

Announcer:

The Art of Leadership Network.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Welcome to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership podcast. It's Carey here, this is episode 528. We're going to talk to Les McKeown, he is back on the podcast. If he is new to you, you are going to absolutely enjoy this episode. There's a reason I keep bringing him back.

Well, today's episode is brought to you by Pro MediaFire. You can get your communications and creative work done for less than one staff hire with Pro MediaFire. Book your free consultation today promediafire.com/carey and by the way, get your free download of BELAY's CEO's latest book, Rise Up and Lead Well, by texting my name Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, to 55123.

Well, Les McKeown is back, he is the founder of Predictable Success, he's also the CEO there. He is a globally recognized growth leadership coach and consultant and the author of four books, including his latest, Do Lead: Share Your Vision, Inspire Others and Achieve the Impossible. The thing I love about Les is, I think I discovered him about a decade ago, I read Predictable Success and it's like my leadership life flashed before my eyes. All the stages of leadership, all the stages of the church and now the company I led, flashed before my eyes and I reached out to him to see if we could connect and we did. We're going to revisit some of that earlier content from Les. He's been on the podcast several other times. I recommend you go back into the archive to discover the treasure trove of wisdom that Les is. But we're going to take it to the next level with this conversation today.

If you enjoy it, please leave a rating and review. And we want to say welcome to all the leaders who are listening from the church world and the business world. A lot of you are new. We want to say thank you for tuning in, we know your time is valuable. I do not intend to waste it. In fact, I think you'll get a lot out of today's conversation. Make sure you check out our partners too. So for example, some of you have been hit by the challenge of inflation and you see staff leaving for higher paying jobs. Staff turnover is at an all time high and did you know that in the communications media and creative departments, staff turnover is 30% annually? If you're a boss, you know how bad that is. Well, there is a way to get your communications and creative work done for less than a staff hire by using Pro MediaFire. There's no cost of health benefits, no payroll tax, and no risk of scrambling for help with two weeks notice. If you've been a boss, you've been there.

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As a busy leader, when you stop and think about all the things you do every day, they begin to add up and they add up quickly. Maybe your organization has grown because of your hard work and endless hours, but you're wondering, is this the time to hire help? Here's the challenge, you can't find the right person. If you've ever been there or you're there right now, our friends at BELAY can help. BELAY is a modern staffing solution I've used multiple times and they have over 11 years experience. They have successfully matched thousands of clients with virtual assistance, financial specialists, social media, and web specialists.

Today, BELAY is offering our listeners a free download of their CEO's latest book, Rise Up and Lead Well. In the book, she shares everything she's learned in her journey from being an assistant to now running the company. She's the CEO and she has successfully delegated and you can too. To claim your free copy of Rise Up and Lead, well simply text my name Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, to 55123. Get the support you need to

get out of the administrative weeds and get back to growing your organization with BELAY. Text C-A-R-E-Y to 55123.

Now for another deep dive into my conversation with Les McKeown. Les, welcome back to the podcast.

Les McKeown:

It's great to be back again, Carey. Hi, everybody.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah. Well, this is round four and I think you started back around, I'm going to say 103. I'm probably wrong on that, but it was a while ago that you were on and I would encourage-

Les McKeown:

[inaudible 00:04:29] we record?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, what number are we on? I don't know what this'll be, but we're in the 520s or 530s now.

Les McKeown:

Oh, my.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you might be 550 or something. We work a long time in advance, but yeah, no, we've done over 500 episodes and 25 million downloads and counting, insane.

Les McKeown:

Wow, wow! That's just very impressive.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I think it's because of that first interview you did. That was a pivotal one.

Les McKeown:

You're very kind. They've all been fun.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They've been great. I'll tell you, it's been amazing. But I do want people to go back and listen to the earlier conversations because we really talk about one of your seminal books, Predictable Success. Then we talk about The Synergist, then we talk about scaling, the difference between growing and scaling. If you just search my name and Les McKeown, you will find the whole host of episodes.

Today, we're going to talk about what's changed and we're also going to talk about leadership and how that's changing as well. No, but it is good to have you back. I want to ask you, the last few years have been really hard on a lot of leaders in a lot of different industries, Les. When you look at the landscape now, what are the qualities or the characteristics coming out of the pandemic, heading into 2023, what

are the qualities and characteristics that seem to be separating the leaders who are doing okay, if not crushing it, from the leaders who are maybe still struggling or not making it?

Les McKeown:

Two things. First of all, something I call consistency of purpose. In other words, the folks who know why they're doing this and are committed to it have come out, in my observation, stronger than those who find themselves in positions of leadership and weren't too sure how they got there or why. The second thing connected to that is resilience. It's just been a time, as you and our listeners know, at least as well as I do, it's just been a time when you just had to hang on at times, just be resilient.

Those two things I think are very connected. You can have leaders who are naturally resilient. I like to think about it when I was a kid, you'll enjoy this. I grew up back in the UK as some of the listeners may remember. The thing to get at Christmas was a toy preferably from the U.S. Now this is way pre-Prime, way pre-internet, way pre-anything. We got real presents, real gifts, real things, physical things. I got a blow up, stick with me here, a blow up model of Yogi Bear. And many of our listeners will have no idea, they'll think I'm talking about Yogi Berra, I'm not talking about [inaudible 00:07:23].

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's fantastic. I remember Yogi Bear.

Les McKeown:

Yogi Bear, cartoon character. What's up Boo Boo? And the thing about this Yogi Bear, which actually it's an incredible exercise in, well, what should we call it? We are in management by my mother. This Yogi bear was blown up, came up to about my chest, had a big smirk on his face and it was essentially a punching bag and it was bottom weighted. So you'd smack this thing and it would teeter over and wobble. If you hit it hard enough, it would go down and touch the floor, but it would bounce right back up again with that big smirky smile. Drove me crazy and I spent hours pounding this thing.

Most natural leaders and many self-made leaders, they have that degree of resilience. That's why they're successful. You hit them, they come back up, you hit them, they come back up. However, even with that, if you don't have a consistency of purpose, if you're not on the way back up thinking to yourself, "Why am I doing this again?" then it's going to be tough. That's what I've seen over the last couple of years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's interesting you mentioned purpose because if you're a church leader that should be front and center, but it so easily gets lost. And you and I were chatting before we hit record, we're in the major rethink as a company right now and we've got a pivotal retreat coming up and my guess is most of my audience won't notice a difference, but we're going to notice a difference because we're going to get very, very hyper specific on exactly what we do. More so than we haven't in the past.

But I was reading Arthur Brooks' book. I don't know that you know his work, but it's called From Strength to Strength. One of the things he said is when you get to a certain age, you have to have a really big problem and he defines it as an interesting problem to work on. I combine that with an interview Tim Ferris did with Roelof Botha. Which was a fascinating interview, we'll link to it in the show notes, where he talked about the founder problem and the founder fit problem. If you're the founder of a company like Elon Musk, great example, what's he trying to do? Colonize Mars. Okay, that's probably

going to exhaust him. It's an interesting problem and it's going to take the rest of his life and the lifetime of many thousands of other people to even remotely accomplish it.

And I have been thinking about, "Okay, what is a really interesting problem to work on for the next 20 years?" And you wouldn't believe the difference in motivation I've felt just redefining the problem. Which does that go to the why of it?

Les McKeown:

Yeah, and I would underline your recommendation of Brooks' latest book. He's been doing a book tour and doing a whole bunch of podcasts and if you can grab on him, just Google it and you'll find him. He speaks really well-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Request is in, yeah.

Les McKeown:

He speaks very well about his work as well, which not every author does as you've discovered I'm sure. Essentially what he talks about, it's in essence consistency of purpose. One of the things that I talk about in Do Lead is that many leaders, particularly self-starters, people who see leadership from afar and sort of think, "Oh, I would like to do that," as opposed to natural leaders, maybe we'll talk about the difference a little later, they don't have one to start with and I talk about just renting a sense of purpose. There's nothing wrong with that. You're better with a rented sense of purpose than no sense of purpose at all.

And so for example, somebody can come into a church and work as the worship pastor and it doesn't have to be their forever leadership position. It doesn't have to even be their forever church. This might sound a little coldblooded, it can be a leadership training role. It's just where they get the sense of what it means to be a leader. Then I talk further on in the book about becoming an uber leader, a horrible phrase. I suspect I wrote that subsection when I was tired, I should have thought of a better phrase.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The Uber [mensch 00:11:37].

Les McKeown:

Well, particularly as leaders in Uber, haven't had a particularly good press recently. It's maybe not been the best analogy, but I talk about moving to the point where you're not just a leader, but you've achieved mastery in leadership. At that point there tends to be a self-sustaining consistency of purpose, which in your world at the moment, you're rethinking that and that's perfectly valid. There's nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's better making a shift of your consistency of purpose than just drifting because then you'll begin to feel unfulfilled.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, to put legs on it, I mean if I was a local church pastor, I know that there are 300,000 unchurched people within a 30 minute drive of our locations. That's a big enough problem and an interesting enough problem to spend a lot of your energy and time on and it's somewhat unsolvable. Okay, so purpose, but Les, you strike me as a resilient leader. I mean, you've been through 40 plus businesses, which is insane. Bought and sold, been a partner in, et cetera. You've written multiple books. You're well beyond the age

or financial position where you have to work but you still enjoy doing it. What are some of the characteristics that have made you resilient?

Les McKeown:

Need is a big one, big driver. I've shared this in other discussions publicly so I'm not making a revelation that's not known. But I've quite literally without hyperbole been in the fetal position. I mean not literally, physically in the fetal position, sobbing and distressed to the point of, I'm not saying this to demean it by any stretch, I'm saying it with a great sense of blessing. I don't think I've ever had severe mental health challenges, but if I ever got close to it, it was in those occasions. Because I couldn't pay the bills. For no other reason, I couldn't keep the lights on and that makes you very resilient. But the thing that underpinned it was and which made me resilient. A couple of other factors, which I'll add in a second or two, it just comes back to consistency of purpose.

And for me, the rented consistency of purpose before I developed predictable success, the delivery of which is not my consistency of purpose, helping people grow or scale their organizations for profit or not for profit. The rented one was just a drive for independence. I know I had a real job as they say, until my early twenties. I started working for myself in my early twenties as 22 or 23. I've never worked for anyone since then. And the one thing that got me back up like Yogi Bear from those fetal positions and many, many other less existential challenges is just that gritted teeth determination that I wanted to maintain my own independence. And that's in the for-profit world, it's no secret that that's the key driver for most founders. It's a somewhat hidden, still very true reality in the church world. It doesn't sit just as well.

There are quite a few church leaders leave and church plant and forgive me, dress it as a vision of God told me to go to this place, but underneath it, all of you really scratch it, there's a need to do your own thing. I just want my own church now. That can be perfect, that can be good. It can be neutral, it can be problematic. Doesn't have to be any of those. I'm not making a value judgment, I'm just saying independence, the need for independence and drive autonomy, put it that way. One definition of an entrepreneur is somebody who stops working 40 hours a week for somebody else to work 80 hours a week for themselves. And that's true. And so that builds a lot of resilience is just a gritted teeth determination that I want to do this thing and I want to do it my own way.

Subsequently then it became for me a commitment to, I had discovered this model. I didn't invent it, I uncovered it and I give it vocabulary. And we've talked about it many times in the podcast. And delivering that has become my consistency of purpose. I think the other two things that contributed so need was one of them. The two other things were clarity first of all. And if I've taught myself one thing to try to give discipline to being clear as you are doing with your upcoming retreat about what does the next quarter look like, was the next year look like? What does the next five, I have a 66 years of age, I have a 25 year rolling game plan. And it's the further I go, the more it's an outline, but I want clarity. And it doesn't mean I'm going to stick to it just means I know roughly where I'm headed.

I know very much where I'm headed in the near term. I know quite well where I'm headed in the medium term and I know pretty well where I want to be headed in the long term. I'm open to it changing. But that clarity and the final thing is I think the most underused skill of leadership, which is the strategic ability to say no, that I see that undermine more leaders than anything else, is they don't build the muscle of being able to strategically say no. And so they end up saying yes to everything. It all leaks backwards. Say yes to everything. You lose your clarity and your resilience begins to drain.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It doesn't get easier though over the last 10 days I've had to say no to some really. Well I have chosen to say no to some very big opportunities and disappoint some people on not my inner circle, but not that far from the inner circle. And part of me is like, oh, one guy asked for 15 minutes of my time, my team and I talked about it. We said no. And I'm like, you jerk, you're going to be sitting on your back porch doing nothing. But it's the 15 minutes that add up and it doesn't get you Absolutely

Les McKeown:

Right. What

Carey Nieuwhof:

Helps you learn to say no? Because I completely agree it is a very hard skill to master one that not a lot of leaders have, but every successful leader I know has it. So what helps you do that?

Les McKeown:

The thing that helps me, I'm hoping that start the sentence again. I'm hoping that a good 98% of what we're going to talk about will be helpful in some way of it to our listeners. Clearly my answer to this one question is not going to be helpful then I will give a helpful answer. The truthful answer for me is I don't really care what other people think about me. I really don't. I've taken me a long time to accept that because I didn't want to believe that about me. It doesn't mean that I don't really value people. I've thought about this a lot. It doesn't mean that I don't value relationships, it doesn't mean I don't listen to people. It doesn't mean that I don't care what they say and take it on board and adjust. But if I make a decision about something, I've got to the point in my careers, as you've very kindly pointed out, I'm close to ancient these days where I know that if I'm saying no to something, it's not because I'm being a bit of a jerk or worse.

A lot of that's associated I think with the imposter syndrome, which I'm sure we're going to get into in various ways as we talk about leadership, that's just something I set out to beat. And I believe I, but I mean I still suffer from it from time to time, but I by and large have pretty much beat it. Which means I'm comfortable when I say that now not everybody is in that position of having built that car pace or whatever it may be. And I actually wouldn't recommend it as a coping mechanism. It's got a lot of downside to it. So that's the bet that I'm not suggesting is helpful to other people. But I wanted to give you an honest answer to

Carey Nieuwhof:

The question you have to develop. It's like Seth Goden, right? They don't get the joke so right, right. Okay. It's not for them.

Les McKeown:

Correct. And so what I've seen in other leaders and which I also use cause it's very helpful, is to get, it's a subset of our clarity thing. Be very, very clear about what floats your boat, what do you really enjoy doing and what are you not? There are many people for whom the notion of spending 15 minutes with somebody, that's the whole reason I'm doing all this say I'm going to say yes to that. And if you try to say no to all of that, you just get very frustrated. They, you can't do it.

So understanding what you like to do and what you don't like to do is I think a very obvious, and I think the second thing, and it's a tool that I use a lot and I feel very help, I find it very helpful, is I treat time as what it is, at a very finite resource I have. I'm looking away from your fine here because I've got a second

monitor and on that monitor is my calendar and I have an ideal day sitting right beside my actual day today. And that ideal day moves forward every morning. It's sitting there looking at me, what I want to spend my time on and what my calendar tells me. And that helps me say no to a lot of things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh my goodness. Okay. Well I got to go there. What does your ideal day look like for you at this point in your life?

Les McKeown:

So I like to finish what I'm teed up to do for the day by 3:00 PM Eastern, which is the time zone that, it doesn't mean to say I'm just going to sit and stare into the walls, but I want to have my major deliverables done for the day by 3:00 PM So there's a hard stop at that. I've got my morning workout, I've got the time that I come to sit here, I've got a little routine, which when I click on it opens up and it just reminds me of the things that I want to look at or meditate about for probably half an hour at the start of the morning. And then I have two key blocks in the day. They're just blue, literally blue blocks and they're empty because that's where I'm, I'm not going to take a call. I'm not going to see somebody for 15 minutes.

I'm not going to I've, because that's when I'm going to my work involves me producing deliverables. I've got, so this morning I zoomed into a client board meeting and delivered their strategic plan. So that was a deliverable. Last week my blue blocks in the morning, first one was dedicated to doing that. The second one might be dedicated to something else. I have my lunchtime is scheduled, but none of this means that this all happens this way. That's the whole point. I would die if I thought I was going to live Groundhog day and do everything exactly the same. That's not the goal. The goal is not to live every day the same. The goal is to know what's my north star in terms of my use of time and everything said everything after that's a negotiation as my friend Rob Pointon would say, everything's a negotiation And when somebody says, Could you give me 15? No I can't do that. I'm terribly sorry.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. So the other thing I want to say about resilience is we've known each other for, I don't know, five or six years now, maybe less. And another thing I really admire about you is your ability to change and pivot. So there was a time where you were scaling predictable success. You had a team, a ceo, the whole deal. And then you let a bunch of us know, Hey, I'm shutting this all down and you shut it all down and now it's basically a solo operation. And a lot of people wouldn't do that. A lot of people would say no, bigger is better. But then sometimes you end up, you're feel like you're in jail, you feel like, and of course you write about this in Predictable Success. You go out of the stage of fun from startup to fun, to predictable success, et cetera. And you easily could have done it but you pivoted back. So talk about that transformation because we didn't really touch on that in previous interviews and I would love to know because I think a lot of people don't give themselves permission to rethink the decisions they've made.

Les McKeown:

Sure. Particularly where they're fairly fundamental decisions and they impact other people a lot, which that decision did do. And by the way, I haven't just done it once. I've done it twice. And yeah, the second time was more for me, that was my mistake because it all comes back to the two markers that we talked or two of the markers that we talked about earlier. Clarity and consistency of purpose. I, as you've mentioned started my whole world was as a serial entrepreneur, actually started as a British equivalent

of a CPA and then a serial entrepreneur. And that was what I spent the first third of my career doing. And I did all of the bigger, bigger thing. That's where I learned my trade, that's where I learned how to grow and then how to scale. And I've built very large businesses and organizations. So I've done it all and I enjoyed it.

Then what I discovered subsequently is that the reason I was enjoying it was not because I was running at the master license that pizza hu. It wasn't because I was selling pizzas. I didn't enjoy it because I owned a graphic design agency. It wasn't, not because I had no good at graphic design of it because of that wasn't because of the individual businesses. What I enjoyed was the pattern recognition. I didn't know it then, but the thing I was enjoying was learning my trade to then help other people. Once I started doing that, it became really clear to me that I can either grow my own business or help other people grow theirs. I can't do both and I don't want to do both. And both occasions that you've referred, the occasion you referred to in the earlier one, I had simply lost that clarity and had aggregated.

I didn't build and we're not talking about enormous numbers in both cases it was somewhere between eight and 12 employees. Not a huge business, but I had aggregated it. I, it wasn't plan it sort of like, oh I need somebody to help me with my social media. And so I go out and get a contractor and then it becomes a full-time job. I employ something. There was a period when Mike B Harvey first met, I can't remember. I was on the speaking tours and I needed somebody to manage the events for me and get the books shipped out as is a lot of logistics involved. So I aggregated in both cases and the second time it was the easiest way to aggregate anything at all. My son was involved, was a family member involved and it was just sort of a natural path whereb he had been paid as due as a consultant.

He had worked with me as an intern every summer and so it was natural to come work for me and he then started hiring people and both times I ended up literally, I mean again no hyperbole and I'm not being metaphor metaphorical here. I literally ended up both times just looking into the mirror and saying, "What on earth are you doing?" I would look at my calendar, which we just talked about and there'd be interviews, hiring for more people. There'd be performance assessments, there'd be deployment discussions. None of which is in my consistency of purpose, not now. It was back in the day not. And so on both occasions that this is where the unfortunate thing that I talked about earlier that I don't recommend to anybody. It was very hard for me in both cases knowing that this was going to be career changing for the other people involved, career changing for me too.

But I didn't have any doubt that it was the right thing to do because the best thing for them, one, I mean once your boss realizes they don't want you around anymore, that's not good contract. It's not a good employment relationship. So in both cases I gave folks runway. I help them get, go find other things to do and went back to, and I've been very good about it. I'm on the sixth year now, sixth year I should be getting a little coin or something of not having any employees. I've got one assistant who's currently snoring on the sofa beside me, has no opposable thumbs and needs me to take them out and walk them three times a day and that's it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And your happiness level is back where you want it to be.

Les McKeown:

A hundred percent. Because I want, personally, I want that freedom to look at that calendar and say, actually you know what, on Thursday I don't want to do any of that and I've got good enough client relationships, I can email some folks and say, Hey, can we push that meeting? I just taking the day off. I don't do that very, very often, but I want the flexibility to be able to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Well we're barely past the first question 25 minutes into the conversation, which means it's a great conversation. But in the same way leaders have emerged resilient or not resilient. Same thing with companies. I mean my goodness, you have the head of the pandemic, then you have inflation, now you've got a possible recession coming and some companies are going to grow, some are going to die, some are going to fold, some are going to wobble. What are a couple of the characteristics that you are noticing between the companies that are thriving versus the companies, churches, organizations that are not

Les McKeown:

Two things. So in Predictable Success, in the first book I talk about the life cycle that all organizations go through. They do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You want to run through the stages quickly just so people

Les McKeown:

Real quickly. We've got three growth stages, a peak stage and then three decline stages. Growth stages are early struggle, which includes the startup phase. It's basically the existential time of trying to find your market next stage, which I give a highly technical name to, I call it fun. And that's with fun or market. We just do it, we're just doing it. And actually everybody who starts a business, they think any organization starts a church. They think that's it. There's really just two stages. There's the early struggle and we might not get through that. Most people are well aware of that. But if we do, then there's the next stage, it's called fun. And that from then on it's just rinse and repeat rinse, repeat, do that, get bigger, do that, get bigger. But what happens is during fun, because it's fun by and large people like what you're doing.

The new church is exciting. People want to come and be part of that. And so you grow, you get bigger. Then with size comes complexity. The complexity begins to overwhelm us. You hit a stage I call whitewater, which is really where you got a decision to make, which is do we go back to being that boutique church just doing small amount of stuff really, really well or do we want to scale? Do we want to become large? You want to become large, you got to put some systems and processes in place, which itself's a big challenge. Don't time to talk about that. Go back to our first podcast. We talk about a lot. You put the right systems in, processes in place, you get to predictable success. Peak stage where you've got the balance between creativity, innovation, risk taking with repeatability, scalability, being able to rinse and repeat. Do this again and again.

Do the right things. You can stay there as long as you want. Typically what happens is we just did something that reduced a lot of grid results, which was to put some systems and processes in place. So lets do some more. We put too much in, we begin to decline stage. We start that with moving into a stage I call treadmill where just we sort of lost our mojo. Many of the listeners have been in churches or businesses like that. It's just, it's okay, but none of the spark it used to. And if you don't fix it at that point you're going to fall into what I call a big rut, which is a long slow slide into irrelevance. Look at the majority here. Your listeners can get very cross with me of the wish. But you look at the majority of the very large denomination, old line denominations, they're in the big rut.

It's a long slow decline into I relevancy with not much happening to fix that. And ultimately you'll go through death rattle whenever there might looks like something's happening. But basically we're just

putting this thing out to grace. Those are the stages. The distinguishing factor in those organizations that I've seen emerge out of not just this but the pandemic was undoubtedly way beyond anything that I've ever experienced in my lengthy career. But I have been through the great recession, the big financial bust in 2008, monolithic inflation back in the UK and the early eighties. I've seen a lot of very, very existential times for businesses and not for profits. And it's been the same thing each time in the book I talk about at the back of the book, very few people get there because that's what the good stuff is. But it's hard reading. I show something I call the scalability matrix, which are 13 things.

I'm not going to talk about them. 13 things you got to do to get into predictable success. Stuff like getting your org chart, getting your rules and responsibilities. Two of them, and they're the two that are like capstones. They lock the whole thing into place are the ability to innovate institutionally, not the ability to innovate because you've got a person who's a good innovator, but the ability institutionally innovate. And secondly, the ability to manage what I call manage key changes. And that means being able, flexible, it incorporates a few other things, but essentially flexibility so you can innovate and then nobody wants to do it right Or you can be very flexible but of no idea what you're doing. Watch a baby. Incredibly flexible but got no control whatsoever.

The churches, the businesses that have come through this last really tough time, best had the ability to both innovate and in the flexibility internally to implement that. And I'll make one very covid specific point because I feel that it's got to be a lesson that we learn. Pivoting is not innovation. A lot of people thought they were going to get through this by doing something called pivoting. It became the keyword in the church world. It was essentially go online, right? If you're not there, go online. That is not pivoting, is not innovating, it's just doing what everybody else is now doing and it's necessary. But it's just a hygiene factor. It's just that's the least we've got to do. The innovation is how do we do it in a way that differentiates us and makes us relevant. There are an awful lot of, not just, I mean not going to beat up in the church, huge number of businesses went online but that didn't get guarantee them success.

Like restaurants went online, you dial in your order, go get it yourself. People who were doing training, coaching, consulting, my world, a lot of folks went online, started putting courses up there. You can do that and put some pretty cruddy courses up. And that's not innovating, right? No. So innovate. And I think the two things I saw were innovation and then the internal flexibility as an organization, even if it was only 10 of us were flexible enough to actually implement that stuff as opposed to just coming up with a beautiful, I used to talk about people would come to workshops and then take their binder back and it would go to binder heaven. All those great ideas. A whiteboard heaven is probably full right now. The number

Carey Nieuwhof:

Of, Oh, that's brilliant.

Les McKeown:

Incredible innovative ideas that people came up with over the last three to five years. But did they get implemented? No, because the folks weren't flexible enough to do it. We tried that before. It didn't work. It wouldn't work for our congregation. I don't know that she has the ability to do that. All that sort of stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thought about that. Working with leaders over the last few years as a distinction between innovation and adaptation. When everybody went online, we adapted. You had no choice, right? Right. It's like shut

the doors adapt. But the difference between innovation and adaptation, I think you're right, is that next gear, that next iteration that okay, we're here to stay versus oh, as soon as the mandates were gone, okay, we can open our doors again. Everybody back in the pool and it just didn't work. It's still not working. But people aren't there.

Les McKeown:

You know? Have a great ice hockey icon up there in Canada, Bobby Orr and he just so far as, I'm not an ice hockey fan by any stretch, but so as far as I could say he was like the GOAT of ice hockey. He was the greatest of all time. And I've read a number of places where he was asked repeatedly what he thought his secret of success was and he said over and over again, I skate to where the puck is going to be. And that's innovation. Pivoting. Our adaptation is skating to where the puck is no. And that's like watching kids play soccer. Six year olds watch, six year old plays soccer, it's flock ball, right? They're all around the ball. All 22 of them and there's like a dust cloud above them. Now if the ball moves as it did in the early days of covid, the ball moved. 22 people moving with the ball is not innovation. That's adaptation. The ball moved, we move, the ball moves, we move, the ball moves. What happens when the ball moves Next time we move. Bobby got it right. Skate to where the ball is going to be.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So in your new book, I know it's toward the end, but Do Lead. For those of you who are not big readers, this is under a hundred pages and there's pictures, so fantastic, very readable

Les McKeown:

Great illustrations.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Uh huh. You cover failure and I know that's toward the end of the book, but how do you counsel someone when they feel like they're failing as a leader? People have listened so far into the interview and they're like, okay, I'm not a resilient guy and I'm not very innovative. Okay, now how do you counsel people through that?

Les McKeown:

Well I think I want to make a distinction. First of all, I want to take the sentence that you used cause it's the most commonly used sentence in the context that we're talking about. And I want to break it down and change it just a little bit of a may. You talked about how do you counsel people who feel like they're failing and feeling like you're failing does not necessarily mean you're failing. That's the first thing. But a third of all that I do is coaching with leaders. That's what I do. I live on Zoom coaching folks and obviously I've got a self filtering thing where the folks who come along and pay me, it's not cheap to be coached by me. They're typically already great leaders. They're trying to get from greater, incredibly good. So it's a great privilege to do it. But they like everybody else, have those at times and they feel like they're failing.

And the first thing we try to do is to establish do they feel like they're failing or are they failing? And the distinction usually comes down to mapping themselves up against an unrealistic set of expectations. And so you're not failing, you're just holding up a completely unrealistic set of expectations, which are usually not self-generated. They're usually placed on us. One of the things I talk about in the book is that huge disservice that the last probably now maybe 30 years, were media reporting of leadership. First of

all, it blew up because it happened on one day, which was the first day of the first Iraq war back in George H W Bush's time. And the reason for that very specific timeframe is that was when CNN went live for its first 24 hour rolling reporting that blew up people. TV became huge, the internet came along and suddenly we need a gazillion more stories than we ever had to fill all of that before you.

23 pages of a newspaper of which 18 were obituaries or local for sale classifieds or whatever, A few stories got you through. Now we need an enormous amount of stories and the stories must all have an arc. There's got to be a problem and a solution and a hero even just grab your newspaper, go to your website of choice, all that stuff. And what happens is we get bombarded with stories of large and small heroism. Leadership is not heroism. Heroism is a subset sometimes of leadership. Most leadership, most successful leadership is incredibly mundane, incredible brilliance. I said in the book, and I said over and over again, brilliance is built on the mundane. You get the mundane things, you can be brilliant over and over again. On top of that, you're lucky, you can be brilliant once or twice because you catch lightning in a bottle.

You want to be consistently brilliant, you've got to master the mundane. Now what happens with great leaders, good leaders, is they read about Elon Musk wanting to colonize Mars and they feel like a failure. Well, okay, knock yourself out. That's like every person in the congregation thinking they've got to be the apostle Paul. It's just let's work out. Do you feel like you're a failure or are you a failure? So that's the first thing. And a lot of that is to do, I would say particularly with beginning leaders, is to do with the imposter complex, the imposter syndrome. I don't feel so dealing with that first. And if you can't find some tools to deal with that over time and you're grip with the imposter syndrome all of the time, you'll never achieve what you really could do and you'll burn out pretty early. So the second thing is, if what we do is we look at all of this and say, No, actually I failed.

I did a thing which led to having to shut this plant. Or I did a thing and it used up a third of our cash reserves and we got nothing, but whatever it might be. Well it, here's where again, this may not be the most helpful thing, but just to all of our listeners, but I just want to tell the truth. Spend a little bit of time, do what I call the hard dirty fingernail work. Do a forensic analysis of it, work out why that happened and don't do that again, don't do that again. And sometimes it's not that complicated and you can beat up on yourself and you can actually do what I call work avoidance, which is doing the equivalent of line from the snippy cartoons. Put your thumb on your mouth and rub your blankie and just wallow a little bit in that sense of oh poor me me, I didn't do a good job. We all need to spend a little bit of time on that. But if you actually fail at some point and talk about this in the book, you've got to do a very clinical autopsy of what just happened. Learn the lessons and don't do it again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, that's super, super advice. And I think that's right. It's like I burned my hand on the stove, don't touch the stove the same way again.

Les McKeown:

I get absolutely torked with the feel fast, feel often mantra. It drives me run. It just drives me run. Why would you do that? Why would you fail fast? Why would you do that? Do you think that was how Roger Federer became the greatest tennis player of all time by telling himself every day going to feel fast and going to fail often? No, it's good. You do fail to get past it fast and it's good if there are going to be ways in which just you're going to fail statistically that's going to happen good to get past them. But to make that your leadership mantra, give a break, give me, I don't want to be in whatever you're doing. If what you're signing up for is failing fast and failing off doesn't work for me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You've mentioned imposter syndrome a couple of times. What do you want to say to leaders about imposter syndrome Les?

Les McKeown:

We all pretty much suffer from it. And you need to find a way to manage it. And one of the best ways to manage it is to get a couple of honest relationships with fellow leaders relationships where you can talk honestly about what you're facing and how you feel about it. Therapy is really good. I mean this sounds a bit, we were coming from an Irishman, got to tell you, it took me a long time to think about that. But you can get a lot of unpaid great therapy by just getting yourself into a good grouping of fellow leaders that you can sit down and talk about it. Because the majority of imposter imposter syndrome thrives on a lack of transparency. It thrives on being intimidated by the facade that some other people put up there. One of the dirty little secrets here is that there are people who get their kicks who think of themselves as leaders.

They're not when you look at it, but they think of themselves as leaders and they get their kicks from actually making other people feel bad. They don't think that's what they're doing. I thought I came up with a new phrase for this a week or so ago, and I'm disappointed to find, I came back from the event it was at where I'd come up with this and I googled it and I found out other people had used it before. But there's a syndrome, which the phrase that I've used for is exec-plaining, Have you ever been in a room where somebody just sitting there explaining, well we did that back and oh I think it was '06. And the key metric you've got to know about there is there's no way this is going to work unless, and what they're doing is they're protecting their self image by in inducing another people as if they're not careful.

The other football, the other people I a sense of the imposter center, how does she know that much? That much? How has he got, where has he got that from? I don't think about things like that. When you're in the presence of a true leader and they come up with a genius idea. You'll think it was at least partially your idea because that's how true leaders operate, right? Yeah. It at least becomes a sense of being collegial. But you don't find yourself thinking, oh I'm such a jerk. So there's that and there's just all the stuff that the press puts out. I mean, here's a good example and we might come back to it when we talk a little bit about the distinction between the leadership distinction between focusing on goals and objectives and people you remember years ago, Cheney Sullenberger, Captain Sully landed that plane on the Hudson Magnificent act of leadership, right? Magnificent. I get to see the Tom Hanks can't remember.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I think Tom Hanks plays him. Yeah,

Les McKeown:

He pays all the great people. And I got the grip privilege of seeing the executive corporate equivalent of that happen from time to time. I mean, if that is the only of pinnacle of leadership in that role, every pilot in North America should adjust, got themselves another job the next day, right? But I mean, of course you might feel a professionally, you might think, hope I would've been able to do that if that was me. Or wow, I don't think I could do that. I'm going to go, I'm going to agree up on my simulator training or whatever. But what happens in business and in not-for-profit leadership a lot is we see and hear the equivalent of those stories and we allow it to transform itself into something that evokes imposter syndrome in us. Which is crazy. Just crazy understandable but crazy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You have a different definition of leadership. You mentioned John Maxwell's leadership as influence. I think Druckers was leaders of followers, right? Look over your shoulders, anybody following you? Why are those insufficient? Why is yours different and what is it?

Les McKeown:

Well, I have to say first of all, and I think I make this clear in the book, I'm a huge admirer both to incredible teachers. Very much so. The reason I wrote Do Lead is because I felt that there was, first of all, there was no real definition of leadership that made sense to me. And secondly, everybody had a different one. So I sit in rooms with leaderships all the time, physical and virtual. That's my day. I'm in my rooms, physical or virtual with leaders and we are all calling this elephant a different thing or thinking about a different thing. And I wanted to nail it down. And a lot of leadership definitions talk about what the impact of the leadership is on the people who are following the leader at the end of the day, that's frankly irrelevant. It's not nothing wrong with, and often as a subset of delivering in your leadership, which I'll define in a second or two, it does mean being able to motivate, develop, challenge people.

That's all a very important subset. But that's not leadership. Leadership is any act that gets two or more people closer to their common goals. The only reason leadership exists is because there's somewhere we need to get to. If there's nowhere to get to, you don't need a leader. Nowhere to get, You don't need a leader if there's somewhere to get to. What do you need from a leader? They've got to get you closer to those common goals, ideally reach them. So leadership is any act that gets you closer to your common goals. Now what happens, and it happens in spades in the church, is we confuse all of that with things like mentoring, coaching, motivation, alignment, all important, all important, not leadership. And let me bring this back to, or I, let's put it on the example we just talked about Sully land the plane on the Hudson, right?

Part of you're running an airline, you know, want to lead your airline, you want it to do well. Part of what you're going to do is you're going to train your spokes to be nice to the customers. Do you want another cup of coffee? Can I kind of top up your gin? And I mean all that sort of stuff. If you're sitting on that plane and I just, it's screaming towards the Hudson and Sully comes wandering out, says, hey, hi buddy, can I top up that coffee for you? You're going to say get that back, get in. What do you want him to just do this thing? And leadership is usually about the mundane in between. And so I give some examples. The day that I wrote that section, I just pulled out my webpages, the stuff that I get my news in the morning and I pulled the first five leadership stories that people were talking about.

And they were about somebody who, I think one of them, I'm not going to quote them all, but one of them was, remember it was the day an owner of, I think it was a business up in Seattle, had decided everybody was going to get \$80,000 a year and including him. You remember that? And there were stories like all heroic leadership, great, love it, tiny, tiny subset. It's not even the stuff above the surface, it's just a tiny bit under the surface. In my world that day, and this was actually back at the time, whenever I had some employees, a group of us had to go somewhere and my then darling wife went to her gym early, did her workout early so she could come back and I could use our car, I could take our, that's an active leadership. It's a not so random active leadership, It's mundane, but why is it an active leadership?

It's something that gets two or more people closer to our common goals. And that's what leadership is. Now, is the other stuff wonderful and important and sometimes do the two completely conflict? Absolutely, yes. I don't like using war and sports as proxies for organizational growth because they're not, they're different things, but sometimes they can be useful. And this is one of those examples, the

coach of, I'm British, I'm going to talk about soccer and sure you all the Canadian listeners would be great with us. Your pep, gar, you're running the best club in the world. Manchester City does your job occasionally means standing on the touchline, screaming you're a banshee to motivate your and player, your players. Yes. Is that leadership? Could he take the rest of the week off and just have those three minutes and get whatever millions he's getting paid for the no, the vast majority of it is mundane, dirty fingernail work.

Really mundane stuff. So leadership is any act that gets two or more people closer to their common goals. And I know you didn't ask me this and I know I'm on a rant, but I'm going to say this anyway. One of the most freeing things of that definition is that it means that leadership is not an elite act. It's not something that only people with the title leaders can do. It means something that anybody can do. You make the coffee run for your team of analysts who are doing a late go in a late night, an all-nighter, not so random active leadership. It also means, however, leadership is not necessarily permanent. You don't have to be permanently a leader to make not so random acts of leadership, step into a transient leadership mode and do something that helps your team group, division, department, organization get closer to its common goals. And then just go back to being the barista. So you're working in your local coffee shop, a big line, your busing tables, a big line appears at the register, you jump in behind you, help out at the register, not surround active leadership. You're helping two or more people, you and your crew get through a shift. You're helping the customers enjoy their experience. And then just go back to busing tables. Does that mean you became the manager? No. So end of rant Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Great rant. And you know what? For leaders who, I get this question a lot. Leaders who are trying to recruit other leaders, it expands the definition of leadership, volunteers, et cetera, inside an organization. It makes you look at it differently. So you do in the book and do lead, you talk about natural born leaders, self-made leaders, and reluctant leaders. What are the differences and why do the differences matter less?

Les McKeown:

Ultimately they only matter when we come back to our resilience point. And what I find is that actually the self-made leader, the one who's made a choice at a particular point and decided to commit to this, are usually the ones that being build a stronger amount of resilience. Natural leaders, and we've all met them right there. People who, they probably were running the lunch, cried at their kindergarten, they hold a cry, they just, they're going to lead one way or the other. Have their tank starts a little fuller than resilience, starts a little fuller than everybody. They start with a natural amount of resilience. But it's this self-starter who tends to be the one who builds more innate resilience because they know they've got to build up muscle. Sort of it's like looking at the natural sports jock just built for this and the guy who is at the gym for three hours every day, they, they've got to do this in order to perform.

They tend to build more resilience and the ones with the least resilience tend to be the reluctant leaders for obvious reasons. Now I love reluctant leaders. That's, that's somebody who just find themselves in a position, you know, can think about the, we've got a fantastic example going on real time at the moment, which is the president of Ukraine. He got himself voted in before this happened. Reluctant leader, look at what's happened, look at what's happened. And he's going to have a huge amount of, amount of resilience that he's built up because he's also now become a self-made war leader. But I sort of suspect when, because I'm all in for it not being, If when he gets through all of this, he's not going to keep running for president. Hey, understand, right guys, I think I'm done for this. I've done, his continuity of purpose is very, very fixed.

So that's what I see the difference now. I don't see any difference in ultimate competence and capability you can get perfectly capable and in incapable incompetent natural self media or reluctant leaders, that's a whole different thing. Not one of the great mistakes we make is to assume that every natural leader is necessarily a good leader. There are a lot of very natural jerk leaders there. It just comes naturally to them to be bad at this and they can't help themselves. They keep, We've all met them, right? Oh yeah. It's not like the first time you confront a bad leader with the fact that they're a bad leader, that they say, Oh, you're right. I'll not do that again. They just go somewhere else and be a bad leader elsewhere. And sadly, the church and for-profit businesses full of stories of bad leaders who got find out and just moved on somewhere else.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's a nice segue into another point. You make that great leadership is not goal oriented it's people oriented, which is a little bit counterintuitive as well, or at least contrary to a lot

Les McKeown:

Of the literature. I think the point I make is I think the point I make is the other way, around it's not people oriented it's goal oriented.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh you're right. I misread the question. You are totally right. Okay, so let's pick it up. It is not people oriented it's goal oriented which is, yeah, go ahead and unpack.

Les McKeown:

It comes to back to our definition. If the definition of leadership is, as I believe it is, any act that gets two or more people closer to their common goals, then first of all, leadership is an act. It's something you've got to do. You can sit around just sort of saying, I am a leader because I sort of emote leadership or I say leadery things, but at some point you're going to have to do something, right? Cause a leader's job is to get us closer to our common goals. And it's why I said it's goal oriented. You can't afford to wake up and say every day and say, How do I make my people feel better?

Unless your job is the title is people better feeler than you can do that. You can have a whole bunch of happy people and they'll very quickly get unhappy because you, you're not helping them get where they want to go. So that's why I said leadership is about achieving those goals. Now does it mean that you've got to have the ability to be people oriented? Absolutely. Absolutely. But there are a ton of other things you've got to be good at as a leader as well, not just being people oriented. And this is particularly tough in the church because people orientation is at the core of most ministries. But that doesn't mean that your job as a leader is just to make everybody feel good, to get them closer to their common goals.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's where I wanted to go next. I'm so glad we're talking about it because there's a lot of leaders listening who would say, Well, I feel like my job is to make people somewhat happy or to satisfy their demands or their needs because when it doesn't happen, I get in trouble. I can get fired. That's the expectation. And those are also the leaders who are really frustrated with their jobs. I almost never meet a people pleaser who loves their work or somebody who says, Yeah, I'm trying to make people happy. First of all, it never works. You're not going to make everybody happy. So speaking to that,

because what happens if you are trying to make it people centric, and I'm just going to make everybody happy?

Les McKeown:

In order to speak into that with the most helpful content. I want to, and I may be foreshadowing a question that you would have later, so let me just try to conflate the two. I want to distinguish between the four types of leaders that I see out there. And again, yeah, okay, great. I didn't make any of this up. This is just me putting labels and on what I see happening everywhere. I talk about this in the second book, The Synergist and interlude. So we've got the type of leader that we most often think of, which I call a visionary leader. So that's the big story. Work at 30,000 feet can bring reality distortion to bear risk taker, Elon Musk, it was up Steve Jobs for a long time and now Elon, something fell from the guy. He got it nuts in. So can and we can all of us, when you think about leaders, we can list a thousand visionary leaders.

There are three other types. We have the operator leader and the operator is only interested in, one is only interested in results. That's all our visionary wants to deliver in this picture. The operator leader goes through breeze block walls. It's, we've got a service in 30 minutes. Get the chairs out. Just get the doors open. Stop talking. Don't talk to me. Do this, do this. Operator leaders do do. Then we've got processor leaders who you already see that much or hear that much. They're making sure we measure twice in cut once they make sure, No, no, no, hold on a minute. Let's not just do this. Could we write down how we do our Easter service so that we don't all get together three weeks beforehand next year and invent it all from scratch again, they're thinking about how do we repeat stuff. The fourth style, which is relatively rare in for profit and is overwhelming, the kiss in church environments is what I call the synergist leader.

And those are people focused leaders. So visionary, here's where we're going to go. Operator, I get it, let's go make it happen. Processor, Oh, let me measure that. Let me find out a way to process that. Let's me get a spreadsheet up here. We should all use Asana. All that sort of stuff. And then the synergist leader is getting everybody together, You happy, you comfortable, you like this? Are we aligned? Leadership for any organization that goes above 10 or 11 people has got to have the balance of all four of those. You need all four. But what happens often in finder owner businesses and churches that have got a senior or lead pastor who is often always also the finding pastor, they're trying to do all of that in one person or two people. And the synergist role is the noisiest one in the church environment because that gets conflated with being what we are here to do. We're here to make people happy. And so the Synergist leadership style takes over and actually what happens is it's the visionary and synergists who end up talking a lot, Oh, this is what we're going to do. Oh, I'll go and make sure everybody's on board and the operator and processor stuff doesn't get done as effectively as it should. We're all still in there talking and the service should have started 20 minutes ago. The one operator on the leadership team is sitting there going crazy.

So that's where I think we can find that conflation of being people focused, particularly on church environment, takes us away from what is frankly our overall mission and the goals we need to do. And sometimes it's set at the start saying no to things to people. It's come out as an echo in our whole discussion. Just the ability to strategically say, no, not because you're being a jerk, but because you've got clarity and you're focused on what it is that we need to do. That ability to say no will help you grow any organization for profit or not for profit.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So if you're that pupil oriented person, how do you get around that? Can you learn the skill of an operator or visionary or processor? Do you hire around that? What do you do?

Les McKeown:

I'm going to give a slightly technical answer and if the listeners will hang in for me for a moment or two, then it'll become wider and more applicable, readily applicable. It depends on the degree to which you are that synergist leader. So I've been talking for caricature terms as clarity terms as if we're just one or other. Most of us, not of us, have got a primary style, a lead style, and at least a secondary style. So I'm a visionary, a visionary processor that's a rare breed accepted. Many consultants are visionary processes. So I like to many

Carey Nieuwhof:

Two of those on our team, our little team process.

Les McKeown:

So they bring consulting solutions. They'd like to find elegant solutions to stuff and then help you implement a way to do it, right? They don't particularly want to do it themselves. They want to see the vision and then help you do it. So when we come back to our synergist leader, and by the way, for the listeners, they can go to synergy quiz, all one word, synergy quiz. Maybe you'll put that in the show notes .com and you can spend seven or eight minutes, totally free, answer a bunch of questions and it'll spit out your mix. We've been doing it for years of over half a million people have taken it very tried and tested. You'll enjoy the results. And what happens is you can be a maximum, and this is where I'm going to be a little technical just for a minute, but doesn't really matter.

Ignore the numbers, just stick with me. If you were all synergist, you'd score 960 on the synergist on this little quiz and zero in everything else, anywhere up to 480. But halfway up there, you can control that synergist style, that sweet spot for any of the styles. You want to be a visionary operator processor, synergist is sort of 240, 480. You own that style at that stage. If as happens a lot in the church world, you score higher than 480. The closer you get up to that 980, the more you're what we call a dominant. In this case we're talking about synergistic can apply to any of the styles. It can be a dominant, visionary, dominant operator, dominant processor, dominant synergist. There are a lot of dominant synergists in the church space because it attracts leaders. If you are a dominant synergist, you want to help people there.

And no value judgment here. Nothing wrong with this. You look around, where can I help people? If you're a person of faith, your church is the very first place you're going to go to. So that, there aren't that many dominant synergists in the cutthroat world of commercial for profit business because somebody looks around and says, "Hey Joan, why are you in my office again for the third time today? I do not want to have coffee with you again. No, I don't want to talk about the last release of the project. Just go. I have a job to do." So the distinction is this. If you're a dominant synergist, if you're a primary synergist, 240 to 480, you own that style. If you're a dominant synergist, a closer yard of four to 980, that style owns you. You're blinkered, you can't see any other, you're not going to be happy with any other solution.

If I don't get a happy smile from everybody, I'm not going to be happy. That is problematic. And it needs coaching. It's not a good thing to be a dominant anything. It's not good to be a dominant visionary operator, processor or synergies because you become blinkered and you don't accept the optimal decision for the church as a whole, right? If we said no, we're going to shut this ministry down. It's

exhausting our resources. It's taking our money away from what we know we can. I'm just making up. It's just sitting here. A dominant synergist will find out very hard, Oh, there's three people are permanently employed at night. How can we do that? We can't do that. So that's where that can

Carey Nieuwhof:

So where's the hope? So many churches are, or organizations, even businesses, very small staff, your synergist, you're trying to please everybody. What's the way out? Or is that your relational jail you're in for the rest of your leadership

Les McKeown:

Life? No, it's not. I don't think any of it's pre, except in Wesleyan churches. It's not in any way predestined. So you know, don't have to stick there. What happens is this, first of all, just recognition. One of the greatest things that in a sense, my ministry that we talk about going around helping people with predictable success is that shared vocabulary and recognition of the sorts of terminology that just talked about is incredibly helpful. Just being able to see it enables you to say, Oh, wait a minute. I think we have that issue. So we've got this very visionary lead pastor who wants us to take over the world by Friday? And we've got a three-four synergist who just want to jump out, grab their team, talk about it. Meetings are great, but at the end of it, did we do anything and we've got any action points, we need more operators, we need whatever.

So just recognition is one thing. And the second thing is just coaching in its simplest sense of saying, okay, when you find yourself getting irritated with solutions being proposed that don't hit your style, and it doesn't just happen with processors, these dominant visionaries get really irritated. If you're trying to play small ball to fix something, they always want a grandiose solution. Even when a grandiose solution's, the last thing you need, you just need, Let's move this thing from here to here. Operators get very frustrated with solutions that aren't immediately applicable. Processors get frustrated with solutions that don't have belt and braces built in, redundancy built in. But once you see that, you can begin to coach each other as a team. And I have the joy of seeing it all the type people, Oh no, no, wait a minute, that's the processor and you coming out.

We don't need to open a spreadsheet for this one thing we're doing one time only. Let's just do it. And don't worry about systems or I know you would like us not just to have, just to go visit a couple of people who are in hospital. We do it one time. You want us to have a hospital ministry? That's the visionary solution. We did it once with good, so let's change the world. Just recognizing that and mutually coaching each other using shared vocabulary can be very powerful. And again, that's one of the reasons why I wrote the book was to provide the vocabulary and the ability to share it internally with your team.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, Les, you have so much wisdom for the team, for teams and for leaders. This is for business leaders, for not-for-profit leaders. It's called Do Lead. Any final words you want to share for leaders? We've covered so much

Les McKeown:

Apart from by the book. I wrote it for you and I think you'll benefit it from, And I think my closing words would be kind to yourself. Most leaders are way, way, way too hard on themselves. Be kind to yourself. The people you lead. Need you to do that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's great. Les, where can people find you online these days?

Les McKeown:

Predictable success.com. All one word, Predictable success.com. Lots of free stuff there. You can get a copy of the book at the moment. We'll have a promo that we have, a promo that'll pop up. You can get a copy of Do lead free, just pay shipping and eight bucks for shipping and go get it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fantastic, Les, thank you so much.

Les McKeown:

Thank you indeed, Kerry.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I would encourage you to go back into the archives and discover Les. Of course, you can just search that on the Googles or in the podcast app you're listening to, or you can get the show notes. Go to carrienieuwhof.com/episode528. You will find transcripts there. Increasingly, I am relying on transcripts in other people's shows, and maybe you would do the same. You can find that over at careynieuwhof.com/episode528. Or just search Les McKeown on the Googles and you'll find us. So next episode, we've got Brian Kapelman. I'm so excited. It's first time I've interviewed a show runner, somebody in TV and films and well, here's an excerpt.

Brian Kapelman:

Well, yeah, I mean, that's just David. I mean, that's one of the, Okay, so that's one of the best things about getting to do this with your lifelong best friend is, I mean, those two guys are just the cool version of me and Dave in that moment. And I remember, I mean, that happened. I was watching Oprah probably crying and Dave walked in. But if you're a writer, you kind of remember those things. And so I remember pitching that to Steven Soderberg saying, We have this notion that this thing. And he thought it was hilarious. And I think Brad and George knew that they were doing some version of us.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Also coming up we have Nancy Duarte, Jon and McRae Acuff, Lysa TerKeurst Pat Lencioni, James Clear, Chris Anderson, Annie F. Downs, Irwin McManus, and much more on the podcast. If you like this episode, please leave a rating and review. And I want to give you something for free too, because you listen to the end, right? Churches that aren't just surviving but thriving in the season, share eight common traits.

So if you want to weed out the unhealthy areas of your ministry and start leading a thriving church, you can get your free copy of the checklist and ebook by going to thrivingchurchchecklist.com. It's free, it's thrivingchurchchecklist.com. Check it out. And thanks so much for listening to everybody. Man, it is fun doing this. Had a couple of moments over the last little while where I thought, how's this my job? But it's my job and I love doing it. And we will do this week after week after week, as long as it serves you. Leave us a rating and review and we'll catch you next time on the podcast. Thanks so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you thrive in life and leadership.

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