300 leaders in The Art of Leadership Academy. You'll find show notes for every episode we've ever done and a whole lot more over at careynieuwhof.com.

Want to thank our partners. Pro MediaFire. You can get your communication and creative work done for less than the cost of a staff hire by going to promediafire.com/carey. And by Compassion International, you can meet a practical need for a child in poverty this holiday season by going to compassion.com/givingtree/carey. And I'd love for you to help out with that.

So next episode, we're going to talk about, well, AI. I have been fascinated by this and I found Deon Nicholas came highly recommended. We have a conversation about artificial intelligence, AGI, ANI, ASI, and how it's impacting your life and where the future will take us. Here's an excerpt.

Deon Nicholas:

I think nuclear's probably the best example of it, right? And there's probably maybe a single digit, handful number of technologies in the past in human history that are equivalent in power and potential, but also equivalent in potential to damage.

With nuclear, we do have probably today the ability to perpetually power the energy of all humans on Earth. That and plus or minus solar. There's a few other things. But we also have this dangerous ability to literally wipe out all humans on Earth. No way to sugarcoat that. And so somehow we have survived so far.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's next time. Also, great conversation with Tim Tebow, Joey and Christy Speers, Cynt Marshall from the Dallas Mavericks, Chad Veach, Sharon Hodde Miller, Brian Koppelman, Chris Anderson, Patrick Lencioni, James Clear, Lysa TerKeurst, and so much more coming up on the podcast.

This transcript was exported on Sep 11, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Thank you everybody for what you do in sharing the word. If you enjoyed today's episode, please give us a shoutout on social media. I'm Carey Nieuwhof on Instagram. I am @cnieuwhof on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms. And thank you so much for listening. If you enjoyed it, also leave a rating and review.

And I want to give you something. A lot of you are thinking about how to build your online presence. I have a free mastermind where you will learn how to do that, how to find your dream audience, and how to get them to notice and engage with you. So whether you're just starting out or have been online for years, this free mastermind will give you insight into the timeless principles that will help your messaging content stand out. So if you want to get in on that, go to influencekickstarter.com. That's influencekickstarter.com to start building your online presence today and it's free.

Well, I hope today's conversation helped you thrive in life and leadership. Thank you so much for listening and we'll catch you next time on the podcast.