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Announcer: The Art of Leadership Network.

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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. I am so excited to have Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy on the podcast. Today, we're doing a bit of a round table here. We're going to talk about all things next generation. Can you talk about how to reach them? What the struggles, the people you're trying to reach our face. Facing Reggie and I go back almost 20 years, we get back into some origin stories in this one. Plus we really discussed some of the issues that well there are answers for and sometimes there aren't today on the podcast. In today's episode is brought to you by Overflow and Leadr, the days of giving the church the leftovers are behind us. If you want to empower your donors to give from their overflow, go to overflow.co/Carey that's overflow.co/Carey to learn how and by Leadr. Leadrhas

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Created the first-ever people development software to help you implement healthy leadership habits from one-on-one meeting. So, check out Leadr.com. That's Leadr.com for how you can better engage and grow your team today, mention the promo code Carey, just my name Carey and you'll get 20% off your first year. So Reggie and Kristen and I sit down. We talk about what families are really struggling with why unchurched people do not care about your next sermon series. Now, that's not as mean as it sounds, but there's a good story behind it and the tension of their leadership transition and how to do that in a rapidly changing world? Plus, we talk about why next-gen is so important. I think you're gonna find this fascinating. So let me give you a little background on Reggie and Kristen Reggie is the founder and CEO of Orange. A nonprofit organization, whose purpose is to influence those who influence the Next Generation.

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And prior to that, he was one of the founders of North Point Community Church with Andy Stanley. We talked about that during his eleven years there. Reggie help guide the church's growth through an emphasis on

innovative approaches to Ministry for families. He's authored several books, including Think Orange, A new Kind of Leader, The Seven Practices of Effective Ministry and his newest publication, It's Personal. Kristin Ivey is the President of Orange and co-founder and director of the Phase Project before joining Orange in two thousand and six and her bachelor of education from Baylor University in two thousand and four and a masters of divinity from Mercer University in two thousand and nine. She is the author of It's Just A Phase. So don't miss it. Don't miss it. It's Personal. And the eighteen volume phase guide for parents. So this is a really fascinating conversation. And ironically, as I say at the your early part of the interview, Reggie helped me get this podcast started. I've been trying to get them on the show for five hundred episodes while not like every episode. I'm just.

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I have finally happened way to go Reg. We finally did it. There you go. So, are you leaving money on the table? It's a good question. But if you're only accepting cash donations at, your church, could be the case. Did you know that 90% of wealth is actually a non-cash assets when cash is the only giving option you put a lid on generosity. So Overflow will lift that lid and unlock more ways to give there an online software that empowers donors to easily give non-cash assets such as stock to church in minutes, not months. So why is this important? Well, the average cash donation in the u.s. is \$128, but the average stock donation through overflow is over ten thousand dollars, the days of giving the church The Leftovers are behind us. So to unlock more giving go to overflow.co/Carey, that's overflow, overflow.co/Carey to learn how

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Today's podcast is all about leading well, leaving through transition leading, families leading your team. What if we carried that mindset into your workplace, as well? My friends at Leadr, believe that employee engagement and workplace satisfaction is driven by each person's relationship with their manager. And whether or not, they are being consistently cared for and develop. This also applies to remote and hybrid teams, which is a lot of teams these days. And that's why they've created their first-ever people development software to help. You implement healthy leadership habits from one-on-one meetings, to

two-way feedback, to goal, setting and more for a more healthy and engaged team. So check out Leadr.com that's Leadr.com on how you can better engage and grow your team. Today, when you go to Leadr.com use the promo code, Carey, and they will give you 20% off your first,

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Hey. Before you jump into today's interview with Reggie and Kristin just know we're going to be there along with Darius Daniels. Horst Schulze. Mark Batterson, Katie Cole and a whole lot more at Rethink Leadership. April twenty, six, through twenty eight. Go to rethinkleadership.com and use promo code Carey. You will get an incredible rate. I would love to see you in person at the end of April in Atlanta and now to today's conversation. Hey. Just a quick note today before we get to the conversation which I loved with Kristin and Reggie and that is I was on the road in a temporary studio. My mic quality isn't one hundred percent what we're used to on this podcast. But hey, I think you're gonna enjoy. Oh. The conversation anyway. So listen in. And here is my conversation with Reggie Joiner and Kristin Ivy while this has been a long time coming. But I'm so excited to welcome folks view. Reggie joiner Kristin Ivy to the podcast. Welcome.

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Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy

: It's so good to be here. Yeah thanks. It's really fun, Carey. Can't wait for the conversation.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So what's what's fun is, you know, Reggie in particular. You help me get this podcast started like almost nine years ago. Eight years ago, when I started the podcast, you know, Rethink, Orange got behind it and I'm like, I got to have you on. I got to have me on it. Only took almost a decade, so I think that's pretty good.

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Reggie Joiner : Yeah, Carey has been great watching you over the last decade actually lead, the lead pastor and then hand off your ministry and continue to do this, and this space and inspire a lot of leaders. And so I think for us, we've just enjoyed learning from you.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I've learned a ton from both of you, so I'm really excited. This conversation has happened. And I'd love to I'd love to go back to how you both got interested. in reaching the next generation, because you kind of come from

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You know, different backgrounds, Kristen. You're now the president of Orange Reggie. You're like me, you're the CEO and founder so used to be important, right? Founders like oh yeah, I started it all those years ago, which is a fun title but how did how do you get into this Kristen? Why don't we start with you? Then we'll go to Reg.

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Kristen Ivy: Yes, I've been in youth ministry ever since my senior year of high school there was just something about youth ministry that drew my attention, my heart, my passion I left you know working alongside of my youth. Pastor my senior year of high school Ridin through my college years of volunteering in a number of different Ministries. When I graduated college, I was a high school teacher and was also volunteering in Ministry and have just always enjoyed

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Doing youth Ministry and being around leaders who care about the next generation after teaching high school? That was when a met Reggie, I was an intern for the Ministry that he was working with at the time and started volunteering there as well and then went back to seminary and just always stayed connected to anybody who is working with kids, teenagers or families.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So I don't think I knew that part of the story. So you were an intern at North Point. Is that when Reggie was at North Point? I

was. Yes though I did intern there in the youth Ministry under Kevin Ragsdale was really incredible learning experience.

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Reggie Joiner : Yeah, I will make a comment even as an intern at Northpoint she argued with us a lot. So strong opinions, a lot, even then. Yeah, a lot a lot. And I will say that when she started working on staff here and you know we'll talk about this some more later but she actually helped us start so many different initiatives in this Org for the last 15 years has led so many different programs that she has. Been a natural leader in this space in and she has led more than most people. I know in so many ways but when she said while ago she started youth ministry when she was a senior in high school. I thought so did I

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And she wasn't even born. So you know I go way back to, you know, the 19 late 1970s, early 1980s and there's nothing profound about me except I was a history major and I work in churches and I work with kids and students and families and it's the only thing I know how to do is the only thing I've ever really done. So, you know, I wish I had some of the education and some of the background but for me it's just been showing up in every way I can and learning from leaders and how to do this.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So we didn't have your music career. I don't know why I thought about this in years, but there is a Reggie on the cover of an album from maybe 1977 is there truth to that rumor?

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Reggie Joiner : But you know, in the 1970s we burned a lot of albums. So I think all of them and I'm hoping they were

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Kristen Ivy: They were not all burned Carey. I love that, you're bringing this up.

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Reggie Joiner: No. No.

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Carey Nieuwhof: I told you there'd be nothing embarrassing on the podcast. But I remember you Bell bottom jeans. Is that right?

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Did have some bell bottom jeans and a puka shell necklace and a Beatles haircut when I actually hit here. I mean it was. Yeah. I was quite the sight. So yeah. Some of you who are listening to this may remember the actual leisure suits where you had the flower shirt silk flower shirt that you would put over the collar. I was I was pretty cool. Yeah. Yeah.

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That's right. Hey.

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Carey Nieuwhof: I never asked you or Andy this?

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But did you ever do because Andy Stanley was huge into music and like basically shelved it when he started Ministry? So he could.

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Focus. But did you ever do music together even Andy?

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Reggie Joiner : No, we never, we never did anything together. We did go to some concerts together that I can't talk about because I don't know if it would be, I mean, we had some great great times, listening to some great music.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So yeah, he talks about going to Elton John and all that stuff. So yeah. So this is, this is you are doing student Ministry after after you gave up. Up. After, you know, your seven Grammys, you probably thought. I don't know whether I can take it any further. And

then you decided to go into like next gen stuff. How exactly did that work? Because I usually get the story that you were working on Merritt Island in family ministry, or that?

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Reggie Joiner : Yeah, no, it started when I was actually 17, 18 years of age, I had become an intern because of the music in my life.

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And then I decided I really wanted to eat lead youth ministry and so I left the church. I was at and started working at a church as the youth pastor, and when I look back at those days, I mean the men and women who allowed me to work as a 19 year old and 20 year old and 21 year old student Ministry, they just had a real Ministry, heart to actually lead someone in a way where they can develop and they saw the potential in me as a leader and they allowed me to, I don't know just be in charge and in a way that I can't even imagine, but when I go back to those days, I learned so much from so many people that were around me that gave me the opportunity to serve, it's one of the reasons I think, we believe so much in the next-gen and their potential to lead because most of us will go back to when we were in our 20s. And there were people who showed up for us, who believe in us. So,

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Carey Nieuwhof: And how did you end up at Charles Stanley's church? Kind of that happened.

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Reggie Joiner : Um. I ended up a Dr Stanley's church because Andy was shifting away to do the North campus and they were trying to develop departments and divisions in both downtown campus and the North campus. And they brought me in to work with families and married adults to establish a parallel me Ministry in both campuses. And Andy and I had both been youth pastors at the same time for almost a decade. We'd known each other. We hung out quite a bit. So there was a level of trust there when I showed up. And um, that's that's how I got into First Baptist. I remember Andy had called me and said, hey, would you just come help do this. Because I'm trying to also pasture the north campus and we just need a little help.

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Carey Nieuwhof: That's cool. And then there were six of you who, you know, step back from dr. Stanley's Ministry and went up the road and started Northpoint back in. Is that 95? North Point started?

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Yeah, actually actually Northpoint started 95. It was constituted in 1995. Yeah.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Yeah, incredible. Now, here's a question that wasn't on the list which are my favorite questions. Reggie, you have an, I can't think of anybody, I'm going through the Rolodex in my mind of different leaders. I know you probably have a better eye for spotting talent and spotting leaders than anyone I know. So I want to know when you met Kristin as an intern. I mean, intern to president of the company. What did you see in her as a young leader that made you take note,

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Reggie Joiner : I think she challenged the process. I feel like she was a learner. I think that she had an incredible passion for both Theology and practical Ministry. She graduated from Baylor because she had the heart of an educator and in something about the education background and the theology learning and training that she had a passion for created a very unique perspective and a lot of what we were doing. I remember the first time she challenged and ask is about why we were doing things a certain way, I thought. Well why would you ask us? Because we've been doing this for a while and we're successful at this. And then I started realizing that she was coming at things from a very, very, very I think Innovative creative and in a sense she cared about the next-gen and and she cared about what actually happens in the relationships with kids and teenagers. And there was really something about combining

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That background of education and theology into one heart and mind.

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Carey Nieuwhof: That was very, very interesting to me. Kristen when you look back on that because you had mentioned it to. You said you had a lot of questions. You were sort of challenging things. What did you so anchor this and an approximate era? Was that the early two thousands or when were you an intern?

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Kristen Ivy: I would have been interning at North Point in two thousand and four, I believe. And it was the summer right before I started teaching high school. I was one of the oldest interns last summer most were, you know, on a college break. I already had a real job. So to speak that I was going to be entering into. Ah. The coming fall. And um, yeah, I like that. Reggie says it so nicely that I asked questions. I look back on that time and think. Ah.

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It would have made all the sense in the world for him to say how dare you come in here with all of these challenges to the process and all of these things that we have been doing for so long. And so it took tremendous grace on his part, I think to listen and give space for the questions along the

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Reggie Joiner : To be honest. When someone asks you a hard question and intuitively, you know. That's a great question and there, right? And it's hard to dance around some of those kind of questions, if you have a heart to really impact the next-gen in a way that matters. So yeah,

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Carey Nieuwhof: What were what were some of the questions if you can remember? Kristen that you were starting to ask 18 or 20 years ago as an intern and young leader. Well, what part of the process. Did you want to challenge even back then?

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Kristen Ivy: So many different things Carey goodness many of them. I feel like I've changed my mind about since I know that I ask questions of North Point because I had never interned at a church, like North

Point before I grew up in the Church of Christ. I was in some smaller environments and then I had interned at a number of Baptist Churches, but primarily either smaller to medium sized churches that had different practices. It had, I had interned at a number of different churches. So I had, I'd gone through

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How their staff met or how their process may have worked. And so as I experienced different things, I just had a lot of questions to raise about that. And then when I got connected in with the content side, I remember digging in hard to the definitions of the virtues and the values and saying, do you think this is really what hope is about. Or maybe hope has a different current angle and just asking a lot of things. About what? What? It really looks like to demonstrate the character of Jesus every day in day out. So a lot of Christian ethics questions. I don't even know. I had questions about everything.

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Reggie Joiner : I would agree about everything. I would be honest enough to say, I can't think of one thing that she didn't have a question about as it relates to small group structured plan, relationally driven models what it looks like on a Sunday morning, too. Are we really being relational enough to what? Why do we organ guys are students the way we do? What?

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Kids need to be with kids that are different. I mean, there were so many questions and I think in almost every question, there was this, I think this discovery that we needed to make, we need to push a little harder to go. Are we doing this the right way? Because there's so much at stake and this is the faith of the Next Generation and I think the principle behind this is if we can't surround ourselves with leaders that surround ourselves. If we can surround ourselves with leaders who see this, a little differently who challenge the process, we can't grow and we can't innovate

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Carey Nieuwhof: How do you how do you navigate that tension? Reggie because you and I have had almost 20 years now of dialogue

debate discussion. We've worked on projects together, we wrote a book together all those years ago.

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You know, how do you because I the reason I'm asking the question is, there's a lot of leaders who are not cool with people challenging the process. It would be like well Kristen you don't belong here. You ask, too many questions, you push the envelope too far. And what I want, is like this homogeneous culture. Where everybody thinks like me, looks like me votes. Like, me believes like me, talks, like me, etc, etc. So, is that something that you come, by naturally Reg? Where are you? Are great. Like, is that something you seek or is there a part of you that still feels threatened? Or did you have to overcome feeling threatened over that?

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Reggie Joiner : I think I always have to overcome feeling threatened. I don't know that. I would be honest. If I didn't admit that. I think.

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I have a fear of something else. That's greater than that, which is a fear of becoming irrelevant and not making sure that the gospel or the faith in Jesus. And what that should look like can actually happen for people who look different from me are different than me. If if all we do is surround ourselves with people like us, then we'll only reach people like us. And and that's not what we need to do. And and the other thing. And this is something Christian has taught me too. I think when I listen to what she has to say and what other leaders have to say now, I hope she listens to what I have to say. And she's kind of in charge. I think when that happens, God, God gets bigger.

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God isn't threatened by our different perspectives and angles and how we see faith and sometimes I feel like we are and it keeps us from seeing aspects of God that we need to see. And and all of those stories I can honestly say that, I think God gets a little bigger and faith, gets a little deeper.

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Kristen Ivy: It makes me think of an interview, one of our staff, in the last couple of years, that was joining our staff. You know, when you do an interview to make a new hire, it's really kind of a two-way interview. They're asking you questions. You're asking them questions. And and in this particular interview, they asked, now if I come and join your organization, am I going to hear "That's not how we do it here" and I thought, what a phenomenal question from someone to say, hey, if you're so set in the pattern of the way, you do, things that when it gets challenged,

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It will be responded with you know that's just not how we do things here. They knew that the barrier would already exist and I think for anybody in your staff culture and your church culture and your organizational culture, we run that risk of getting said in our own ways, we remember why we built things the way we built it but if we're not careful that, why I can become the barrier for somebody else who's coming in and saying. Yeah. But but what, if there was another way or another method that we could try

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Carey Nieuwhof: So We are working together on rethink leadership which comes up at the end of April. So it's a companion to the orange conference which is this massive event. One of my favorite events. I go to every year and recently, your ship is something we developed a few years ago. For senior leader, senior pastors, executive pastors, campus pastors, teaching pastors etcetera,

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And this is something that goes back to the beginning of our relationship. Reggie? When we met back in two thousand and five. Isn't that crazy all those years ago? Um. Why do you think it should be intentional for senior pastors and church leaders, senior church leaders, people who set not in student Ministry not in next gen. Not in, you know, youth Ministry. Not in children's Ministry.

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But in that senior leaders chair to think about student kids and family Ministry?

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Reggie Joiner : I think one of the things Carey that we loved about our relationship with you as lead pastor. Was you model something that a lot of lead pastors I hope can see and watch, and that is that you valued? You championed your next gen staff, the leaders that work with kids, Ministry and Youth Ministry.

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Were around you, you went to conferences with them, you would lead the way and understanding and learning about the next-gen. Something happens to the value of that of that role. When lead Pastor show up in a space, like we think leaders, and they actually get around a table and they talk about not only the issues, they need to talk about related to Leading at that at that level and that point, but they also talked about what it looks like to make sure that this idea of family ministry. She stays high as a high value in the organization last year, and there's a theological side to this and the sociological side of this. You know, last year, when Kristen opened the conference, she actually talked about this thing in us that goes back to Eden, that's built around, you know, home and what it looks like to get back to what God desires us to find when it comes to belonging.

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And I think there's a value here that lies at the core of a church where we are trying on the one hand to build a bridge, two families were also trying to establish a concept of family in the church. The church is called to do. And so there's a theological Baseline that I hope that lead pastors champion because when they champion, this they are actually setting up their church for a future. Mmm, see.

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Carey Nieuwhof: hmmm, see but this is really interesting. So you confess something, I'll confess something. I didn't have that perspective until I met you. And as a lead Pastor, I was probably nine years into leadership seven in full-time leadership, and I had, you know, leading a growing church. I had this bad

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Idea that you hire a kids person. You hire a student person and you send them down the hall. And as long as it's working and it doesn't create any problems than everything was fine. And I never really integrated them into the senior leadership team until you and I had numerous discussions and a kind of realised it. So what's the what's the problem? When leader does what I did for the first years of leadership? And it's just like hire good kids person. Hire good student next Gen don't cause any fires. Don't get us sued. Just go down the hall and do your work. Like what? What? What is the logical outcome in the shortcomings of that approach? Because that was definitely mine.

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Kristen Ivy: I'll jump in here. One of the first things that comes to my mind. This may not even be true? But is that adults might lie to you?

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We've learned how to survive and how to play nice and how to be diplomatic, but kids and teenagers won't. So if you want to be in touch with what's happening today, if you want to really stay in touch with the, the experiences that families are having the challenges that they're dealing with the realities of Life.

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Monday through Friday. That next gen Ministry leader sits in a seat where topics can't be theoretical. They're very practical every single day of the week, and if that's not integrated, Deeply into your leadership structure into your messaging elements and really every Ministry of your church. It does get easier to to let a disconnect grow in your ministry.

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Reggie Joiner : I think we would both agree and it's part of the reason I think Christian is such

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a great leader of this organization that you need to take your staff or your potential staff are the most educated that are the smartest

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it, get this at a number of levels and you need to push them onto the front lines with kids and

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teenagers because that is the future of the church and the issues

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related to families

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and schools and kids that are dealing with in everyday world require us to to push those kind of L into the front and I think like Kristen alluded to that there's a risk especially going forward in the next decade. There's a risk of us going backward as the church and just

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Actually deciding? You know what? Let's just do. What we know how to do? Let's do three songs in the sermon on the Sunday. And let's just keep making that better and better and better and improve that. And we forget that what happens in the big room in the church is not really the most important room in the church on a Sunday morning, or in any other event that they have if you're not discipling kids and discipling teenagers for the next for the next decade next generation. And I do think that there are leaders like you and Andy and I could go down a list of so many who they've proven that in their budgets they've proven that and how they staff they've proven that in how they speak consistently to this is value. And um, I don't know, though. I think that it's so important that a church that decides not to do this.

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They'll survive. I mean they'll die a slow death. They'll wake up in 10 or 15 or 20 years and they'll be old and they'll shrink down to a certain number. There's a comfortable with, but they will not be relevant to the culture around them.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Well, there's a couple of other things I've seen to, you know, thinking about it because I had met you before you

left North Point to start Orange, which I think was in 2006. And one thing you Andy always said about your leadership, is he really valued you as a leader. You happen to lead next gen but he saw you as the future and a futurist. I think the metaphor he used is, you know, we'd all be sitting there a senior leaders Reggie would wander into the woods.

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He'd be gone for days. We wouldn't know what happened to him and he'd come back and say, hey, look, what I found did it and then, and he goes, oh yeah, he's right. So I think there's valuing the leader that you have the other, the other case I would make and I think you guys Kristen, Reggie, help me see, this is I would argue that the most complex, I think being a senior pastor is very complex, but on an equal footing, or perhaps barely a notch down would be next gen because you're dealing with the greatest number of volunteers. The most sensitive area in Ministry of something goes wrong with children or students. It's just devastating for everybody involved. So you have that high safety, high-trust environment. Plus you're dealing with a constantly changing culture in the culture is changing faster for Elementary and high school kids today than it ever did 20 years ago. So you add all of that together, you've got an extremely

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Complex job description that requires. I think decent compensation and an elevated seat at the leadership table, any thoughts on the complexity of that next Gen job. And what's involved today?

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Kristen Ivy: The complexity of the next gen job. I mean, yes, it is very complex. I think we I had an opportunity to talk with some next gen leaders this last summer, in a series of focus groups as they were processing some research that we had just done on parents and what parents want and what parents are afraid of. And what kind of support parents are looking for? And I remember getting to the end of one of the phone calls and this group of leaders just looking right back across the screen at me and basically saying.

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We are not qualified for this when we really think of the complexities about family today, and what parents and caregivers are facing. And the challenges that they navigate Monday through Saturday, and all of these practical layers, it is so complex. That's the perfect word for it. And I do think that's where Ministry happens. Our ministry happens in our programming, across the church, and number of our Ministries across our churches as well. But if we're not looking at how we intergenerationally interact to, prioritize relationships alongside of discipleship, then there's something fundamental that we're probably missing.

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Reggie Joiner : I wish I could almost make a list based on what Kristen has taught me in this space. What Andy has taught me in this space what other leaders have taught me in this space but there's so many so many parts of the story that we just don't even have time to get into.

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The fact that if there was a leader and a pastor who would allow the kind of budget and the kind of innovations and the kind of discovery that that he would allow for those I work with kids and teenagers to do, but she still continues to do. I think the fact that in Kristen's explanation and this would be something fun to talk about some more, we talk a lot about who's at the table, and the fact that at that table, there needs to be diversity, there needs to be an entity representing, the kids in the family ministry or the next-gen ministry, because that if that representation doesn't happen, we do if we're not careful as a church,

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You know, we lose our influence our community. And we don't really know what the real issues are that we need to be addressing and showing up to talk about and and part of it is this. And this is a big piece of it. And in Kristen alluded to this, too, while ago, we have to connect the idea of faith to future everyday life. And we love to talk about faith. But if there's a disconnect between faith and what's really happening in families and what's really happening outside, then then we aren't going to be as relevant and compelling with the gospel

messages we should be. Carey I remember a story where you and I in the early days were talking about pastors preaching on Sunday mornings, and you say, said, you'd gotten up that Sunday morning. You were on your way to church.

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And you're passing by all of these homes where somebody was cutting the yard or pulling their boat out, to go to the lake. And you thought in your mind, nobody really cares about what I'm going to say Sunday morning from the platform, they care about their relationships. They went to bed on Saturday night, worried about, you know, I don't know what their spouse is going through with their kid, is dealing with. It really does come down to some of those issues. And if we're disconnected from those issues, then it's just a matter of time before we don't know how to connect faith to their everyday world.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I'm so glad you raised that, you know, that's a very lucid memory for me and senior pastors, work so hard on their series. It's like, and you've seen it. It's still happening on Instagram every week. It's like don't miss it best series ever. And then, hey, if you missed it, make sure you catch up. And I mean, all that is good. I mean, I'd rather work hard on a series than not worked hard on a series, but it occurred to me that day driving to church just like

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Nobody here in our community and church people woke up wondering. I wonder what Carey Nieuwhof is going to preach about next. They don't even know who I am, but every single parent woke up thinking about their kids thinking about the next gen whether it was going well, whether it wasn't going well and that helped me elevate, next-gen Ministry and I mean, you guys have been just so instrumental in that and that legacy continues other Jeff. Brody at can access. And, you know, literally thousands of millions, probably a church leaders around the world at this point.

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which is huge. But, you know, it put, put everything in perspective for me as a senior leader because I'm like, yeah, I can work really hard.

And then the other thing that occurred to me and again, you know, this is like you graduate from seminary, you have a lot of letters behind your name, but you really don't know anything and seventy percent of the people that we were reaching that I'm talking to on a Sunday morning, our parents with children at home

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And yeah, they're worried about good theology. They're worried about the relationship with Jesus. But they're also really worried about their kids. And they're worried about their marriage and that kind of stuff. So I would love to talk about the issues that you see families wrestling with today. I mean, you could argue that nobody got hit hard or during COVID than kids. I mean, being pulled out of school, no socialization of student Ministry children's Ministry really got hit hard during Covid and again, some states were closed for months, others a year and a half. I had dinner last night with a couple from originally Northern California now Southern California and you know, they they were saying they were shut down for the better part of two years. It was almost like Canada. So I want you to know, coming out of Covid, what are the issues with culture changing as fast as it is that real families are really struggling with today.

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Carey, I love that. You asked that question.

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We know that most kids pastors and family pastors, would say what we're saying on this side of the pandemic, if it can be called the side, this stage of the pandemic is really just a progression of what was already taking place.

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Attendance patterns were already on the decline, families were not coming as frequently as they had previously and so with the pandemic did is it just expedited that trajectory forward a little bit faster and so many kids pastors that we talk to if they are still in Ministry, there was tremendous turnover as well.

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But if they are still in Ministry they're saying yes it was the it was the direction we were headed it just pushed forward faster than we had anticipated.

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And in the middle of that pandemic that was why we initiated a research project to say.

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Now's the moment when we have to go directly to caregivers in any kind of family unit and say what do you worried about most, what keeps you up at night?

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What concerns do you have for your kids future? One of the things that you really want and hope to be true for them. And so we did conduct that research project and so when you ask that question, I instantly go to the top three answers that parents gave us the first one was their kids mental health.

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In fact, it was over. I want to say was 98%, it was really high of parents said, their kids mental health is important to extremely important to them, but it was the number one thing that parents said mattered, most,

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And then second to that was access to opportunities. Which we need to dig into a little bit more as they. What kind of opportunities? What does that mean? What does that look like? But the third one was character development across all age groups of parents who are raising pre-schoolers all the way through twenty five years old. They'd said the development of character for their kids was important to extremely important. That was ninety five percent of parents across all age groups said that was in their top three things that they really want and hope for their kids' future.

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Reggie Joiner : And the interesting thing about this survey and the research that Kristen and team did was they did it for both appearance inside the church and parents outside the church.

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And they were very intentional about, you know, asking questions to parents. Who don't participate in the church, you know, what are your issues? What are your fears? What does it look like to help you win? And I think there's a fundamental misstep that as churches, we've made, and I love, I love when our team addresses this, but the misstep is, we think that helping parents win shows up because we help them come to our church and we get parents to help our churches win, we help parents win. We think it's deeper than that. The churches need to back up and pause, and go. Okay, we're really asking you how can we help you? Help us win when we should be asking you, how can we actually help you win?

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So let's ask that question. Let's ask you, what does it really look like for us to serve for us to show up for us to love you as a neighbor and to step into this space and help you win? I think the church, the church has to reset to that baseline, if we're going to go forward and actually have influence with a culture and a community around us.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Can I ask a little bit more and maybe you don't have anymore?

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That's fine. We'll move right on on access to Opportunities. Is that like to make sure my child has access to sports or healthcare or the right education or an opportunity in the workforce? Is it that kind of thing or does it mean something else?

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Kristen Ivy: So in our survey we actually presented parents, with 17 different possibilities and had them rate each one of those 17 items specifically education, was listed twice once under educational achievement and

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Ah. Then there was. There was a separate category for career and a separate category for college. So educational achievement. Ah. College and career were listed as three things. So I would assume that that's not being lumped in with access to opportunities. Um. Sports was also listed specifically as we're extra curricular activities. So I'm not sure we'd have to dig in a little bit further. We don't have much more information.

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Reggie Joiner : Well another interesting piece of the research too. Thou had to do with, um, family experiences together. There was a high high bar on how they want to have action really designed events for spaces in places where they can do things together as a family. Which that goes back to one of our core DNA issues.

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Kristen Ivy: So, the research that we did was broken up and I know this isn't what we're really talking about, but it was fascinating and a part of answering. I think your question Carey, which is, what do parents care about? We looked at what do parents want for their kids, what our parents, most afraid of what kind of support do they have? And what kind of support do? They wish they could have and where are they finding help today. And then, we also had a specific survey that we went into faith communities and ask Christian parents what do they really looking for. And that's Reggie, especially where we found that piece that said, if the church could do anything to help them be a better parent. The number one thing that they wanted more of was opportunities together to hang out, you know, with their kids in a relational space, just to connect, just to build that relationship. So that as they go through, navigating all of, you know, the life things they've got stronger, relationships that can carry the weight of that.

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So, let's talk about that for a moment because Reggie, I mean, you and your team at North Point kind of pioneered kid stuff. Well, I was almost 20 years ago now, right? And that was a shared experience based on like Disney does movies that kids think are hilarious and parents are

some think are great too write or theme parks, do that. It's like there's something the whole family can enjoy together, kids stuff, you know.

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It's still running. I'm sure in some areas but as things evolve and change what might some of those experiences look like today that leaders can facilitate

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Reggie Joiner : Well I know that we continue to make sure that we call it the Family Experience of Family Shared Experiences. We continue to create resources so that even seasonally if they can't do something on a more frequent basis, they can do something at least at Christmas. It started this new school year at Easter. You know that there are summer programs and projects, because as to her point to Kristen's point that parents need a space where they can, you know, share an experience built around faith together. And if we're honest, you know what I think kids stuff did is it reminded us that we have so easily segregated the church. You know, we put the adults in this space as we put the kids in this space we put to use in this space.

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And if I'm a parent, I want to participate in their spiritual growth, I don't want to miss out on some of those conversations in some of those dialogues. So whether it's a series around youth, you know, where we're talking about a specific topic that parents are invited into strategically or whether it is an actual event that we create designed for parents and kids. Seasonally it's just important that we don't revert back to a model that was 50 60, 70 years old. Which against segregated, the family, I think, in some ways I think kids stuff might have been ahead of its time or a family experience. And as we're looking at the next decade, it's even more important that we turn up the volume on what it actually. Looks like for parents to do this together, hint, what happened in the pandemic

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Was parents stayed home with their kids with each other, what happened in the pandemic for at least a year and a half to two years. Is they figured this out in that space and we have an opportunity now

as leaders to go. Okay, let's not only think about what we call our Sunday at church parents who show up at church, but let's also be intentional about creating experiences for Sunday at home parents and expand our definition of success as a church leader,

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Carey Nieuwhof: Hmm. Go ahead, Kristen .

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Something that happens. A think when we create programs that have organic moments that allow people to interact with each other. I've seen some Churches experiment with you know ways where they could help a kid have a shared moment with their parent or a caregiver or a grandma who's able to connect with their grandkid right there in real time in this space because just because families are at home together, doesn't mean that we always know how to talk to each other, especially about some of the important thing.

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And so as Ministry leaders just like educators and counselors and ah, physicians who actually write about this part of our role as community for each other is to help facilitate conversations that might not organically happen, otherwise and to create opportunities for that relationship to really thrive. So think when the when we put together, family programming is important for us to think about the fact that a lot of families conversations have been impacted by screentime. I'm a mom of three kids. So let me just say that my family is impacted by

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Carey Nieuwhof: Reggie and I crashed your house one weekend morning and I think we woke the family out. Yeah.

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Kristen Ivy: I know you probably walked in while my son was playing Minecraft and ah. So yeah, we might have been in the same house together during the pandemic, but.

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Having conversations together is something that I think we desperately need people to come in and lean in and go. Here's here's how to engage and here's a silly game you could play together or hears, you know a dumb improv thing that you could they could get you guys talking.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I'm Kristen and I want to go deeper on that because I'm really glad you raised that this is this is a passion project of mine. I think conversation is in crisis right now we yell at each other on social media. We disagree with each other on social media. It's one of the reasons I love doing the show. I love doing this podcast because we can have long form real conversations that go back and forth with questions not accusations, right? So

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I love it but I think conversation is a dying art. And when I've talked to student leaders, what they're saying is students came back faster than young kids, obviously, because parents were a little bit more worried after the pandemic.

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I don't want my child to get this and then we had, you know, all kinds of diseases stapled on top of covid. Etc, etc.

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So but when the students came back because they had been out of school for a while, they kind of stood awkwardly on their phones. Not really. Talking to the other people in the room.

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Like there's there's a I don't know generational breakdown and even you know you look at some of the polling data and it's like if you're under 30, you don't know how to have a conversation on the phone.

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Like, you don't know how to have it right.

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Sometimes I wish people would call me more often like like back in the day.

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So what do you do when conversation is a dying art and feel free to disagree? If you think no carry is alive and well. T

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Kristen Ivy: That's exactly what I was trying to get at. I actually went to something with my kids recently. My daughter's into performing arts. And we did something that was an improv. I don't know, family night. And I sat there thinking, this is what churches should be doing, where we're having to look each other in the eye, you know, and and do some improv together in a way that forces us out of our comfort zone, as you know, as family together and reengage as us relationally. And you're right. I think kids and teenagers.

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When the pandemic happened, we were in the same buildings together, but there was so much screen time that happened.

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I remember having to lift all of my kids screen time limits, just so that they could do their school online. And so it was almost like, everything's now out the window, you have to do your school online. So now you have to have access to Google in a whole new way.

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And a lot of us are scrambling to figure out how to pick up the pieces.

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Even back to the research and what we found of all of the things.

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Things that we put out on the table for parents to say, you know, what do you worry about most, again, from a list of about 19, different things third-highest was anxiety, and I think that that's connected to are we able to really form human connections with each other,

especially in our closest circles are family units, whatever, they look like our ability to have strong bonds and connections is going to be connected to our mental health, and our levels of anxiety.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So before I get to Reggie, I want to ask you one more question, Kristen, which is what are you? And Matt, and your kids. And if you give us your kids age, that's really helpful because people can identify with stage. What are you doing to foster dialogue at home

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We just don't want to talk to Reggie.

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Kristen : You poor said, haha, thanks for the honesty or sit. Well, we have this. That's a quiet guy he is. He's quieter.

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Kristen Ivy: That's right. He is and our oldest is 13 and And I'm only half joking, there are times when we say no you will sit at this table for five whole minutes. While we're sitting here as we have 13 11 and 7 and wildly different personalities. Totally different. Humans in every way. My son is also, very reserved. I like to say he

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He shares very little unless you happen to catch him on the right evening at bedtime. And then just when the magic happens, he will open up and be vulnerable and share, you know, for an hour. And if that magic happens, I just sit in it for as long as it will continue. Um knowing that it may not happen again for another. You know, two months. But ah, my middle daughter. She will tell you anything and everything that you want to know and beyond at any given moment. So it just different personalities. Different kids try different things. Yeah.

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Carey Nieuwhof: And what's so refreshing about that is I mean, all of us have led organizations that.

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Think about these things, care about these things and it's still a battle at home and Reg. We talked about this recently we were together in Atlanta but like I've learned so much about communicating with family fighting for the heart with you like I tear up every time I think about it and like you my kids are grown now what are you doing to foster a healthy relationship with your kids because I don't know, really anybody? Who is better? I'm at prioritizing the relationship than you are.

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Reggie Joiner : Well, I think, you know, we go back to the book that you and I wrote and actually Christian helped us ghostwrite some, which was, you know, Parenting Beyond Your Capacity and we wrote in that book. A lot of the things that we were doing wrong. I think I would have to go back and at least start by owning

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Things that I feel like I wish someone had told me that I missed step is an illustration of, but even when you do, you can keep fighting for the relationship. I think, as my kids have become adults, I have decided that disagreeing with me is not the same thing as disrespecting me. And that one of the most important things I can do at this phase and stage of their life is to respect them as parents and respect them as adults and actually learn from them. And so when they want to do something different with their children who are. By the way, my grandchildren I have to also lean in and go. You know, if you decide you want a parent that way, it's not just simply, oh, I did it wrong with you because you want to do it different.

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It's actually, you know what I didn't know then. And I need to respect you as a parent. And I have become amazed at watching all of my children in the sense that that that their parenting and what they've discovered what they're doing. I mean, you never really think about this. I know that Kristen probably hasn't thought about this yet. But when your kids are the age, Christians, kids are if you don't imagine them his parents as much. And I I always sudden when my kids became parents, I was I was like, oh, wow, you're really good at this. I

never imagined you would be this good at parenting. Because they asked the right questions, they push for the right values. They fight for their heart right way. And it's just such an exciting thing to watch. But I'd just have to from time to time. Remind myself.

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The disagreeing with the way I did it or disagreeing with me about an issue isn't disrespect. They're actually doing what we taught them to do which is be independent and be adults. So I think you have to start there. I hear grandparents sometimes and this is just a pet peeve of mine. I hear grandparents sometimes trying to get their adult children with their grandchildren to hold on to some of their values and some of their ideologies that may not have been great to begin with and they almost see that as a challenge to faith and they don't know how to separate Faith from some of those ideologies. And I want to go it's possible that your kids were following Jesus more than you are you in a different way than you were simply because they don't agree with. You doesn't mean that they don't aren't getting this right. Is that make sense?

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Kristen Ivy: As you're as you're talking about this, both of you have shared stories of Andy and I actually think he just released with Sandra a parenting book kind of on the same idea and I think it's called Parenting Getting It Right. Right. But he and Sandra are really pushing at always prioritizing the relationship and their reflections on what it looked like to prioritize their relationship with their kids early on and what that's looking like. Now in a new season as their kids are grown and I just thought listening to them sharing are those stories has been impactful for me, even at the stage that I'm in, in parenting.

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Reggie Joiner : I think and even told one story in the book about how I did it wrong. So wait a minute, oh yeah.

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Carey Nieuwhof: But you know, we will link to that in the show notes and will also link to my interview. And my wife didn't interview with along with Dr. Rob Meeder of Andy and Sandra we'll link to all of those

in the show notes. If you want to go deeper. Um. I was at dinner last night with a pastor of one of the largest churches in the country. Toni and I went out with him and his wife and their lead. They have a forgetting the ages right there. Approximate fourteen, eleven. Nine year old. So three kids and we were talking about the grunt stage. I remember when my kids were in middle school. And usually if you got four grunts a day that was a good day it was like, what do you do in today. Nothing you know. No. I was school. Fine. Are you hungry? Yeah.

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Good night. You know, that was a good day and now they're articulate young adults. But I was, I was going on Reg about what you taught me about fighting for the heart and I would be remiss if I didn't ask you to talk about that a little bit. Can you talk about? Because I'm like often if I teach on this stuff I talk about rules parents and relationship parents. So Toni's relational. You know, she's the way better half. I'm the rules guy. It's like, well you can't you shouldn't and I'm an Enneagram 8. And when all that unhealth comes out, It's not good for the parent-child relationship and you taught me a very different way. And Jordan and I have talked about this, my oldest even recently. It's like, you know, the reason we have relationship today, I don't know what would have happened if God didn't send Reggie into my life when you were 13, because you taught me how to fight for the heart and really prioritize relationship even overrules. So you want to talk about that and it just it's such a

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Such a big subject in my life because it made such a big difference.

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Reggie Joiner : I think it's just a posture. I don't even know that we could talk about 10 ways to do it or but for the most part, it's a posture. I think, for me, it was, it was a moment in my life when I realized I can win the argument. I mean, I can pull out the Bible and at the time the dictionary, now it would be a search engine to go to Wikipedia and I could get some of the experts to back up my point and win the argument. But at the same time, I could lose the heart and affect the relationship and how I won the argument or got my way in this space. And I think at some point I felt like there were like with any

kid or teenager and is growing up in your house. There are these crises moments.

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And in those crisis moments, you can either show up and be the judge and the jury and say, I told you so why didn't you see if you do this? This is the consequence. Or in those moments I could show up and go, hey, I need to ask you a different kind of question right now. And that's what can I do to help? What can I do to help you navigate this this because at the end of the day in any talks about this in his book as well at the end of the day, the goal is to be in a relationship and the [inaudible] friendship and so fighting for the heart is simply fighting for the relationship. That's all we're saying. And sometimes our kids need us to lean in, even in the most critical moments when things are really, really complex and intense and just stop and go, just. So you know, I will never stop fighting for my relationship with you. And I'll never stop fighting for your relationship with God or your relationship with the people that you need to have a relationship with, because those will always be a priority to me.

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Just a reset in a posture, you know, the dynamic of the relationship and what you're after. Because if you don't do that, you don't position yourself on the right side of who the real enemy is, and the real enemy wants to destroy the relationship. The real enemy wants to divide and I just think it is. It is a different way of looking at any sort of any problem or conflict. When we're on one side of it, looking at it together, even if we disagree, we're trying to get to a resolution, that will help us win in our relationships, so that's all it really is, is just posture.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So, here's a question, I don't think I've ever asked you. I don't know. Why are you naturally wired that way? Or did you have to learn that?

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Reggie Joiner : I don't know the answer to that when I think I've had to learn a lot. I mean, I think I'm naturally opinionated. I'm naturally, you know, I'm, if you look at my right path, I am more argumentative

than I want to be. I see things the way I see things. Why are you laughing both of you laughing? This isn't right? So I mean we've had a few good ones. Yeah, so that there's a self-aware thing there so maybe maybe I to counteract that and because I have seen maybe the hurt that I have caused because I'm so dominating in a conversation. Maybe that I've learned that I've got to back away and fight for what really matters but

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Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. But when you do it and I've seen you fight for relationships, I've seen you, ah, you know, I always think in the back of my mind, if I ever end up in the ditch, you're going to be one of my first phone calls like you're the guy I want my corner of everything blows up in my face because you have a way of doing what you just said. It's like, hey, maybe some stuff really went down here. But I'm here to help. What can I do like you really have that posture? And it's just it's I can't overstate its influence in my leadership of the way I've learned to lead. Because that's not my basic wiring. Kristen anything you wanna say about fighting for the heart. It's just such a big value for me.

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Kristen Ivy: I think, in my mind, it's always, there's a difference between the way, I imagined it and the way it happens in real life, I always imagined that it means that we'll have these deep meaningful conversations where my kids are saying back to me things that I had always hoped they would value. You know, we just have this this moment of connection and I could paint a picture of what I feel like. I think it should feel like and it never really does because most of our conversations don't gosh, I hope my kids don't listen to this sometimes too long.

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Well sometimes they're talking about things and I don't necessarily care about automatically naturally. You know, it's they're sharing a lot about a video game that I have no interest in or it's over sharing about YouTube video that they saw and

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I have to really focus to try to care in the moment about what's being said and I go back in my mind and I just think it's really a lot more about the little bitty displays along the way of showing I care, whatever you have to say, because you're saying it and I care about you because I recently did have one moment where where my my middle daughter was sharing something with me that I thought was fairly vulnerable and I kind of reflected back to her. I was really glad that she was talking with me about this. And she said well Mom, I mean you told me when I was like two that I could tell you anything and I thought I did not know then that you were listening when I said that and now it matters so much more than I did.

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Reggie Joiner : I want to add one more thing in here that our middle daughter said to me one day in the middle of a tour and we're all sitting at a table because she does have a sensitivity. She said to me, Mr, Reggie. You don't have to worry about your future. You've already had it.

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So she treated me feel safe to share what she's thinking.

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Reggie Joiner : She did. She felt felt safe to share that.

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Carey Nieuwhof: That is a really anything else you see. Ah families or the next generation struggling with today. That you think we need to come alongside and help them with.

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Kristen Ivy: So one of the things that stood out to me was how much parents worry about their kids physical health

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Actually, in our long list of things that parents might be concerned about and I mean, it was everything from I would go down a list. It was everything you might imagine that a parent could possibly worry about

in their kids life and the two top things above anxiety, we're getting enough, sleep and getting healthy nutrition. And I think his ministry leaders. So, often times we just forget about the physical stuff of life. I know that I do when when were writing content, we're talking Ministry is just easy to diminish, the simple things like getting good nutrition, getting enough sleep. And yet that's the day-to-day reality of a lot of families. And so, how are we going to engage our Theology and our ministry with

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Really people humanity and our physical being as well. So the spiritual and physical combination if you will. I'm not sure what to do with that. It stood out for us, particularly as we work with youth ministry that serves pizza for every gathering. And I'm not knocking it at all because I serve pizza in my kids on Friday night, but there were a lot of questions that we were dialing back and asking and trying to figure out. Okay, what does this mean for our ministry is, what do we do with this information? We don't really I know yet.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah I can see at your best kids edition and maybe we'll get Craig Groeschel to do a power to change kids edition book, team up on that, it is good and you know I don't know a lot of

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Church leaders are leaders who are really talking about kids health. That seems to be siloed off into fitness or whatever. Even the amount of sleep? Right. I've I'm totally since I burned out all those years ago. Reggie and I also have a bond that we burned out the same year. So that was incredible. Back in two thousand and six. But like sleep is just this obsession for me these days like to get enough in to feel good.

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Kristen Ivy: It was actually the highest rated thing for middle parents of middle schoolers as well. So interesting. Um. That right in a season when actually physically kids do need more sleep, parents said they're more worried about their kids sleep than ever before. Probably if we were guessing the us to do with the amount of activities extracurricular

is picking up homework increasing all these physical demands on their kids and you've got caregivers.

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Who aren't oblivious to that? They're basically like, hey, we have a front row seat to it. And yeah, we're worried that our kids aren't getting enough, sleep, to be able to manage the stress and be able to take care of their own mental health. And so it was interesting when it comes to the line of work that we do in Ministry to say, actually getting enough rest is a theological issue. So what could we do to lean into that conversation and support families who are already worried about the amount of sleep, their kids may or may not Be getting.

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Reggie Joiner : There are actually two projects that Kristen has worked on that. I think has really helped our organization shift into the future in a way. That's really practical. One is the Phase Project which

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Suggest two churches that we need to understand the six things that are changing about every kid at every stage. So the book that she put together, It's Just A Phase, So Don't Miss It. And then the individual guides to help parents understand each one of those phases, we think is a great way for churches to lead in to parents at every stage and to be holistic and how they see their kids and for the church to care, not simply again about faith but how Faith intersects in their everyday life and then this project that we just worked on which is called what most parents, aren't telling you which is I think another way for the church to decide they're going to stretch their skill or exercise empathy in a world outside their church. So they can continue to actually lean in to help families.

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Win is an important part of all of this.

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There's an empathy thing that I love about Kristen. I love about our team and staff.

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Where Before. You know, we right before resource before we try to give answers we back up and go, okay. How are people hurting? How are they seeing the world? And we're Kristen was talking just a few minutes ago about the physical health and mental health. I kept thinking about the trauma-informed churches that need to understand in the spaces more than ever before or what it actually is like for kids to experience trauma to identify those things and to lean in and a healthy way in the right way to help them get the connections they need to heal and to recover. And in a way, that makes sense, these are issues that are not going to go away and for the church to think, you know what we can just do expository preaching on a Sunday morning. And everybody's going to be okay. Actually read a blog the other day that said, be biblically informed, not trauma-informed. And I thought.

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Some, for some reason, we have become calloused as churches to the real issues people are dealing with and we believe that everything the Bible says is true, but we don't believe everything. You need to know, is in the Bible, we say that all the time. So we believe the Bible is true, but there are truths and things that we need to understand as leaders working with kids and teenagers, and youth that are actually real world issues. And yes, Jesus makes a difference in someone's life and faith in God, we think If someone's future and how they treat each other, how they see themselves. But we got to dig into some issues to and get practical in an education, way on what it looks like to help them in their real world.

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Carey Nieuwhof: No.

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And I think, you know what, you're reminding me, we sort of started, the conversation about next-gen Ministry, kids students. But the more we talk about that more we dive into it. This is just ministry, right? It's learning to love God with your heart. Mind soul, strength body and he cares about all of the those things. And when you ignore these issues, like, even from a preaching to teenagers and adults, right? If you ignore everything, we talked about your kind of ignore In the world,

they go back into and it's not like the Bible doesn't have a lot to say about the stuff. It's got a ton to say about this stuff. It's just, it's our responsibility to senior leaders to really be part of it as well. So this has been super, super helpful.

[01:08:30.900]

Um I want to, because we're going to talk about Rethink Leadership and just a moment. And I would really love every senior leader to come to Atlanta. Hang out with Reggie with Kristen with myself with Darius Daniels. Who else is going to be there? Katie Cole Katie going to be there. Think so. Yeah. Yeah. Katie Cole. Darius Daniels. I mentioned Horst Schulze, the former President CEO of Ritz Carlton, myself. I'm excited to be back there, but we're gonna have family Ministry conversations. We're also going to have other conversations that are geared around it. And I want to talk a little bit about success session. This is something that, um. I don't know that you'd call it a succession. But Reggie, I quote you all the time.

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You're the one and again, very providential in my life. You talk about pushing other people in the spotlight, right? Like don't always, don't always be the guy with the microphone. Don't always be the guy that it's got to give all the messages, 50 messages, a year, because you're insecure. It's push other people into the spotlight and you've done an incredible job. I mean, you gave me opportunities. I never would have had if you didn't lean into me, but you're really committed to that in your organization and Kristen you're the new president of Orange. That happened about a year and a half ago or so. Do you want to talk about sort of the leadership transition that you guys are in the midst of right now? What that looks like highs lows, good bad ugly. All of the above because it's confusing and it's going to be a huge conversation in the next decade as Boomers and gen xers, hand things over to the Next Generation.

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Reggie Joiner : I like Kristen start. I mean, I think that that's probably the smartest move to make here. I think it's, it's an interesting. It's an interesting, I believe very interesting and a very important thing that needs to happen as we reimagine organizations as we reimagine

churches, as we think, in terms of more diversity and collaboration, because there's a generation watching, Going. Am I ever going to have a seat at the table? And am I going to be allowed to create and to innovate? And and I think the way we managed, you know, ideas and organization, and leadership is shifting and changing. And we have to lead the way in whatever way we can and turn it over to other leaders to speak into it. But anyway, that's my first response.

[01:10:58.900]

Yeah. It's a big question, Carey. We could spend hours on this question hours and hours on this question. I do feel like I am one of the most fortunate leaders in one of the best case scenarios. When it comes to, ah, this leadership transition. And that is because Reggie is so good at putting other people into leadership positions. And um, you know, giving people voice around the table. And just his, I would say, bringing me along in leadership for a very long time already and been patient with me to learn lessons that he'd already learned and give bring me an opportunity to fail. And you know, figure out what I needed to learn and those in those moments. And so I just have a a really ideal scenario in that. And I think in particular in these last couple of years.

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I even see that more clearly. I was reading an article just the other day, talking about research that had come. I think out of it, may have been out of Harvard where they actually identified the best transition for any organization happens when a founder is willing to stay connected to the organization, and is able to transition to a leader who's already had longevity out, the organization that that actually gives better outcomes for whatever that organization is. So if The founders able to stay on. And if the new leader has already had some history there then even though it creates a lot of tension and we could get into some of that too. And a lot of, you know, back and forth and trying to figure out, you know, what's the new reality now. And it's always changing but that isn't ideal thing. And I think it's worth saying because there's a myth

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That can creep in that says it would be a whole lot easier to just, you know, rip the rug, you know, take somebody out, put somebody in make a big switch, make a big change and that doesn't always

necessarily need to be the case, but it's also harder than anybody probably anticipates. We've had an opportunity.

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Carey Nieuwhof: Let's talk about some of the tension

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Reggie Joiner : I actually comment for just a second. There is probably a reason. She's reading an article. Article on transition from Harvard and from other organizations. Because I mean in all fairness, I mean, there is for me an advantage that there's someone who's been in this organization for 15 years and we think a lot of love, a lot of like and so many areas and our values are so similar. But we're different.

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And and I think she's a different kind of leader. I think she is more hands on. She has the ability to actually go to the the the forty thousand foot view and to the ten foot view faster and quicker than I can. And that that means she wants a different structure in place. And she needs a different structure in place or she'll get overwhelmed. And so one of the first things that she stepped in and did it was create a VP structure and strategy where she's sharing leadership with some other leaders, a larger number of leaders to actually lead the organization, you know, with them, having a seat at the table and more of a collaborative based mindset. And even though I consider myself collaborative, you know there there is a different level of collaboration. She's taken our organization to which I think is so powerful and is so transparent. And it is so valuing to everyone else in the organization.

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If I were talking to a lead Pastor right now, I would say the way you have led may not be the way. The organization needs to be led. And the worst thing that you can do is simply try to find someone who is like you to replace yourself and there's a starting point. The starting point is if you're ever going to transition to another leader one day which you are, then you start should start asking yourself the question, how can I begin to allow people at the table who see the world different? And begin to let them lead. If you're the only person on the platform are you you're the only person actually making decisions at

the table then I think you've got to start now reimagining what that dynamic looks like.

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Kristen Ivy: Start earlier than you ever intended or ever thought you would need to, that's a really great piece. And I think we've gone through different phases Reggie in this process. And when you first tried to start convincing me to become president, I was very resistant to that for a number of reasons. And when you finally even convinced me, okay? This needs to happen and you you're going to say yes. At this point.

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There was a seasonable, there was a season where I was surprised that you were stepping back in the way that you were and I would say, it was difficult for me, even to figure out. What does it look like to lead without bumpers on the lane so to speak without that?

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Understanding that I'm going to take this up to Reggie. And if I'm making a bad choice here, he'll tell me. And then things will be okay. And so that was a really uncomfortable phase that we went through. And then I feel like as I started leaning into that, there was also trying to navigate a little bit of hope. It's okay to say this. I just will a little bit of displacement on on your part. Um. And I think we've both had conversations about that to say, okay. But if I do push in and start to lead and change some things I can. We've led together long enough that I know when you feel a level of displacement and that's uncomfortable for both of us. So how do we you know? Sit down and talk about it. And ah, map it out and say, okay, how. What's happening here there? Just it requires so much communication.

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Reggie Joiner : There is a I think an amazing I think opportunity as we wrestle with some of those issues to also model to other staff that the relationship matters that a leadership matters. And even in moments when I may have to pull out of a meeting or not being a meeting, because actually being in the meeting is being in the way of the meeting, which is another thing that's hard for people like me to

imagine, I like I but there's still a construct. I mean, there's still this thing this left over that sometimes for me, just to choose, not to be in a space, gives more freedom in that space.

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Which which I think, you know, even as Kristen transitions into this role and she is leading, which you probably had to go. Purpose is leading it. Now, there's a grieving process for her as it relates to oh Now, I am part of the construct and people don't feel as free to tell me things that maybe they would have told me before. I mean, this was in this position. I mean, there's so much so many dynamics to this, and, but there is so much that can be said for the fact, that we have an amazing amount of years of trust in this context that allows us to navigate the complicated pieces and I would I'm just like a alluded to earlier. I mean I'm

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I mean, I'm sixty two. And I'm trying to imagine how to help this organization continue to to be in a role. And there's all the same kinds of opinions and insecurities that anybody would have still show in my world and life too. And I have to keep those at bay because I know that if it is a succession plan, the success of that plan is going to have to do with what, John the Baptist said. One day when you said I must decrease so they can increase. I mean, it's there's that kind of mindset.

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Yeah.

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Yeah.

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Carey Nieuwhof: What wouldn't be? Because I've been through it and you know, Sean Morgan has said the number one thing it will mess up a succession is not the incoming person but the outgoing person. Yeah. And I think that's true that really resonates. So what? What battles are you having to face Reggie? Like what emotions are servicing? What's what's going on inside you?

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Reggie Joiner : Do we have a therapist here, too? Or is this? Just the three of us? Because I'm not sure audience is listening. When I was bringing therapy my, I mean part of it is trying to understand in my role.

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Now what the most supportive thing is that I can do. And if that's even in my ability, or will House of talents, because I do think that I am not a complicated person in the fact that in my life, I've really only done, three or four things that I've kind of understood how to do. So when they're new things that I need to learn, which there are. And when there are other ways that I need to support, instead of the ways, I've always been accustomed to supporting, there's kind of a new learning skill for me and then there's the dynamic probably of walking into a room and recognizing that.

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If I speak into this the wrong way, I will shut down the conversation. And so I have to turn this dial off that. I've never felt like I should turn off before so that people in the room feel free to have the conversation. They need to have, that could be almost parallel with the fact that in their times, I go into room and I feel like, you know, that I'm here, do you know that I've been doing things and that I have an opinion about this as well and because I am still here, you know, so there's is that dynamic and and sometimes living between those two sides can make you little schizo.

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Carey Nieuwhof: So I get I can 100% relate 100% relate. Yeah well and you know as your daughter said to Reggie and I'm sure to me you've had your future so no I yeah Kristen what about for you? The hardest part? Like I know let me start with this. Did you feel the weight?

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Kristen Ivy: Yes.

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Carey Nieuwhof: A lot of the people who are coming in all of a sudden, because I mean, I remember when Orange walking into the condo after you resigned from North Point in two thousand and six and it was just the condo and everybody fit. And it's just a condo. And now it's this massive organization that's got global reach. And you know thousands of churches from around the world. You're stepping in a that as the President. What did that feel like?

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Kristen Ivy: Well I said, no for the record. Um. Quite a few times I have. I have always felt the weight. And I think the thing that surprises me is, um, I always felt like an owner, an Orange in what orange was becoming. Who Orange was and how we serve Ministry leaders?

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I've always felt deeply responsible for the role that we are privileged to play and coming alongside of people who are doing work day in and day out in communities, that maybe we'll never even have a chance to see. And so, I already thought I was carrying so much weight. That is surprising that there was even more and everybody, I've talked to who's stepped into a senior position.

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Has had that reflection to say, wow, I thought I knew that there was so much and then I learned there was so much more and Carey.

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I love your community, in your podcast, for that reason, because it's a place for leaders who do feel the level of responsibility and do feel the weight that they carry to kind of come together. And say, look,

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You're not alone and this is hard and anybody who tells you, it's not hard as not, being really honest about it. And yeah, I love that you draw that that conversation out and you're able to create space for people to be real and vulnerable who do share that senior leadership spot. So, yes, it's definitely heavy and it's harder than I mean, you asked what's the hardest thing? I'm singing I can't even name just one. There's at least a dozen that come to mind, and it's many of the

tangential things that happen around leadership transition, Reggie and I've shared with each other, we as an organization. Did not experience turnover in the early years, we were growing like crazy. It was like, yeah. There's five of us and then you look up and there's 20 of us and then you look up and there's 40 of us and now there's 80 of us and now there's 130 staff and it just felt like there was this snowball of momentum

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And for us to go through this leadership transition season right at the same time as the pandemic, while the church is going through some redefining as well, there's so much kind of colliding in our world. And it's really the first time I think as an organization we've experienced some turnover on that hits, you know, in a challenging way, too. Is it directly related to transition? I don't know, but but it may not be unrelated. And and what does that feel like? And how do you manage those emotions? I'm not. I'd have to sit down and probably list out all of the challenges. I think another one would be I. I signed up for Orange because I love Orange and the mission of Orange and the church. And what the church is doing, ah, in communities everywhere. But also because Reggie was a leader worth following. And I think following Reggie and learning from his Leadership has been a tremendous gift to me. And so it's.

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It is personal to navigate transition when you have deep respect for, the leader that you've learned from for so long. And how you, how, you step into spaces, and, and figure out how to say. Everything you put in place here was necessary in a season, but we may still need to make changes and it's not a reflection on you or your previous leadership, because we may be doing something now, that's wrong. You know? And someone's going to come along after me and they're going to change it again, but there's just so many human elements.

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Reggie Joiner : I would say to add to that, that the gift Kristen has been to our staff. They're going to realize more and more as the years go by her DNA is in almost every book that we've written. Her

leadership has been on almost every team that has been formed in happened in the Org.

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Her her passion to make sure that we get this right for the sake of the faith of the kid or teenager on the front lines is unmatched in so many ways. And I honestly believe, I mean, I know she said she didn't want to be over this, I didn't want to be over this either. I mean, there was a sense in which neither one of us wanted to be in charge of something like this, and it just happened.

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And I watch her lead and I think Oh, I wish I had known to do that. Oh, I wish I had thought about that because there is this dial that she has as a leader. And I love to talk about this because I meet and we could spend some time talking about men and women who are leading, you know, I meet men all the time who are leading, you know, group of seven staff and they think their leader because they're great communicators on the stage.

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Kristen is a great communicator. And she's a very strategic leader. She's leading one hundred and forty staff. And a nonprofit organization is trying to continue to change and morph and lead churches to change. And when I watch her dial in this natural leadership skill that she has, it's exciting to watch. So there's nothing about this watching from my perspective, live on even the sidelines. Sometimes it isn't pretty compelling to go. Oh. This is this is the way we morph and change and evolve and invite other people to take to the table and create a diverse team, I think can do some things in the future that whenever even imagine so, this is excite.

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Kristen Ivy: And complicated,

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Carey Nieuwhof: it's really exciting.

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Reggie Joiner

: Yeah, yeah, yeah. If we always agreed about everything, it would be a lot easier, but I can't, I've never get there to always agree with me about everything.

[01:27:15.900]

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, if you've enjoyed this conversation, we're going to continue it at Rethink Leadership and orange conference. And you guys are both going to be there. I may put you on the hot seat this year, the 26, through 28 to continue elements of this conversation, and we got a number of other thought leaders. And leaders. And one of the things I love about Rethink Leadership is it's sort of a stripped-down senior leaders event your roundtables not rows. You are engaged with the speakers. We have a green room but we tailed speakers not to use it. There are breakouts where you can ask your questions. We want you to leave with your question answered and it's a round table so that you can process things with

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The other senior leaders on your team. And then when you bring your next gen staff, they go to Orange Conference. There are breakouts for them. You guys have dinner together like as a team and you start to process things and deep level plus, there's the incredible Orange Conference which is included in the admission price to Rethink Leadership. So all you have to do is go to RethinkLeadership.com and then when you're checking out use the promo code `carey23`, that's my name, CA re White 23. Tell me, just as we wrap up one, one of your favorite things that happens at Orange Conference. Or Rethink Leadership, go ahead. You can be totally red.

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Reggie Joiner : I mean, I hate to say this. I love hearing people lead and teach and speak and create no moments, where light bulbs, come on. And I see things I've never seen, but I really love the music.

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some of the songs and some of what we do in the environments that we create. I don't know. It's just hard to explain. I've always been emotionally moved by the right song. And there's some great moments I feel like happening worship. And some great moments that I think happened on the stage as we kind of engaged together in that space. Ace I like we laugh a lot, too. I mean, I love that we laugh. Yeah.

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Are you still doing the But Seriously Night this year

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Kristen Ivy: we are we are. We loved it. We love to create space where people can laugh together. And ah, it just allows you to breathe and realize that, hey, we're not all fighting each other all the time. Um. Laughing together. singing together, laughing together. There's something about that. And then I love watching when leaders, ah, see each other, just organically in this space and are praying for each other.

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And there's something just about that human connection of going. Hey, I see who I see your ministry. Let's pray about your ministry together, right here, right now. And it is a unique group. I know Rethink Leadership is alongside of Orange Conference, but being in proximity to so many kids, pastors and youth pastors, there's an energy in the room and an energy in the space that I think is really fun and add a whole lot of people who don't take themselves too seriously. And It's just kind of refreshing.

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Reggie Joiner : I've seen this year is see you tomorrow. We feel like that there's a unique way to make a promise to each other, especially in light of a generations deconstructing in a lot of ways in light of the polarity that's happening. And politics, we were 80 different denominations in this space.

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And we love that we can learn from each other and you know, this Carey in this world where there's so much debate and social media and

it's so easy for us to make each other the enemy when we show up together in this space, and we see each other worshipping and we engage with each other, for the sake of the faith of the kid or teenager in all of our communities. We remember who the real enemy is, and it's not us, it's not each other.

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And if there's this uniting thing that happens and when We say see you tomorrow we're just saying we're going to help families keep having conversations with their kids by saying to a kid when they tuck them in at night. See you tomorrow. We're going to start over again. When we say to a leader across the table, I'm going to see you tomorrow. Even if we disagree, we can keep learning.

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I mean, there's something about that, promise that God made to us, his mercies are new every morning, we get to start all over again every day that we can make to each other as well. So that's kind of the essence of what we hope to create. If this year's conference

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Carey Nieuwhof: Well. And I think the thing I love about it is a host of new ideas. Like oh, hadn't thought about that that way before the collaboration. And I can't think of a single year or a single leader I've talked to who hasn't left, inspired and encouraged at the same time. So I know for our staff year after year. It's just oh, finally, some air in the balloon. This is good. This is good. I can go on. I can see you tomorrow. Oh guys. I mean, this could have been a much longer conversation will continue it in Atlanta. The twenty six and twenty eighth of April twenty twenty three. Check it out. Just go to rethinkleadership.com use promo code Carey23 and we will see there.

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Kristen Ivy Reggie Joiner.

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Kristen Ivy: Thank you so much. Thanks for agreeing, thanks for making time for the conversation.

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Well that was a heartwarming at times beautiful and honest conversation that we're actually going to continue. So make sure you go to rethinkleadership.com, use the coupon code, `carey23`, you will get 20% off, bring your entire team. It's a conference just for senior leaders plus, you get the Orange Conference and you get to hang with your team and it's going to be awesome. Don't want you to miss it. I want to thank our partners for this episode, Overflow and Leadr, the days of giving the church the Leftovers are behind. If you want to really help people give to your cause go to overflow.co/Carey, that's overflow.co/Carey to learn how and make sure you check out leader.

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Leadr.com that's Leadr.com will help you engage and grow your team. Today. Use the promo code `carey23` and you'll get 20% off your first year by the way. We've also got show notes for everything that we talked about with Reggie and Kristen today, you can go to careynieuwhof.com/episode556. You'll get everything there. And well, we've also got transcripts for you, as well. Next episode, we have got David Kroll in the house. He is the CEO, that's right. CEO of church. Home where Judah and Chelsea Smith are. And we talked about moving beyond the megachurch model, what's next? The problems with church transfer growth. It's a brilliant conversation. Here's an excerpt.

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David Kroll: We may be using mediums that are different than traditionally in the past, right, buildings and programs, right? Are really the traditions that we are in the near term coming.

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It's not what our forefathers used. But um, that's what what we have used recently within the church. Right. And we're saying, hey, you take a look at the way that most of society is digesting everything, including community. And they're utilizing technology as the main medium to deliver all of those things. It doesn't mean they're not meeting in person. And that doesn't mean that they're not connecting. It doesn't mean that they don't value some of these human necessities that we

see all throughout scripture and then even inherently just in our own lives to know to be true in our souls. But we said, hey, listen, we're not going to be married to a method. We're married to a message. We're married to the message of Jesus and that and what he wants to deliver to the globe were not married to the delivery method mechanisms and methods of the past.

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And because of that, we started the journey with technology.

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Carey Nieuwhof: It's coming up next time on the podcast, if you subscribe, you'll get it for free. Hey, if you loved this episode, please share it with the people that you love. We really appreciate it. And if you would be so kind, leave a rating and review. Also coming up, we've got JP Pokluda, Erwin McManus, Andy Wood new pastor at Saddleback David Platt, Gretchen Rubin and a whole lot more coming up on the podcast. And one of the most common topics that comes up when I'm coaching and training church leaders as outreach and most people are in search of a solution to make their outreach efforts more effective. It's not always going particularly well. So the truth is, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution what works for a church, down the road.

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May not work for you.

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So the art of reaching is actually an online course I offer along with Mark Clark that will walk you through creating an effective outreach program for your church. The principles and the strategies in the art of reaching will help you set the foundation for your outreach efforts and reach people in your community more effectively. It's been proven by thousands of leaders and with Easter just around the corner, I've actually added an Easter Outreach Toolkit and that includes a step-by-step outreach and follow-up. Lan with ready, to use templates for invitations, emails and texts, follow up the whole deal. Three of my own best connecting Easter series, including one complete transcript, Graphics, the whole deal. You can get all of this at. No extra cost. If you join before March 15.

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So to sign up for the art of reaching go to theartofreachingcourse.com make sure you join the art of leadership Academy. When you're there, you'll get so much more value. That's where all of my interesting conversations beyond this show are happening these days. So just go to theartofreachingcourse.com, you can get the Easter Outreach Toolkit as a bonus. There's a lot of value packed in that. Do it before March fifteenth to get that special promotion. Hey. I'm loving these conversations. Thank you so much. Everybody so grateful for you. We'll catch you next time on the podcast and I hope our time together today has helped you break a growth barrier you're facing.