

Announcer:

The Art of Leadership Network.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Welcome to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership podcast. It's Carey here, and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. Well, we got some stuff that I think is going to help you do that. Our guest today is Rory Vaden. I've been looking forward to having him on the podcast for a long time. Today's episode is brought to you by the Highly Productive Leader. That's a 30 day challenge I'm doing right now, and it'll help you free up more time and find more energy in 2023. Go to highlyproductive2023.com to register and by Leadr. Get 20% off your first year of their people development software by using promo code Carey, that's C-A-R-E-Y when you go to leadr.com. That's Leader without the second E. Well, Rory Vaden is on the podcast. We are going to talk about the best branding advice ever, the shortcut to finding your unique contribution to the world, question I get all the time from young leaders and how influence really works.

Rory is a New York Times bestselling author, a hall of fame speaker, and the world's leading expert on the psychology of ultra performance. His pioneering concept of multiplying time resulted in a TED Talk that's gone viral and his books have hit the New York Times bestseller list, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Amazon, et cetera, et cetera, and he runs an incredible branding agency out of Nashville these days. I met Rory finally in Chicago this past summer, and we hit it off, and so I'm really glad to bring this conversation to you today. And speaking of seasons, it's no longer summer. In fact, it's almost 2023, and fast forward to a year from now. Would you like to look back and feel like you've accomplished everything you wanted to do? Maybe even some things you've been dreaming about for years but have never gotten to? Whether it's launching another campus or building a healthier routine. Maybe dropping some pounds. Maybe it's adding an extra service and having the bandwidth for that, starting a podcast, writing a book. Maybe it's honestly just getting your messages done ahead of time. Would feel pretty amazing, right?

Well, that's why I'm launching something that I'm calling the Highly Productive Leader. It's a 30 day challenge to free up more time and energy in 2023. The challenge is 30 days of uncovering why it's so easy to go off track, setting those ambitious goals, but then I'm going to hand you a strategy for actually accomplishing them and I'm going to coach you with accountability and encouragement. I've structured each of these sessions on the framework that I teach in At Your Best. So if you've done the book or taken the course, this is a chance to apply it for a new year, and if you haven't, don't worry. All are welcome. It's all happening inside the Art of Leadership Academy. So if you're a member, which many of you are, all you have to do is log in, join the group. For those of you who aren't members, you can get in now. You can join the Academy and the challenge by going to highlyproductive2023.com. That's highlyproductive2023.com.

I know it's a busy time of year. You're like, "Carey, I don't have the bandwidth to do it." It's going to take you probably an hour, hour and a half a week for a month. That's it. That's less time than most people spend on social media or even watching TV each day. So if you can do that in a day, promise you can do this in a week. Go to highlyproductive2023.com and get in today before the challenge starts. And as I'm talking with leaders, I hear all the time that one on one meeting effectiveness is a felt need. Why? Well, because people aren't participating. They're kind of phoning it in. They don't feel cared for or developed, and therefore they're not engaged in your mission. My friends at Leadr are working to solve that problem. They're the first ever people development software, and that is focused on helping you have better one-on-one meetings that are employee focused that drive engagement and put an end to meeting dread.

It's a one-stop shop software solution for all things people focused and they help you streamline goals and get more out of the entire team, and it all starts with the one-on-one meeting. So, check out [leadr.com](#), that's L-E-A-D-R.com, for how you can better engage and grow your team today through one-on-one meetings. Be sure to use the promo code Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, for 20% off your first year at [leadr.com](#). Well, with all that said, let's dive into my fascinating conversation, at least I found it fascinating, with Rory Vaden. Rory, welcome to the podcast.

Rory Vaden:

Carey, my friend, it's great to be here, man. I'm so excited about this.

Carey Nieuwhof:

This has been a long time coming. I think we've been trying to connect for multiple years, is that right?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And so many mutual friends who are like, "You got to meet Rory. You got to meet Rory," and we finally met at the GLS this summer in August in Chicago, which is great.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, I know. That's right. Yep. So it's been years in the making, but it's going to be good. Good things to those who wait, so.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fantastic. Yeah. Well, it's always fascinating for me to see how people ended up where they are, especially with someone like you who found success I'm going to say pretty early in life. So, I'd love to follow the breadcrumbs. You want to tell us how you got to where you are now, a little bit about what you do, and then sort of back up and look at the breadcrumbs?

Rory Vaden:

Sure. Yeah. So, I was raised by a single mom. My mom sold Mary Kay cosmetics. So, I am a pretty boy. I'm a mama's boy. I don't hunt, I don't fish. I manicure, I pedicure, I massage. I know more about makeup than I do about cars. It's totally true. But my mom was in direct sales and so I grew up going to all these motivational meetings and stuff, and so I kind of grew up around personal development, and when I went to college, I got involved with a direct sales company and I went door to door 14 hours a day, six days a week on straight commission paying all of my own expenses, and I ended up doing it for five summers because I made about \$250,000 doing it over the course of five summers, mostly from recruiting. So, I was a top salesperson, but I was the all time record holder in leadership, and so by the time I graduated college, I had like 57 students that I had recruited that were in this organization. And then I left that behind [inaudible 00:06:40].

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, can we stop for a minute?

Rory Vaden:

Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Can we just pick that apart and then we'll go for some more breadcrumbs?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. Let's talk door to door. Who wants to be a door-to-door salesperson?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, even before then, you took me back to my childhood, and I remember in the seventies and eighties it was like pink Cadillacs everywhere. Did your mom ever get a pink Cadillac from Mary Kay?

Rory Vaden:

No. She got the red Grand Am, which was like a level down, but only... I think she got the red Grand Am, but only for a minute. She wasn't like super into it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right.

Rory Vaden:

She kind of dabbled into it. But I remember early on, my mom used to always say these things to me. I was in martial arts and I didn't like it. I remember what happened was when I was 10 years old, I became the youngest black belt in Colorado to ever get beaten up by a girl, and I got beaten up bad in this tournament, and so I was telling my mom, I was like, "Mom, I don't like this. This isn't fun," And she used to always say the same thing. She would say, "That's okay, Rory. Enjoying it isn't a requirement of doing it." Enjoying it isn't a requirement of doing it. And so I started to develop this passion for self discipline and understanding how do I get myself to do things that I don't want to do?

And then as I finished school and became an entrepreneur in my earlier twenties, I started studying the psychology of ultra performers, these top one percenters, and I found there were all of these consistent themes around self discipline and doing things you don't want to do and how do you do that? And that became my first book, which was called Take the Stairs, which came out, that hit the New York Times when I was 29 years old. I had already been speaking since I was 17, so it was like 12 years, and my wife and I had built... So after that door to door college experience, I entered a contest called the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters because I thought, well, maybe if I won the world championship of speaking, I could be a speaker. I didn't win, but there's 25,000 contestants from 90 countries, and I came in second place in the world when I was 23.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Rory Vaden:

And so then I was at this event, the National Speakers Association Conference a couple weeks later, and this gentleman walks up to me and he says, "You're Rory Vaden, right?" I said, "Well, yes sir, I am." And

he said, "I heard about you. You're the Toastmaster kid, right? You were in the World Championship. That's pretty cool." And I said, "Yes, sir, that's me." I said, "I'm sorry, have we met?" And he said, "No, we haven't, but I'd like to get to know you." And then he reaches his hand out and he says, "My name is Zig Ziglar."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Rory Vaden:

Some of the young ones listening may not know who Zig Ziglar is, but he became my personal mentor, Carey, for about four years.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Get out.

Rory Vaden:

I would talk to him and then I would travel with him, and he used to do these big events. You know, they were called Get Motivated events, and they were like arenas full of people, and I'd be backstage. It's like him and Colin Powell and Barbara Bush. You know? So also around that time we started a sales training company because that was the only thing I knew was how to sell door to door, and so we started that company. We grew that for 12 years. That was where I met my wife. It was an eight figure business. We had about 200 people on our team. And then we exited that company in 2018, we sold it, and then we started Brand Builders Group today, which is what we do now, which is we help experts to become more well known.

So, the through line to all of it is I would describe my expertise as the psychology of influence, which is understanding how do you get someone to take action. So, I would say influence is the ability to move people to action, and that includes yourself, and so I think of the four levels of influence, and level one is learning to influence yourself, which is self-discipline. Getting yourself to do things you don't want to do, i.e. take the stairs to use the title of my first book. Level two influence is being able to influence one other person through a one-on-one conversation. I would call that sales, and we teach a curriculum. We have a program called Pressure Free Persuasion, which is how to raise money from donors or how to sell high dollar offers, but all in a very pressure free way. Level three leadership or level three influence I think of as moving a group of people to action, which I call leadership.

And then level four influence is what I call moving a community to action, which is what personal branding is, and that's the work that we do today, right? And so many of our clients are some of the biggest personal brands in the world. Ed Mylett, Lewis Howes, Amy Porterfield, Peter Diamandis. Matthew West is a client of ours. Many of you probably know him. He's one of my favorite musicians. Eric Thomas, E.T., the hip-hop preacher. It goes on and on and on. John Gordon, who wrote The Energy Bus. All these really incredible clients, and it's really understanding, how do we influence a community? But it's understanding. I think my life has been, I'm very much a student first and foremost, and I'm fascinated at how to get myself and others to take action.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Okay. Well, we got an hour right there just to pick that apart. I want to go back to when you were a teenager and I definitely want to hit on Zig Ziglar and then talk about the brands that you serve.

Rory Vaden:

Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof:

But let's start, what motivates you? How many summers was that? Four or five? Five summers?

Rory Vaden:

I did five, so it was undergrad and grad school. I graduated with an MBA and a bachelor's, so it took me five years to graduate, but I got both an MBA and a bachelor, so I had five summers, and so I did that. You know, they take you to a state you've never been before.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, so back up even more. Why not flip burgers? Why not do the typical route?

Rory Vaden:

Money.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How did you get into... Okay, money.

Rory Vaden:

Money.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So you were motivated financially.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. So what happened was my mom told me, she was like, "You're going to go to college. You're going to be the first in our family to go to college and you will get a full ride scholarship because there's no way I'll ever be able to pay." And that happened. I was valedictorian, I got a full ride scholarship, went to the University of Denver, but it didn't cover my housing and didn't cover my books and my living expenses. And so I was on college campus one day. This referee, this woman, her name was Tracy, she refereed at my intramural basketball games and she said, "Hey, I did this thing last summer where I made like \$10,000. I think you could be really good at it. Do you want to come to this meeting?" And I was like, "\$10,000?" I was like, "In a summer?" So, sure, I'll show up.

And they showed me this booklet of all these people who were the top performers the previous year and there was a woman who had made \$32,000 her first summer and I was like, "I don't care what it is. I'm in." Like, "As long as it's not illegal, I am in. I will do whatever you tell me. Just tell me what to do. I will do it." And so I made like \$17,000 my first summer, and then I made over \$50,000 each summer thereafter because I was selling and also had recruited a large team. But it was straight up doors slammed on your face, people spitting on me. Not very often, but I did have a person spit on me one time. And getting the cops called on you, being chased by dogs, the whole thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What were you selling?

Rory Vaden:

It was educational children's reference books. Basically think encyclopedias. They weren't technically encyclopedias, but they were kind of like that. The thing was, I never wanted to be a door to door salesperson. Right? Like that wasn't my life ambition. I mean, I was a normal child, Carey. I wanted to sell Mary Kay. But I loved, and I hated the job. I did. I hated. I cried every day, every morning for five summers, I cried. I hated it. But I loved the person that I was becoming in the process. It was so difficult of just getting the door slammed on your face over and over and over again. But I needed the money and it exposed me to principles. Obviously I had been deep in scripture. I'm not a pastor, but I'm a hardcore bible thumping Jesus freak, and I have been pretty much my whole life other than a little stint when I was a teenager where I wasn't super active. But I've been close to Jesus my whole life, and when I was selling books was a huge part of my faith journey because I remember July 26th of 2001, which was my 19th birthday, was my first summer. I was sitting on the corner of Buckingham Lane in Coral Court in Montgomery, Alabama, just realizing I hated the job.

I wanted to quit. I wanted to go home. You know? I grew up in this little tiny town called Frederick, Colorado. Didn't even have a stoplight, so you know things are bad when you want to go back to Frederick, right? And it's now a booming area, Frederick is. You know, and I made this covenant with God that said, "I can't do this. I quit. I don't have it in me." And so I made a covenant and I said, "If you want this to happen, this has to be yours. You have to take this because I can't do it. I give up, so you have to make this happen," and he did, right? I've always had that sort of strong sense of faith, and not growing up with an earthly father, I think maybe it was one of the blessings in terms of really has helped me always lean into my heavenly father. Yeah. So, that was my door to door days.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Because obviously the immediate motivation was money, but you're clearly a driven person, ambitious. I mean, other people would've just taken out a massive student loan. Other people would've found other things. But I mean, six days a week, getting doors slammed in your face, getting spit on once, that perseverance is pretty unique. Do you know where the drive underneath all that comes from?

Rory Vaden:

Well, I really believe that the amount of our endurance is directly proportionate to the clarity of our vision. So, if I have a crystal clear picture of what I want for my life and my future, then there is naturally a strong connection to how the sacrifices I'm asking myself to make today forward me towards that future. So, it thereby creates this context for action to take place. So in Take The Stairs, we actually call this the paradox principle of sacrifice because people think, or sometimes people will say, "Oh, I've always struggled with self-discipline," or, "My kid struggles with discipline," or, "This person on my team struggles with discipline." And what we have found almost unanimously is that it's not that people struggle from a lack of discipline as much as they struggle from a lack of vision. They don't have a clear enough picture of what they want for their life or they don't spend much time thinking about it and so there is no reason to make the sacrifice. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

True. Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

There's not a connection. There's not a connection to the long term, and this is a place where the biology, like our human brain is actually working against us because the human brain is not programmed for success. The human brain is programmed for survival. Survival is about conserving energy. Right? If you were stranded out lost in the ocean, it's like your instincts kicked in. Your brain is in life preservation mode, which is conserving energy, doing whatever you can to keep you safe, doing whatever you can to keep you comfortable. Left to our own natural design, like unchecked, we will default to take... This is where we use the escalator metaphor. We default to doing what is easy in the short term. But if you think about what it means to be a successful person, success is about doing. It's about expending energy. It's about not being safe, but taking risk. It's about getting outside your comfort zone. It's not about doing what is comfortable, it's about learning something new. It's exactly the opposite of everything that the brain is designed to do.

Most of us have the extravagant luxury of living in a world where we very rarely worry about our actual survival. We have the abundant opportunity to spend our time thinking about and pursuing success or visualizing it. So for me, I've always had a clear picture. To answer your question about me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah.

Rory Vaden:

I started doing martial arts when I was seven years, five years old, and then I started doing Shaolin kung fu when I was seven, and I had this vision of being a black belt. And when I say vision, I don't mean like a vision statement. I mean like a picture in your mind. My life, if you look at my life, take Rory the teacher out of it and just go, like if you look at my biography, my life is accomplishing a series of the next most seemingly impossible thing I could think of. So, I saw a picture of like, "What if I could become a black belt by age 10?" And I see this scene of breaking boards and testing and being there with my sensei and them handing me the black belt.

My mom tells me I'm going to get a full ride scholarship, right? So I have this scene of, I'm on graduation day. I'm valedictorian, and they announce that I get this full-ride scholarship and I'm seeing this happen. When I went door to door, it wasn't that I was like, "Ooh." It really wasn't the money. I mean, I needed money, but they did this big awards banquet every year where the top person got to stand on stage and speak to everybody, and that was what I wanted, and so I had this visualization in my mind of like, that's it. The World Championship of Public Speaking, even though I didn't win. I went twice. I lost twice, which I say, "Anyone can go once and win. It takes a real man to go twice and lose both times." But I made it, and I mean, I made it to the top 10 in the world two years in a row, and then I was the world champion first runner up in 2007, so I was 23. But there was scene.

And then shortly after that I remember walking through the airport bookstore and grabbing a book off the shelf that said New York Times bestseller, and I remember holding my hand on the cover of this book and going, "What would it take to have a book in an airport with my name on it that said New York Times bestseller?" And so it starts with this visualization. The immediate thing that shows up after that is immediate disbelief. That's impossible. You don't know how. Why you? You don't have the money. You don't have the connections. Right? There's this immediate flood of, and what that is is that's normal. That doesn't mean you're doomed for failure. That means you have a perfectly healthy, functioning normal human brain. Why? Because your brain is designed to keep you safe.

What keeps you safe is saying, "Think of all the terrible things that could happen. You can't do that. That's too risky." So, that's your brain operating in a healthy way. But success is not ordinary. Success is

not normal. Success is not average. And so to become a successful person, you have to literally rewire neurologically your own brain, and so that's what Take The Stairs ultimately became was the sort of seven key distinctions for how the world's ultra performers think. And so the picture, right, was I wanted to walk into an airport and see a New York Times bestseller, and so then when I was 29, that happened. And then I wanted to sell an eight figure business. And then I got to a point where I realized, "Golly, my life has been a series of seemingly impossible goals, one after the next." Except they were all about me. They were all completely self-centered.

And so I, with the help of many, many mentors and my mom and then the man that she eventually married who adopted me, who became my dad, and lots of mentors, lots of supporters and friends and fans. But I basically woke up one day and realized, none of this is... You know, it doesn't last that long. I remember feeling the first time that I got the news that I was going to be a New York Times bestselling author was like, I remember that moment, and it lasted for a few days. That one lasted for a while, but it doesn't last that long. Now for me, always, I've always known and never tried to replace Jesus, right, for that, so I've always had sort of a healthy relationship with achievement. But what I didn't really realize is going, man, the real feeling that is magical is there's nothing like the feeling you get when you help someone else succeed. And so I think of Maslow. You've seen Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

Okay, so we were talking about TED Talks, right? Because you got, I don't know if I'm going to spoil it, but you got someone from Ted coming on the show here [inaudible 00:26:39].

Carey Nieuwhof:

I do. No, that's okay. Yeah. Chris Anderson's coming on in a few months. Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, so Chris will be on, and I told you, I said, "Hey, you need to tell him my first TED Talk went semi viral." It's got like four and a half million views on how to multiply time, which is what my second book was about. But if I were going to do another TED Talk today, this is what I would do it on. I would show Maslow's hierarchy of needs, of which at the top, he has self-actualization, becoming everything you're meant to be. I think this is, I think it's a beautiful framework. I think it's helped a lot of people. I think it has created a lot of clarity. But as I've gotten the privilege of pursuing so much of my own individual success and coaching other people, what I realized is that actually, I think Maslow was one rung short.

It's not self-actualization that is the highest pursuit. It's others' actualization. In other words, it's helping other people succeed. That is a fire that never burns out. That is a well that never runs dry. That is a passion that you can chase for your entire life and get nothing but joy from. And so in the work we do at Brand Builders Group, part of what we help people figure out is what problem are they uniquely designed to solve? What is God's divine design of their humanity? Because I think people ask the wrong question, Carey. People go, "What's my purpose?" And I think a better question to ask is, "Who can I serve?" Because the sooner you get clear on who you can serve, the sooner you're going to find purpose, because our lives have meaning in the context of other people. Like if I'm achieving, there are wins and losses. It's competitive.

But if I am serving, there are only wins and there is only success and it never runs dry. It never burns out. And so when I get clear, when I'm going, "What's my purpose? What's my next thing? How can I grow?" It's just, see, it's self centered. But when I get into being others focused and others centered, that is where everything changes and that's what we do today. Most of my thinking today is going, "How do I help our clients to achieve?" So Ed Mylett, we just helped him run his book launch earlier this year. He sold 117,000 copies of his book. Pre-sold. Pre-sold.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It was pre-sold. That's insane.

Rory Vaden:

Insane. Eric Thomas just hit the New York Times list. We've had four Brand Builders Group clients now that have had a TED Talk go viral that we've helped them. They've had over a million views on their TED Talk. This is where, outside of Jesus being my number one obsession, hopefully, and being always a craving to read God's word and then a craving to know my wife and to know my children and to be around. Outside of that professionally, it's going... I don't even care how big our business is. I don't care about the revenue and the money, but it's like it fires me up when one of our clients wins. Like a revenue budget? I mean, come on. Not inspiring to me at all. But when one of our clients, their name is on a New York Times bestseller list, or they're speaking on one of the world's biggest stages and we kind of had something to do? That fires me up. And so for all of us, you say, "Where did that drive come from?" The first half of my life, it came from vision, because the amount of our endurance is directly proportionate to the clarity of our vision. We're not struggling from a lack of discipline, but a lack of vision. The last few years, it really has come from being, I think, others focused. It's come from service and going, you know, that's where all the action really is.

Carey Nieuwhof:

How did you figure that out? Because, you know, there's Bob Buford's quote-

Rory Vaden:

Being a total self-centered jerk.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, that's a good answer. Good answer. Good answer. How did that manifest? Is that something you saw in yourself? Did other people say, "Hey, you're a self-centered jerk"? Or what happened with that?

Rory Vaden:

No, I don't think I would, and I don't think I've ever been like selfish, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

Where it's like I am taking advantage of other people for my own gain.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure, sure.

Rory Vaden:

It's not that. I think people-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Or self-focused or whatever you want to call it, right? Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, I think it's just self-centered, meaning it was like I was the center of my universe. I thought about what I wanted, what made me feel good, what made me happy. And to some extent, I think that's healthy. I think it's kind of like you've got to put your own mask on first. I mean, that is true, right? If I don't have enough money to pay my own bills, it's hard to give so much money to feed a country, right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

It doesn't mean you can't give from what you have and you have the parable of the talents and all that stuff, and you should always give, but it's just going like, "I can't really give hundreds of thousands of dollars if I don't have them." So, I don't think it's necessarily bad or wrong or unhealthy, I just think it's immature. It's early, and the place to get to is going, "Oh, okay, how do I give back? How do I bring other people with me?" And I had a very strong sense of that even when I was in college, right? I was recruiting. I was bringing other people with me. I got more joy out of helping them get a \$5,000 or a \$10,000 check their first time than I did out of me getting, whatever, a \$50,000 check. It was seeing that impact.

But I mean, functionally what happened was I got married. Right? Once I got married, I realized how self-centered I was because I didn't... It wasn't just me worrying about me. Now I had to take into consideration this other person, like what they wanted to eat and where they wanted to go and how they wanted to spend time. And then I had kids and I was just like... I mean, having kids has been the most difficult thing that I've ever done. Not because there's anything wrong with my kids. My kids are perfect. But what they have done is my kids have exposed a great weakness in me, which is that I spent 35 years of my life only thinking of me. Never having to wake up in the middle of the night to take care of someone else, never having to be inconvenienced.

And for me, I was so efficient with my time that anything that got in the way of how I spent my time, I would basically just blow past it, and when you have kids, it doesn't really work like that, and so I just slammed into a brick wall of like, "This is so hard and so uncomfortable. Why is this such a struggle?" And it's because, "Oh, they're slowing me down. They're inconveniencing me. They're preventing me from doing things I want to do." And it's like, "Oh, it's me, me, me, me." They're preventing me from getting to worry and focus solely on me. That's not a weakness in them. That is a giant exposure of a weakness in me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, what's amazing is you're in your thirties when you discover this.

Rory Vaden:

Nah, I'm 40 now. Oh, yeah, [inaudible 00:34:43].

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're 40 now.

Rory Vaden:

I just turned 40.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You discovered it in your-

Rory Vaden:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, happy birthday.

Rory Vaden:

Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof:

In your mid to late thirties, right, is when you discovered that?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. So we had Jasper, so Jasper's like five and a half, so, yeah, so I was 35.

Carey Nieuwhof:

34, 35. I mean, most people, if they come to that realization, because there's a lot of old self-centered people, it's usually the forties are pretty turbulent and then it's in their fifties or sixties they kind of go, "Wait a minute. This could be about someone else." So, that's really cool you found it. I want to back up again. Zig Ziglar. I mean, my goodness.

Rory Vaden:

Amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

He is a legend.

Rory Vaden:

Amazing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Seth Godin gives him so much credit, as do so many others for, well... Yeah, I'm trying to remember. I think it's a Seth Godin story about just listening to Zig Ziglar tapes. I don't know. I'll figure it out after.

Rory Vaden:

Lot of people have, though.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Rory Vaden:

But lots of people listen to Zig Ziglar tapes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What did you learn from Zig Ziglar?

Rory Vaden:

Okay, so here's what has stuck with me about everything that I learned from Zig Ziglar was, off stage, okay, he was the same person he was on the stage, and that was super rare, and there were three rules that he had about his off offstage living. I don't ever think I ever heard him talk about these onstage, but these were his three rules. First rule, he would never ever be alone one on one with another female other than his wife ever. So he would not let a female come pick him up unless there was another person there. But he would never ever be in an alone one-on-one situation with another woman other than his wife and his daughter. So there was that. The other thing is he said he used to call the redhead, you know, Jean. When he was gone, he would call her three times a day whenever he was apart from her, so he wanted talk to her three times every day. And then he said, "And I got to be home for church on Sundays." Those were his three personal things, and every time I would see him, he would like, "Rory, don't forget, no matter what happens, these three things."

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's super cool. What made him remarkable? I mean, he is legendary. Literally legendary. He died a number of years ago. Right?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

When did Zig die? Was it 10 years ago?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. So what happened was when he was like 84, he fell and he hit his head. So I had really, it was only like a few years before that I had gotten to sort of meet him and get to know him, and then he fell and he hit his head and he lost his short term memory, which was sort of a peculiar thing, but very difficult for a speaker because he would be on stage, he would say something and then 15 minutes later he would say the exact same story that he had already told, and that was really challenging. And for a while

they, Julie, his daughter would interview him and that worked, but then it was, it just got shorter and shorter and then he passed away. I mean, he was an incredible man. I think those are the things that stick with me are who he was off stage, the relationship he had with Tom, his son, and Julie and his wife. And then towards the end of his life, I mean, he just was flat out evangelist. He didn't care about money or getting invited back, or if a meeting planner got mad because he would say something about God or Jesus, he just didn't care. He was just at this point where he is like, "I don't care. I'm here. If you're going to give me a microphone, I'm going to tell people about Jesus," and that really stuck with me. My whole faith journey I guess is supposed to be, like many people, has been one of sanctification. Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah.

Rory Vaden:

This gradual cleansing that I think my life, some of the darker parts of my life, very much fit that, self-centeredness being one of these things. I actually just posted a blog today that I've never written about before, but it's called Seven Reasons Why I Stopped Drinking, and the three ways I was able to do it. I've started to feel more promptings to be a little bit more bold on some of the more personal elements of things. But that's probably one of the biggest, actually, not probably, and not one of. The biggest critique I get in my career is talking about Jesus. If you go look at my TED Talks, so my TED Talk's called How to Multiply Time, and if you read the YouTube comments, almost everything is positive, and then you'll see all this, "Why did he have to throw a Bible verse in there at the end?" "Oh, I didn't realize this was just a bait and switch for some pastor." If you read my Amazon reviews, it's like, "Oh, I thought this was a business book and he has too many references to the Bible," or whatever. And Zig just never cared about that stuff, and so I don't think I've ever cared about it because I watched him not care about it, and so I'm grateful for it because I've never agonized over those comments whatsoever.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You mentioned stopping drinking. You don't have to go through all seven reasons, but what was some of the motivation behind that?

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, so there were several. There were seven. A couple of them, well, the catalyst for it, it wasn't like I had this rock bottom thing. The catalyst was we got pregnant with Jasper, our first, and so A.J. was like, "Well, I can't drink." And so I was like, "Well, in solidarity, I'm not going to drink," and then I just never picked it back up. That was it. The last drink I had was I had a glass of champagne the night we found out that we were pregnant with our oldest son, and that was the last time I had a drink. And she told me on my birthday, so it also happened to be, it was my birthday, so I remember the date because of that.

But there were a few things. One of the things was I realized that everything, every regret that I had in my life, every time where I had a behavior that I took that I wasn't proud of, whether it was something I said or some way I acted or some relationship I had with somebody, a hundred percent of the times, a hundred percent of those regrets, I was drunk. Like nearly a hundred percent, it was like, "Oh, every one of these I was drunk." The other thing was, I said this out loud to somebody one time, I don't remember what they asked and I just told them, I said, "I just have so much more fun when I'm drunk."

And there was something about the way that I said it where I heard myself say it, I was like, "Wait a minute. I have more fun when I'm drunk?" Meaning if I'm going to have the most fun I'm going to have

the rest of my life, I'm going to have to be drunk in order to have the most? Like, that doesn't feel like a good. So it was just sort of like a disconnect. Scripture. There was some stuff in scripture that kind of was part of it, but honestly that wasn't super-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Fair enough.

Rory Vaden:

That wasn't the super driving. You know, the body's a temple and all that sort of stuff. You know, Jesus turned water into wine, and wine is a gift. So it's not a judgmental thing on anybody else. And then I had, another thing was I met several influential people and then when I got to know them personally, I found out they didn't drink. So, Lewis Howes was one of them. Right? So Lewis hosts a very large podcast called The School of Greatness. He's our oldest client, so we've been working with him for over four years. He just sold the podcast to Sirius XM and millions and millions of dollars, and he's got a big book coming out that we're working on right now for next March.

Anyways, I found out Lewis was this guy I respected, and he's super young, he's younger than me, and I was like, "You don't drink?" He's like, "Yeah, I just don't drink." And then we had this friend who was a Navy SEAL for like 24 years and he didn't drink, and I remember talking to him about it one time and he just said, "Yeah, when you're a Navy SEAL, you just got to realize that in any given moment it can become a life or death situation. Like this building could be on fire. Someone could walk in and start shooting at us. Somebody might come up from back." And he said, "And I just have to go, is being drunk going to help me if I get in that circumstance or is it going to hurt me?" And I was like, "Yeah, well."

So anyways, they just kind of started stacking up and then we got pregnant and then I just sort of stopped. The other thing was I never drank just a little bit. I drank for the purpose of getting drunk. Right? Like when I drank, which wasn't every day, but it was every week, probably every week, and probably-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wasn't an off switch.

Rory Vaden:

It wasn't like, oh, you know, like A.J. drinks now, but she has a glass of wine, maybe two, but it's very rare that she would drink more than that. But I didn't have that. When I drink it was like, "All right. Let's go. Shots and whatever." Just drinking it like water.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, that's good to know. That's really good to know about yourself. We should probably touch on branding. I mean, marketing and branding. I mean, that would be great. This is a great conversation, Rory, and thanks for being so transparent.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. They said, "Carey, he's kind of like the Oprah of podcasting. He might take you on different questions." Your team prepped me, so I was like, "Oh, fine. Wherever he wants to go." So you kind of say, "Okay, what's the through line between everything that we have talked about and-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, yeah, sure.

Rory Vaden:

... the Brand Builders Group." Okay. You help experts become more well known. So functionally, we help people first of all get clear on their message and clear on who they are, and we call it finding their uniqueness. Then we help them extrapolate it into a body of knowledge. We help them create intellectual property frameworks, diagrams, charts, tables. You know, their content. Then we help them write and craft speeches, and we do mastery level presentation, skills training, stuff that I learned in my journey to the World Championship of Public Speaking. You know, how to use the stage, the psychology of laughter and what causes audiences to laugh and how to gracefully sell from stage and all these advanced presentation skill sets.

Then we teach people how to sell high dollar offers. We teach them how to do book launches, podcasts, and then funnels and social media and online marketing and digital marketing, right? So tactically, those are all the things that we teach people to do. But you go, "Okay, what's the through line here?" Well, it's actually really, really clear because, so first of all, when people hear personal branding, you know, or like we're a personal brand strategy firm, they tend to think either visual identity. They tend to think like, "Oh, you guys do websites."

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Give me a logo. Give me a logo.

Rory Vaden:

Or you do logos. We don't even do that. That's not even one of... We don't do that at all. Or they think, "Oh, you guys do social media." And it's like, "Nah, we don't even really do that." Here's how we define personal branding. We think of personal branding as simply the digitization of reputation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Rory Vaden:

The digitization of reputation. So the personal branding is a new term, but to us that's confusing. The word you really need to think about is reputation. What are you known for? How well known are you? Right? We help people become more well known. So, yeah, is social media a part of that? Sure. But are we concerned about hashtags and whatever and understanding the algorithm? No. We're going, "What's your content strategy for making sure you're putting content out there and how are you monetizing that?" So personal branding is the digitization of reputation, and here's what we have seen. Before you can ever have a strong personal brand, you have to have strong personal character. My pastor, one of the things my pastor told me is he said that your influence will never grow wider than your character runs deep.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh, yeah. Yep.

Rory Vaden:

Your influence will never grow wider than your character runs deep. So, Zig Ziglar had strong personal character, and so his influence grew and grew and grew and grew and grew. There are other people in the world today that their influence has grown to outsize their character, and when that happens, there's an implosion, there's a collapse, there's a breakdown. And again, that's just hard. It's not to judgemental, it's just there's difficult things that come up when that gets out of whack. So, you have to build a strong personal brand rooted in strong personal character. My wife is such a great example of this. So A.J., she's our CEO. We've been business partners since we were 20 years old. She was 22, I was 23. Everything we've done, we've done together.

There's that Bible verse. Virtuous woman who can find her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, and he will have no lack of gain. And I go, "Oh my gosh. If there's one thing that has been true in my life, it has been that." A woman of virtuous character, and I've had no lack of gain, and surrounding yourself with people of character, becoming a person of character. That's the other thing is I've been in situations where I have been around people who did not have the strength of character proportionate to the amount of influence they had, and it was bad. It was bad situation. Bad stuff fell out of it. So, I think that's the foundation is a strong personal character. If you become famous overnight, it's not a good thing. It's a problem. And then-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, so.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Go ahead. Keep going.

Rory Vaden:

No. So anyways, that's the connectivity between Take The Stairs and self discipline and I think our work. A.J. and I consider, like our family mission statement is like, we're undercover agents for God. So, we decidedly want to keep our books on the business shelf, and we decidedly want to speak at secular events, and our company is decidedly "secular", even though everybody knows that it's not. At least we're not. We're very open about it.

I think too many people are focused on how many... They're too focused on the width of their reach, and they're not focused enough on their depth of character and the depth of the people they're impacting. So, one of the things I posted on Instagram just a couple days ago is I said, "Don't be so concerned about the width of your reach. Be more concerned about the depth of your impact." Because the algorithm, people have this love hate relationship with the algorithm. Like, "The algorithm is blocking me and the algorithm's making it harder to reach people, and I'm blacklisted by the algorithm," or whatever. Well, the algorithm does control a lot to how many people you reach, but it has zero control or influence on how deeply you impact each person that you do reach, and that is what we should be more focused on.

So that's part of the work we do at Brand Builders Group, and the best piece of personal branding advice I've ever received, Carey, this is not a Rory or a Brand Builders Group quote. This came from a gentleman named Larry Winget, who was another one of my mentors, and he said this. He said, "The goal is to find your uniqueness and exploit it in the service of others." Find your uniqueness and exploit

it in the service of others. And so four years ago when we started Brand Builders Group, we had been in the sales training space. We had a non-compete, so we weren't going to go back into sales training. And so it was like, "All right, what are we going to do?" It's like, "Well, we should teach people how to do what we've done. Write books, get book deals, get speaking engagements, grow their social media following, monetize their personal brand, build their reputation."

These are things that we know how to do that we've never taught anyone to do or made a business, and Lewis happened to call us around that same time and he was asking for some help, and so he became our first client, and then he had us on the podcast the first time, and that was the launch of the company. So, we developed a process. We call it the Brand DNA Helix, which is these six questions that we take people through that help them identify what is their uniqueness and what is the thing that they were meant to do that no one else can do. It's like it becomes their uncopyable difference. I mean, I would say it's God's divine design on your life of what he created you to do, and we just sort of take people through this process that reveals it for them, and that's the first part. That's the first part of what we do.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So I don't know that this is an answerable question or not, because I get a lot of questions from young leaders who want to have an impact and who honestly want to have an influence and brand and the whole deal, and I always tell them, "Try to do something significant." Like, don't worry about the influence. Don't worry about how broad it goes. Just go deep. Really help some people get committed to a cause and see what happens. Don't be dumb about it, but just trying to grow your followers for the sake of growing your followers is something, but I'm really intrigued by... Not a good idea, I meant. I'm really intrigued by that differentiation. So, here's the perhaps unanswerable part of this question, but you mentioned them by name. So, Ed Mylett versus Lewis House. On the outside looking in, you could go and say, well, there are two guys who interview really interesting people who are huge in the podcasting, in the book space and the conference space. What's a differentiation? Can you explain some of the nuances between an Ed and a Lewis? Because I think a lot of listeners would know exactly who he is, and that might... Because the default is, "Well, I want to reach everybody. I want to reach the world. I want to impact the world." So help us understand where the brand distinction would be even in two superpowers like Lewis and Ed.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah. Okay. So, it matters. Essentially you're asking how do I find the uniqueness? How do I find that point of differentiation? Right?

Carey Nieuwhof:

What makes Ed different than Lewis and Lewis different than Ed?

Rory Vaden:

Sure. And what I'd say is the more important question is how do you find what makes you different from Lewis or Ed in a way that it could help you grow to have the kind of influence that they do? I'll tell you the shortcut. So, I told you there's six questions. So we have our whole experience, the Brand Builders Group experience is 14 different two day experiences.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Rory Vaden:

The first one, the entire first two days is just around helping someone find their uniqueness. But when we train our strategists, there's one shortcut that we've discovered. And so when we train our internal team, this is what we teach them because we have to teach them on how to read this for people, and I'll tell you what it is, okay? We didn't know this, Carey, when we started the company four years ago, but now, I don't know, we've probably had about 1200, I should look it up, but probably about 1200 clients that we've taken through this process.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Rory Vaden:

We know this now. Here's what we know. You are most powerfully positioned to serve the person you once were. You're most powerfully positioned to serve the person you once were. This is the ultimate hint and through line that we're looking for is it is figuring out what path have you walked out. The reason why Brand Builders Group is growing so fast is because A.J. and I and our team, we're teaching people how to do things we've done. We have viral TED Talks. I'm in the Professional Speaker Hall of Fame. We have built six different multimillion dollar businesses. One eight figure business. We're about to have our second. We have launched New York Times bestselling books. We have sold millions of dollars from stage. We have done these things, and so when we are teaching it, when you hear it, you go, "This is hitting me in a visceral way that's more palpable and practical because I've been there and done it."

So when we flip that and go, "How do we do it for you?" Actually, it's incredibly difficult, but it's very simple. We just have to say, "What obstacle have you overcome? What challenge have you conquered? What setback have you survived?" And that is the problem that you can dedicate your life to because you are going to understand that person in such an intimate way that no one else in the world is going to be able to understand that person. Right? So when you write copy and when you speak, when that person hears you, they go, "Whoa, this person gets me. They understand what I'm struggling with," and they do because that person is you. That person is an older version of you. Now, it's not age wise. It just means they're an earlier version of you, at least in that relative journey. Right? They're earlier on whatever journey you have been on. But when you just say, "Oh, I want to start a podcast and I want to have millions of followers," okay? That ain't it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Right. Yeah. With Lewis, okay, we figured out that the problem that Lewis solves is self-doubt, because when he grew up, he was an awkward kid. He got made fun of in school, and then when he got injured, his whole life was playing football. All he thought about was football, football, football. And then he gets injured and he has no other skills, right? And he has this tremendous self doubt that he's ever going to make it or become somebody, and so when Lewis interviews somebody, he's interviewing... We call this the lens, so this is something we teach in Podcast Power. So, what makes interviews different is you interview them through the lens of your problem and you interview them through the lens of your uniqueness. So, two different people, two different podcast hosts can interview the same person and they have two completely different conversations because their lens is different.

Rory Vaden:

Right on.

Carey Nieuwhof:

A good example of Lens is think about like Rush Limbaugh. Biggest radio personality ever. When people listen to Rush Limbaugh, they think they're listening to News Talk Radio, but they're not listening to Rush Limbaugh to hear the news. They're listening to hear Rush Limbaugh's take on the news. They want to hear his interpretation of the news, which means they're listening through his lens. Now, you wear glasses, right? So we actually describe this as your left lens is the problem you solve and the right lens is the uniqueness. When I'm a host, I'm interpreting the world around me through my lens, and my audience is standing behind me because they want to see the world through the same lens. They want help interpreting how the world is happening. So, when Lewis interviews Mike Tyson, that's what he's talking about, right, is how did you overcome this? Ed approaches it from a completely different way.

Every one of our clients is different. All of our clients, we have about 700 active clients in our monthly coaching program, they all have a different lens. Now, in some ways, one of the jokes we tell is we're all writing different versions of the same book. We're all basically plagiarizing the Bible or pick whatever ancient text you want to say, but it's like the principles are the same. But it's your uniqueness that matters. We call this the law of frequency, which means that we can be delivering the same source of truth, the same principle, but certain people will only be able to hear it from you. Meanwhile, other people will only be able to hear it from someone else. Why? Because they're tuned into a different frequency. Right? Somebody who can hear Tony Robbins say something, they go, "I don't really like this guy." But if Brené Brown says the exact same thing, they go, "Oh, man. She is brilliant."

Rory Vaden:

[inaudible 01:01:41].

Carey Nieuwhof:

She's amazing. And vice versa. Right? It's kind of like, we call it the law of the frequency, because think of it as a radio station. You could have two different radio stations playing the exact same song at the exact same time, exact same lyrics and everything. Which song is the person going to hear? They're going to hear whichever station they're tuned into, and what we believe is that part of the work that God has prepared for you is that there are certain lessons that other people can learn and they can only be learned from you because they are tuned into your frequency. They jive with your style. They go, "Oh, because I want to hear it from a black woman," or, "I want hear it from a middle-aged white guy," or, "I want to hear it from someone who grew up poor like me," or, "I want to hear it from someone who's single or someone who's a parent or someone who is an empty nester."

They're hearing it through a frequency of you, which is really interesting because we all are frequencies, right? So you might think, "Well, what do I have to teach? Or why would anybody listen to me?" And it's just a self-centered view. You only feel fear when you're thinking about yourself. When you go, "I don't know. I'm not qualified. I don't think anyone's going to listen to this. Why would anyone listen to me?" But you go, why do people go to church and listen to a pastor when they could read the Bible? Like they could read Jesus' words directly. Why do they go to church? There's some other community and fellowship and blah blah blah. But really they're going because they need the pastor's help interpreting Jesus' words and applying it to their life today. Right?

So, the messenger is like an intermediary. The messenger isn't the star. The message is the star. The messenger is the intermediary. And I would even say it's the receiver who's the star. Right? Like your personal brand is not about you. Your personal brand is about the person on the other end of the microphone, the person on the other end of the camera. The person who's sitting out in the audience, and that person is struggling. I know it because we are living in a broken world and people are hurting, and that person, that person needs you way more than you need them. Right? Like you're going, "I want more followers. I want to make more money." That person might be going, "I'm thinking about getting a divorce. I'm thinking about committing suicide. I'm thinking about leaving my family." And you show up and you have a day to reach into that person's life because they're tuned into your frequency and you hit them with something that completely changes the trajectory of their life.

That's what you need to be thinking about. There is no fear when the mission to serve is clear. When you're thinking about that person, you don't care, is the lighting right? Is my audio perfect? Am I going to say the right thing? Am I nervous? Just like if you were driving down the road and there was a car turned over, you wouldn't be worried about, "Does my outfit look cute or does my makeup look nice?" You're going to help someone. Someone is in need and so you're going to serve them. That is part of the amazing power of service that when you live in this moment of service, all the fear disappears. There is no fear when the mission to serve is clear. And so if you're feeling fear, it's because you're thinking about yourself. It's because you're like who I was. You're self-centered. You're self-absorbed. Not selfish, not evil, just self-centered. You're thinking about you and what you should be thinking about is who can I help? Who can I serve? What problem do they have? What questions are they looking for?

Because this is what it's all about, Carey, is realizing that there is somebody out there right now who is searching and seeking and begging and pleading and perhaps on their hands and knees begging and praying for answers to questions that you know like the back of your hand because you've spent your life studying it. It's your duty and your obligation and your authority and your responsibility, and I believe your divine calling to go serve that person. Love God, love others. Right? And so I'm not worried about the fear or what knowledge I don't have or I don't like the technology or I don't understand the algorithm or I'm not comfortable with this. All of that is irrelevant to the fact of we got to reach people. And if I'm a church, right? Like I'm going, "I don't care what tool we got to use. Whatever tool we got to use to reach people is what we got to do." We got to suspend judgment or concern about the vehicle and be like, "I don't care. I'm coming after somebody's soul and I'm going to go chase them down and I'm going to go get them" and so that's what it means to be a mission driven messenger.

Oh my goodness. That is some of the best stuff on marketing I've ever heard, Rory, and it's funny, you just made my life flash before my eyes. Never thought about this, but you know what the preaching hermeneutic was for me?

Rory Vaden:

What?

Carey Nieuwhof:

It was the skeptical 17 to 21 year old kid that I would subconsciously preach to every week. The kid who's thinking of walking away, the kid who's not sure it's true. That's why I have such a heart for skeptics and what I do now, this podcast, Carey Nieuwhof Communications, which is what we call my company. Why do I do the Art of Leadership Academy? Why do I do that? It's the 30 to 38 year old church leader who was leading this growing thing who didn't know what he was doing and who would soon be burned out, and when I think about that, I get choked up. That's why I'm doing this now. I didn't realize that. But when we were talking about earlier sort of our refined mission that we came up with

just very recently in the company to reverse the decline in the church and help church leaders identify and break their next growth barrier, that's about me serving people who were younger me, because I had to grasp for straws to figure that stuff out and it fires me up. Is that what you're talking about?

Rory Vaden:

Yes. That's what I'm saying. You're most powerfully positioned-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow.

Rory Vaden:

... to serve the person you once were. That is where everything comes alive and that's how you break through the wall. And by the way, if anyone wants to have a conversation with us about this, we do the first call for free with everyone, so if you go to freebrandcall.com/careyn, okay, for Nieuwhof, so Carey, C-A-R-E-Y.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You don't have to spell Nieuwhof. Look at how easy that is.

Rory Vaden:

We're not going to spell Nieuwhof. We're just going to say freebrandcall.com/careyn. We will do a free call with anyone who's listening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's awesome.

Rory Vaden:

And we'll start to guide you down this path. Because it's hard to see it for yourself. It is difficult, but that's the big hint, and you go... It's a game changer, Carey, because here's the other thing.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, it's a game changer. That's motivation. Like I want to do this for the rest of my life, you know, in one form or another, rather than just sit on the beach with my feet up forever.

Rory Vaden:

Right. Right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Doesn't appeal to me.

Rory Vaden:

That's another great example, right, is people go, "Oh, I just want to make so much money." And you go, here's what I'd say. Do it one time. Buy a 10 day beach vacation. By day eight, you're going to be bored out of your mind. The first couple days are awesome, and then it's like, okay, cool. And then it's like,

man, why? Because, I mean, we believe it's because God created us to work. That work exists before the fall of man, right? Work is a part of our natural design. It gives us meaning. Not just money, not just, "Oh, this is how I'm going to retire." It's that there's nothing like the feeling you get when you add value to another person's life. That makes you whole. People are going, "Oh, I'm struggling with happiness." The reason you're not happy is because you've tried to find your own happiness. Go find someone to serve and do something that adds value to their life. I promise you, happiness will show up.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I agree.

Rory Vaden:

If you make an impact on somebody else, you will be happy. If you are trying to find ways to make yourself happy, you ain't never going to be happy.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Preach.

Rory Vaden:

It's totally fleeting, and so that is the design of how this is all orchestrated. So that's just like, we want people to lean into that and, yeah, it changes everything.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wow. Well, I guess my last question is, because we have pushed the boundaries of time on this one, are you open to a round two at some point in the future?

Rory Vaden:

Heck yeah. Let's do it, man.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I feel like we just scratched the surface. This is so, so good. Rory, thank you for what you and A.J. do. Thanks for building into our listeners. So tell us where we can find you on the internet and give us that free call URL again.

Rory Vaden:

Yeah, I mean, I would just say if this part is resonating with you about you, like helping you find your purpose and your calling, go to freebrandcall.com/careyn. If you're not so much into that but you like the conversation around multiplying time and self-discipline and that, just go to roryvadenblog.com, and there's just lots of free trainings and resources there. But if you kind of feel the calling, and here's what we believe, Carey. We believe that the calling on your heart, like if you're listening to this and you're going, "Man, I'm feeling called to get my message out there to more people." We believe that's the result of a signal that's being sent out by someone out there who needs you, and that person needs you more than you need them. But that's why it won't go away. The reason why that won't go away is because you're literally being called forth.

There is a signal being sent from someone out there who is searching. They are searching. They are seeking. They are seeking some type of truth or wisdom that, it's not that you're the only person who knows it. It's that you're the only person they can hear it from or you're the best person for them to hear it from. And that's where that calling comes from because that is the expression of, it's God's divine design of our humanity and just going, "I'm going to dedicate my life to finding those people. I'm going to dedicate my life." I'm going to find a problem where I wake up every day and I go, "I'm not okay with that. I'm not okay with this problem existing. I'm not comfortable knowing that every day someone is struggling with something that I struggled with. I'm not okay knowing there's 17 to 21 year old skeptics walking around who's eternity might be lost because they're skeptical like I was."

Like, I'm not okay with that. I'm not okay with a young church leader wanting to grow but not knowing how. Right? For me, I go, "I'm not okay with somebody who feels called to get their message out, but they don't know all the tactical steps of how to pull it together," or they don't feel convicted that there's something special or unique about them. And so what is that for you? What is that problem that you would dedicate your life to? Because we think that that is woven into your humanity from the creator himself.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, I agree. I mean there's something very emotional and very beautiful about that and extremely clarifying. I mean, we were talking before we hit record about my last three months and just getting some more clarity on the vision, but I've been asking the big preaching question and for the first time I'm like, "Oh, yeah, that's why I preach." It's like, yeah, that's great. Rory, this has been fascinating. Thank you so much for everything and let's do it again.

Rory Vaden:

All right. You sign me up, brother. I'm excited about it. Thank you, Carey, for having me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, some really helpful stuff there, and if you want more, go to the show notes, which you'll find at careynieuwhof.com/episode538. Man, I am so excited about this 30 day productivity challenge. If you want a more productive 2023, join my Highly Productive Leader Challenge. Simply go to highlyproductive2023.com. That's highlyproductive2023.com to register today, and Leadr is giving you 20% off your first year of their people development software by using promo code Carey, C-A-R-E-Y when you go to leadr.com. That's L-E-A-D-R.com. Next episode, we got Sean Cannell. Man, do we talk about what's happening on YouTube? And I know a lot of you are thinking about, "Hey, I got to do more video." Well, kind of a masterclass in that. "Here's an excerpt."

Sean Cannell:

The worship center's not super large. They have made some incredible... It's sort of like it's not about your resources, it's about your resourcefulness. They have used what they have, invested dollars strategically. I think that really thinking about how do I do online well and not forget about it when that was maybe the only thing you were doing, and that's I think the challenge. It splits your focus. Your focus is for sure split. So you need leaders, and so who is really thinking about the online experience and the in-person experience?

Carey Nieuwhof:

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