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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. Well, you know that employee, the one who gets under your skin, or maybe it's somebody in your family or maybe it's somebody in your church or in your company or a customer or client you've got. How do you work with them? Because you can't just like delete people from your life all the time. Well, I'm talking to Michael Bungay Stanier on that. MBS, as he's often known, and we talked about how to work with almost anyone, unusual habits that help you thrive, and how to ignore the hype cycle to focus on what really matters in relationships. Today's episode is brought to you by ServeHQ and Convoy of Hope. You can equip your volunteers with simple on-demand video training by going to servehq.church and did you know you can feed a child every school day for only \$10 a month?

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Visit convoyofhope.org/carey to learn more. Well, I'm so excited to have Michael Bungay Stanier back. We had a lot of mutual friends and it was one of those things where we just had to meet. And last time I interviewed him, you guys loved that and he has sold over a million copies of his book, self-published book, *The Coaching Habit*. It's the best-selling coaching book of the 21st century, recognized as a classic. He's got a brand new book and we talk about the concept of how to work with almost anyone. There's brackets around that; almost anybody can't work with absolutely everybody, but almost anybody. And he talks about really practical ways to help build the best possible relationship with key people at work, but I think you can apply this a little bit wider than that. Hey, Thanksgiving is coming up in a couple months Christmas.

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It's like, you're going to learn some stuff along the way. Michael was a Rhodes scholar, he's an Australian who lives near me, just down the road in Toronto. Canada. Well, every Church leader knows that having trained and engaged volunteers is essential to successfully accomplishing your mission but if you're like a lot of leaders you also know how tricky it can be to onboard people and you're probably still looking for volunteers to replace the ones that have disappeared. What if there is a resource that made it easier? Equip your volunteers and develop

leaders with simple video training courses from ServHQ. You can create your own training or use their video library so you can customize it or use theirs. Better yet, you can even automate the next steps your volunteers need to take. So set it and kind of forget it for a while.

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You can check it out at [ServHQ.church](https://servhq.church).

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Convoy of Hope is doing great work around the world. They are doing children's feeding initiatives, disaster response, women's and girl's empowerment. But did you know that just last year in 2022 alone Convoy fed over five hundred and thirty three thousand children, every single school day in 37 countries? And on top of that, they responded to 75 natural disasters and humanitarian crises, which only seem to be escalating. Convoy of Hope makes it easy for you as an individual, as a business leader, or even a church leader, to deliver tangible hope to people who desperately need it at just the right time. Often, we see the stuff in the news where like I don't know what to do, this is what you do, go to convoyofhope.org/carey and sign up for as little as ten dollars a month.

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You can feed a child every school day, or you can also, if you want to get Hands-On, create hygiene kits for disaster survivors for the upcoming hurricane season there will be hurricanes, you can learn more about all of that at convoyofhope.org/carey.

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Hey, before we get into today's episode, I want to thank you so much for listening. Thank you for your engagement. Thank you for the way, you share this with friends, as you do that as you subscribe, as you share the message, as you get it out on social, we're able to do even more with this podcast. So, thank you for that. And now my conversation with Michael Bungay Stanier

CAREY NIEUWHOF: MBS, welcome back.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: All right, thank you. This is when you're one of my favorite people to talk to and is so nice of you to invite me back and talk about this new book. So thank you for having me.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, we've had some really good times together in person. And this time, we're doing this virtually just so we can get some video, that kind of thing. You sign every email and in fact, I've got the key tag, you mailed me, which is great, exactly like that. I want people to see this. I don't think they can. It's like Buzzy, but it says, you're awesome and you're doing great. You sign every email that way, whenever we chat, I smile every time we see it. I want to know, random question, why do you say that?

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Well, I had a moment of spontaneity when I was facilitating a large group session and when I'm facilitating, I'm often getting people to work in pairs or groups of three. So they're practicing what I'm teaching them, not just hearing it. So I got people to practice a conversation. And then at the end of it, on a spur of a moment, I said, now look at your partner in the eye and say this to them, you're awesome and you're doing great. And it was massively awkward, like mumble, mumble, mumble, but I was like, you know, I'm going to double down on this. So we had three or four more rounds of practicing. And at the end of each one, I said, you're awesome. And, you know, turn to your partner and tell them you're awesome and you're doing great.

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And you could just feel this energy building in the room. And by the last one, they're like slapping hands and hugging and kind of like saying it with gusto.

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I'm like, there is something really powerful in this phrase. So I added it to my email signature.

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The first feedback I got from that was from my mom, who is like, this is terrible.

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It's not even, it's not grammatical, you're a Rhodes scholar. You should at least put it grammatically. It's too American, too North American.

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I'm like, you know, it is, I can't disagree with any of mums points there, but there is something in that statement that makes people feel encouraged and seen. And you know, on a weekly basis. I'll get a couple of emails saying, thank you for that. I appreciated the encouragement because, you know, and I'm sorry to break your heart. If this is what it does, Carey, but it's like it's standard on all of my emails. It goes out to everybody, really? That's my stuff.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I know we've talked about that offline, I like that. And now it's on a key tag. And no, and I just, I think, you know, nobody I've met is ever over-encouraged. Nobody's ever had a lifetime dose, right? Like Hey, that's enough. Can you leave me alone? Like, there's no more.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: There's no more you can help me with, because I am fully charged, and fully expressed, and feel fully confident in every moment. I don't think that's happened yet.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, I think about it more often than reading it. You know what I mean? I'm like, oh, yeah, you're awesome. And you're doing great.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I like about it is, I think, It applies, it's like that famous, is that Solomon in the Bible. I'm thinking something else but wanting to find a way to navigate life and turned to his court jester and perhaps, and as I need, when the good times are good, I need something to help guide me. And when the bad times about, I need something to help guide me and he came back with a ring with this too shall pass on it.

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And what's powerful about that phrase is it grounds you in the moment and gives you perspective. What I like about you're awesome and you're doing great is in the good times, that's helpful to hear, and in the bad times, that's helpful to hear. You're still awesome. No matter how it's going on out there. And you're doing great means you're probably doing the best you can, even if it's hard or even if it's easy right now.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: You know, I've never thought about this too shall pass in the context of the good times. You know, I always think don't ride the highs too high and the lows too low, but you're right. It's true. You can be elated thinking, I am the best thing since sliced bread, and this too will pass. Or this is the best moment, this too will pass. And also the dark clouds, this too will pass.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: It's like reading both good reviews and bad reviews of a book. You're like, I can't remember who it was, but it was Ray Bradbury said, you've got to weigh those reviews equally, give them the same weight.

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Um, which is to give them really, no weight at all, is really helpful because you just go, you know, this is wonderful. I love that they've said this or I'm disappointed that they've said this and it's not really going to affect me too much in terms of the work I do or the sense of self.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I have You know, a lot of leaders listening to this get feedback every week. Now, thanks to social media on whether that sermon was great, whether they're doing well as a boss, what their staff think. And it was funny because I was in Amazon, I don't go on very often and I was checking out the reviews for my book and you know, dropped from five stars to like 4.7 or something like that. So it's just that it doesn't quite show five stars, it shows like four and a half and I gotta be honest. That kind of like, can I just get five of my friends to post a 5-star review and notch it backup? Yeah, how do you handle reviews, how do you handle? You know, because you're an author who sold? Well, over a million books. Yeah, how do you handle the one Stars? The two stars?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Well, I don't take it too, seriously. I mean, I love it. When I hear a story of work I do having an effect on people's lives.

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It's very meaningful for me.

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But you know, I got an email from somebody else that I see somebody left me a voice message on LinkedIn the other day just to say, I use your work and I work in this, I work in education and its really having a ripple effect and that's pretty

wonderful to hear. But, you know, when you go into book reviews, it's like, who knows, what's going on for people? I mean, I literally for *The Coaching Habit*, the best-selling book on coaching the century.

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Somebody has written, this is the worst book ever written. I'm like, well no, that's hilarious really, because I mean, first of all, kudos to that person for reading every book ever written.

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Secondly, I'm quietly confident that the really bad rip-offs of *The Coaching Habit* are probably worse than *The Coaching Habit*, but maybe not.

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So, you know, with feedback generally, it's like take what's useful and ignore the rest. And so I'm like, is there anything useful here? Anything that has a grain of truth, anything that's helpful for me in my work. And I know the people who I care about and whose opinion about how I'm doing matters to me, and it's a pretty small number. And if I can be good, in their eyes than I have a degree of contentment that no amount of one-star reviews on Amazon are going to drag me down too much in part also because I'm like, this is the best I could do at the time, that book is the best I could ride at the time. I gave it my best. I might love it or I might have some reservations about it from two or five or seven years later on, but at the time I did the best I could so there's no place for regret around that.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: On your new book you've got Brene Brown endorsing it on the cover and Seth Godin, and Liz Wiseman and numerous others. I mean you know I think as Seth would say, well maybe it's not for them.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Right. It's like there is a way that having a some skeptical or cynical reviews actually creates more credibility for the five-star.

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I'm right.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Like if it was always, you did have all of your friends go.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I don't have that many friends.

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I wouldn't have made that much difference in the end, but you know, who knows? I loved our last episode that you and I did a couple years ago. We kind of dove in the whole Rhodes scholar thing, what makes you your backstory. But, I'd love to ask what habits or practices do you have that might be a little off the beaten path that sustain?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: That's an interesting question.

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I'm pretty normal.

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But I would say some of the things that characterize who I am are I really enjoy reading and I read diversely. So I read science and I read business and I read self-development and I read young adult and I read science fiction and I read literature and all of that helps me think differently and be a better writer. I think there's something rich in cross-disciplinary knowledge that informs, the thing I'm working on gets most richly informed by the stuff adjacent to it or a leap from it.

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And I think that might be one thing. I think perhaps another, I'm not sure if you, I guess it's a practice, or kind of commitment is I'm very interested in trying to be a teacher but also to de-center myself from a place of authority. And there's a really weird tension around that, like I am not at all interested in the kind of status that some people in this world going forward, just like I want to be the star, I want to, I want to be, I want to have my fans. I want to have my followers and make a mistake. I actually love being on stage.

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I love a spotlight, I love a crowd that I got on the palm of my hand and love that I got some true fans who think I'm fantastic.

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That is all very encouraging for me and you know, I wrestle with how power works in organizations. And I know that I inherited a bunch of that, you know, both straight white tall, dude, thing plus being a Rhodes scholar, plus this, plus that, plus the

other. I'm just, I just naturally gravitate to the center. Holding this, having the throne, being on the stage, and most of the work I'm trying to do in the end is about helping. Going to bring forth people's Humanity, but also to give people the invitation to take the responsibility and the accountability and the power that might be theirs. And so, part of what it means to empower others is to give up our yourself.

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So I'm trying to figure out and I haven't. It's ongoing. I don't know how to do this exactly, but I'm trying Is to find ways to be the best teacher I can to bring ideas into the world that spread but also to not put me at the heart of it, but to Well even try how to say it but be it be but be somebody who in doing that Allows others to step into authority rather than necessarily me.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You know. Yeah, and we talked about that in the last episode will link to it in the show notes But we don't have to say specifics another fun slash unusual thing As you said, I want to stop public speaking.

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This is maybe a year ago. We had dinner in Toronto or lunch or whatever And so you set your fee at a ridiculously high.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Ridiculous, yeah.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Thinking, well, now I'm un-gettable. Nobody's gonna care and that basically killed your public speaking career. It's like, okay. And how does that like, that's a very interesting way because we're all struggling with saying no and sometimes if you just put a really strange parameter around something. Yes I will do this. If you pay me axe or I will do this if a b c and d are true and people are like and it's not ridiculous like it's not. There are people who get paid that amount of money. It's not like a million dollars, right? But you're like yeah, that's like multiples of what I used to make speaking and now most clients will just look at that and go. Nah.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I can probably get somebody to keep on your like you probably can. You know, I am not particularly strong willed.

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I realize that for a meaningful life, one of the most powerful things you can do is get clear on what you're saying no to. So your yes's have real weight to them. Do a few things really well, and I have shiny object syndrome. I'm constantly going all. I've got some ideas. Maybe I should do this. My team is like don't get on a plane, because on a plane I have ideas, but I get off your phone and they're like oh no, he's been on an eight-hour flight without internet. What's gonna happen here? Yeah. So, rather than it coming down to my willpower to say no. I'm like how do I set up structural things that say, no for me. So, and I'm a long time coming to the scary. It's not like, I've kind of managed the summit. All going really smoothly? But, you know, I just had too many times where I've said,

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Present me has said yes to a speaking gig, thinking that future me was going to love it. And when future me shows up in six months' time, future me is going, who made this terrible decision?

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Why are we here? This is not the thing you were looking for.

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So we built in criteria around my speaking. So I have five. Can you pay my full fee? Are you a friend? Is this a cool organization that I respect and I am aligned with their values and their vision? Is it in an amazing location? Is it a crowd of more than a thousand people? I think those are my five. And they have to make two of those for it to be a maybe. And then the new criteria we have, well, I have two kind of backup criteria. One is, if this was tomorrow, would I say yes to it?

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That helps me manage the future me, present me, confusion. And then I go and talk to my cell on my wife about it because the number of times I've come home complaining and she's like, why did you say yes? And I'm like, I'm not totally sure, she's allowed to kind of say. Yeah, I think that sounds like a good gig for you as well. And all of that just helps me set stuff up to not avoid the stuff that I'm both pulled towards and nervous about at the same time though. The work that makes the difference.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You know, I've never quite had this thought that just listening to you talk about this. It's funny how you get to a certain stage in life where you just set up the boundaries that protect you from yourself. Oh yeah.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Like, I'm terrible. I have this ability to set up these ever, ever more complicated processes and then undermine, hacking my own systems. I'm like, it's a nightmare. Which often what that leaves is massively complicated systems that nobody else understands but I have a way around them anyway. So it's like, it's a double loss.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: So yeah and categories are really really helpful like I've got an email or two to answer this afternoon. It's like hey will you endorse this book and basically in a season where I'm not doing endorsements unless you're my brother, I don't have a brother, I just have sisters. So, you know, that's pretty safe to say that is going to be a no, and I like the guy and he's writing a good book and the whole deal but I just, yeah, just can't do it. I just can't do it. I've got other things on the go and I think rules like that are very helpful. Any other rules that you've either practiced or seen that help protect people from themselves?

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Um, I use text expander and I just have a pre-written no. It means that I don't have to worry about how to say no. It's just I just type in semi-colon N-O, and a short message that says thank you so much. I really appreciate the invitation I'm fully committed to my current projects, which means I just can't take on anything else I wish you the best of luck. Or something like that, and I'm like that's that saves me the emotional heartache of going. Okay, I have to say no, but what will I say to this person? I'm like, it's already written and then when there's a somebody who has come to me for a book endorsement because probably like you I get a certain amount of people asking me.

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And either send them to know if it's not enough thing. But if they like my step-brother, okay, you don't my brother but you're my step-brother, I will skip right. So, I've got some reciprocity, there's some sense of obligation on them and I'm like, well, maybe I will email that. I've got a standard message that says, happy to take a look. My standard is, if it's not a hell yes, it's a no. And often it's a no. And so most of the time, I don't do the endorsement and then, I'll quickly scan the book and if it's, if it pulls me in and I'll write them endorsement but often I'll go. Hey, I'm thrilled for you. Well done on your book. It's such a thing to get a book written. It's not quite a

fit for me. But here's a useful article, I wrote about book marketing, I wish you the best of luck.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Great idea.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: All of that pre written for me. So I don't have to think too hard about what to say. I've got that set up.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: And textexpander shortcuts I think on your iPhone can do that. We're basically you just have a code and then like, literally a paragraph or a page can appear. And I think that you're so right. I would say my actual criteria. I'm joking. I don't actually have a brother, but it would be like if I'm texting you on a semi-like weekly or regular basis. I will have a look. Yeah. Right. Right now, like I can think of a half-dozen people who would be an exception to that rule, but those people aren't writing books right now and if they were like okay I can I can do one on a Saturday. Yeah. And you don't even need an honest, I don't need to read much of the book.

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If it's that person, when you're endorsing, is the person. Not the book, your like, Carey, your heart is an authority and has a generous heart and a brilliant mind. This book is by Carey. You could buy read this book.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Totally, totally. Yeah, you can do that too, if you know the person well. Of course, cancel culture has caught up to book endorsements. So now if you endorse it, you endorse all the ideas in the book, which also means I now read a book from cover to cover before I endorse it.

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So, I'll tell you. Well, you know, church world has its blessings and its curses. Let me tell you that.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Not just the church world. There's a whole world where we're dancing with that.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: We are. Well, I do want to dive into work. You've got a brand new book called *How to Work with Almost Anyone*. I had the privilege of reading it when it was in draft. And, you know, before we get into the specifics, so much has changed in work in the last five years.

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So we have the rise of the gig economy, working from home, people not wanting to return to the office, the great resignation while it lasted. Apparently, it's over. Now what trends and work? Do you see as the most significant that we're going through right now is a culture?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Now, I feel like I'm hanging on with my toenails and fingernails to Howard shifting and changing, because so many things are like, slow, slow, fast. Like it's impossible to work at home. Oh no, it's possible. We're all working. Oh, what? We're all committed. Oh, we're not committed any more. It's the great resignation or wait, it's not the great resignation. And so we get a little bombarded, by the, the flow of happening at work.

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There's just generally a restlessness about the status quo in the old ways of doing things, a restlessness around how what I owe an organization, whether it be a public, a private, or a church or whatever, it might be how power and hierarchy works. And, you know, I'm a little torn about that because I grew up being that Restless person and not being that great with the hierarchy and all that sort of stuff. But now, you know, I have an organization and I'm at the top of the organization. So there is some hierarchy. So I'm wrestling with like, I want people who have a commitment to my organization.

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So, I don't have a good answer for this, Carey, you know, I feel like all sorts of things change, you know, there are kind of moments where we're like, oh, it's the great resignation, moment of it's that we're not talking about that anymore. It's diversity and inclusion, and we've got a huge focus on that all that's shifting as well. So, you know, there's a thing called the Gartner hype chart, I think it's called, which shows how things have a hype moment and then they sink, and then they kind of steady out and they find their place. And so it feels like as we hear the shifting trends in work, they're moving through the hype cycle.

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What I focus on, and what I keep thinking about is it's kind of like Jeff Bezos insight, which is rather than what's changing, what doesn't change? Jeff Bezos will say it doesn't, it's never going to come on where people go and want something to be more expensive. I want it to be delivered more slowly, so he's very focused on what he thinks are the evergreen experiences in retail. See, there are pros and cons of what Amazon has done. In the world. So partly, I'm like, so what hasn't changed about work? And I think you, I'm going to turn the tables on you. What do you think? You know, as somebody who talks to people all the time because of your podcast? What do you think has remained consistent in work?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: I love that framing.

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Well, you and Seth have both written really important books on work this year and I would say significance. Yeah. Healthy relationships. Healthy culture. Am I making a difference? Is any of this doing anything? Do you see me? Do I like you? Can we have a conversation? Is this work giving meaning to my life? Or is it sucking my soul? Are you? Tapping into the whole of me, what you get at or just the part that you know, I'm semi-robotic now. Or there's not a big difference between me and chat GPT, I think it's those Eternal issues and I think, you know, even as AI invades the workplace, I think it's got pros, I think it's got cons like everything and I'm using it. But just for a first draft or a prompt or ideas, not like to replace a job at this point.

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I think it's this, I think it's meaningful conversation. I think it's being seen. I think it's being appreciated, loved, understood. That, you know, Pat Lencioni built an entire career on what was almost laughed out of C -suites in the 1990s and early 2000s, which was soft skills. And now everybody's like, no, those are the things that define a workplace, right? So I think you're right. And I think you do a beautiful job getting out of, and let's be honest about that. Was it the Gardner hype cycle?

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Gartner. So Gardner and a kind of I-T consultancy. Gartner, the hype cycle.

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And you know, it's like everything from.

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Yeah, everything that's ever been invented kind of goes through that hype cycle most often. They talk about technology, but don't you can map all of the kind of work Trends on to that as well.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, and I think right everybody wants an edge. It's like I coined the term great resignation and you get your 15 minutes of fame and your blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, right? Or like it was a great night resignation is over. And so, I mean it is good. It was prudent to pay attention to it in 2022 and then we had quiet quitting for about three months. Remember that? So yeah, I love that your focus is more on the timeless, not the timely, and that's why you can go back to a book, you know, you're hinting at Ecclesiastes or Proverbs, were written, 3,000 years ago. I read a proverb every morning and, you know what? Speaks into my life. Humans don't change that much, right?

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: With work, I'm going to repeat some of the stuff you said but you know my own words. It's like how do you be human in work? I do think many organizations I know less about the church world but you can speak to that. I think it's a nature of an organizational structure is they often tend to dehumanize

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They're like, we're an organization. We're a structure, there's work to be done and you kind of lose that we're trying to get stuff done rather than we're trying to celebrate the people at the heart of the organization, that Martin philosophy of I/it relationships and I/thou relationships and I'm like organizations will tend to I/it relationships.

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So people are hungry for I/thou relationships. I heard the chief innovation officer of a great place to work speaking the other day, and he said of the companies that are at the very top of the great place to work, rankings, they are places of great listening.

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So people can be seen and be heard, just as you said.

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In the end, he said, it's all about the relationships. So it is about the sense of do I have relationships? Are there people who don't have to be my best friend, but do I feel like I have a degree of kind of connection and alignment with them? Am I making progress? Am I making progress on work that matters a little bit? And if you can do all of that, you're doing marvelously because that is simple to say and it's hard to pull off.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Thanks for raising Boober. I haven't thought about him in many, many years, maybe since Seminary.

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So let's talk about, let's jump right into how to work with almost anyone.

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Okay. So I think we all have the experience. It's like, well, I really have a best friend at work or I can get along with this person or we socialize off hours. But there's almost always, you only need a team of 4, 5, 6 people to have someone that you're like yeah, not so sure about that right? Yeah. And then you get into a large organization and inevitably there are co-workers that you just don't like, right? And you don't want to work with, or like I have an insufferable boss. So what is the big idea behind how to work with almost anyone?

[00:31:51.800]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: The big idea is every working relationship can be better.

[00:31:56.800]

And that matters because your happiness and your success depends on your working relationships. Most of the time, we cross our fingers and we hope for the best, like, hope there's fewer of those people who I don't like very much, I hope there's more of those people who I really get on with and we click and it's magical. There's a honeymoon period that lasts somewhere between 12 seconds and 12 weeks but we're like, how do I more actively shape the working relationships knowing that they're so important, to, let's just work to get done. But to my own sense of well-being, my own sense of being seen my own sense of Being Human with people around me.

[00:32:38.200]

The best possible relationship is an idea that isn't just about, so how do we turn every working relationship into a thing of Disney-esque magic and beauty with unicorns and sprites jumping around. I always go, look, your working relationships are probably mappable on a bell curve, past and present. You will have some at one end where you're like, this is great, we just clicked, it was fun, we elevated each other, we danced through the hard stuff, we had some grace, we had some style, we had some fun, those kind of magical working relationships. People can probably call a face or a name to mind right away. There are probably some people down the other end of the bell curve where you're like, wow, that was hard. That was a bit miserable.

[00:33:26.500]

Sometimes you're like, and that person was the incarnation of evil, but quite often, it's actually much more mundane than that is. Like, we just do a sand in the gears. We could just not find a way of kind of clicking and getting going.

[00:33:40.500]

It was just hard work.

[00:33:42.500]

Most of the other people often quite forgettable in some ways, are kind of right in the middle somewhere, like it was okay. And with the best possible relationship, you're like, okay, not only how do you make the really great ones even more magical and last even longer, or that's a really great outcome.

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It's not even about taking the ones in the middle and go ahead to give a bit more magic to those but it's that as well. You know, how do you bring out the best of each other? Even on those more standard relationships.

[00:34:10.000]

It's also, look at those really hard working relationships right now. What if you could make those workable or bearable, or good enough, what if you could make a difference there?

[00:34:20.800]

You know, there's a writer and relationships called John Gottman, wrote one of the really influential books on this called I think it's called the Seven Secrets of a

Successful Marriage and amongst other things, he says that issues in a relationship, 70% of those are perpetual, like they just going to be there.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: A ten year argument.

Exactly. You'll look forward to that argument for the rest of your life, okay? That's the way it's gonna roll. But the optimism for me, is that means 30% of the relationship, you can influence. What if you could make the bad and the good and the brilliant working relationships, 30%, better? What would that be like? What would that do for your success and to your happiness?

[00:35:07.700]

And then the rest of the book is like, okay, if you buy into that as an idea that all working relationships can be better and it matters, because that drives success and happiness, how do you do that? And that's what we get into in the book.

[00:35:20.600]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: So I want to get into some of the specifics, but let me name the elephant in the room because there are people listening right now who are like, yeah, but you got to meet my boss. You got to meet this one. Like the almost is in brackets, Michael. So like, if you have a totally toxic boss, like where is the line? Because I think we all intuitively know that, okay, there might be a couple of people who are impossible, but we can probably turn some of the C minuses or D pluses into a B if we work at it, do you draw the line? Where do you draw the line? If you draw the line about toxicity or that really difficult person?

[00:35:57.000]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I'm not sure, it's a big complex question because it depends so much on you and context them and tenure and just what their behaviors are. Like I mean, when I came up with the title, how to work with almost anyone I'm like, oh, that is a great title because everybody immediately goes, oh, let me tell you about my almost. I know exactly who that person is exactly. Um, I'm like okay name your almost person That leaves everybody else, and what I hope is that you don't just assume that every difficult or challenging or not straightforward working relationship is irredeemable.

[00:36:43.300]

Okay, Carey. Good guy, ish. But, you know, he and I, we don't really click that. I probably won't bother because it's too much. It's too much at risk, but I can also go look Carey, we don't call it here and I don't click when were working together but I

don't think it's toxic. I just think we got different styles of working and we don't we haven't figured it out yet and I might come into a conversation with Carey, maybe you Maybe a different Carey, and go, if I can make this a little bit better for us that's going to reduce the impact quite a lot. In terms of the misery or the kind of hit up this, that I get around that working relationship. So for sure, there are some relationships from like, you know, that person is a psychopath.

There's all that good research that says psychopaths are one percent in the population and 20 percent of CEOs, or maybe it's 13 percent of CEOs. There's a way that that type of person definitely shows up in organizations. Then maybe other people are like, this is never going to get better and it's not worth it. But the way I look at this, Carey, if you look at a relationship, a key relationship, one that influences your happiness and success, you've got two choices, to have a conversation and try and make it better, or to not have a conversation. Each choice has prizes and punishments, has risk and reward. It's worth just looking at both of those choices and actually sitting with what's at risk and what might get better and then make the call around that rather than just going, they're toxic, they're too hard, too difficult, I give up.

[00:38:27.300]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: I really appreciate that angle. My wife used to work as a divorce attorney and one of her you know one of her conclusions after working with hundreds of couples, was she realized that? Yeah there is that odd super toxic abusive person that you need to take a break from. But there were numerous times where the problems were not that big and she had a few clients sit in her office after it was all over and she was into mediation and, you know, staying at a court in the whole deal, very conciliatory, and they would say, you know what? If I knew it was going to be this hard, I would have tried harder. Yeah and I think that's a very similar vibe you're right. So maybe for the purposes of this conversation, take the most toxic person in your life out of it right now. The person who real really does have some kind of borderline personality disorder is a complete narcissist or whatever and let's focus on the almost everyone else. So with that in mind, how do you work with almost anyone?

[00:39:25.000]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Well, the idea of the heart of the book is singular, it is this: have a conversation about how you work together before you plunge into the conversations manifold of what you're working on, and that conversation about what to do, what are we working on? What's the problem? Is the loud thing. It's the thing that you want to talk about right from the start because it's there. It's urgent.

It's exciting. Ting. It's not, it's Troublesome. It's worrisome. It's calling you mean, even when you think, back on The Coaching Habit book, Carey, which no is a book of mine. That's been most successful by a long way. They're one of the first questions there as watch the real challenge here for you. That's a great question, but it's a question about the issue, the question about the work.

[00:40:16.900]

And I'm saying, if you take your eyes off the work and look the other person in the eye, metaphorically or literally, and say, before we get into all of that stuff, which is calling us and needs to be sorted out, what if you and I have a chat about how we best work together so that when we work together to solve it, we're bringing out our best and we're avoiding our worst to get going on the stuff that matters.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You call that the keystone conversation?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Yeah. It works as a metaphor twice. One for the keystone that people probably come to mind immediately, which is the big stone in the middle of the pillars of an arch. And I was like, that's a great metaphor, because there's two pillars and they lean towards each other, and then the keystone joins them and creates stability and strength. And the longer it's there, the more solid it becomes. It works really nicely as that kind of metaphor. But in the 80s, this idea of a keystone was taking toward ecology and biology.

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They started talking about keystone species in an ecosystem.

[00:41:20.000]

The best story being the introduction of wolves into Yellowstone, National Park in the U.S.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Quite controversial.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Controversial. But basically wolves had been shot and made extinct.

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Elk had overrun the park and were kind of slowly destroying the park because there were too many elk eating all the trees and any other vegetation and everything was kind of getting denuded and stripped bare. Reintroducing, the wolves got the elk

population under control, scared them out of some areas, which meant that the vegetation came back, which meant the river got healthier, which meant the Beavers came back, more fish, more birds and the whole ecosystem became more diverse more rich, more resilient better able to bear stress.

[00:42:06.500]

So whether you're you're up for the building metaphor of the ecology metaphor that Keystone idea is this is the thing that shapes and allows the ecosystem, which could be your relationship, to be stronger to last longer and to bear stress.

[00:42:22.800]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, you know, and it's funny how a predator can make things better. That's a that's a really interesting thought, something to just tuck away. I'm just going to put a pin in that. I don't know that we can do anything with that today creditors. Make things better. Hmm. Okay, so you're going to have the conversation. Can you walk us through what that would look like? So, it's how do we work together? Not what are we going to do. Because often, you're right. Okay, job one around Here is boom, boom, boom, boom. Here's our value statement. Here's our culture. All right, now let's get on to the task and you've got to ABCD. So before you do that, walk us through the broad overview of the conversation you want to have.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Yeah. So there's three main parts to the conversation. One is you do a bit of preparation. One is you invite somebody in and you have the conversation. And after you've had the conversation, there's kind of ongoing maintenance of the working relationship. That's the big picture. And then for the conversation itself, which is kind of what the book is mostly written around, I suggest five potential questions that you can walk through.

[00:43:24.500]

I think you can do it, you know, all five questions, one after the other.

[00:43:30.200]

But I do just want to flag for people that if they just sit down, like even if you never buy the book and you don't even listen to what the questions are, you just sit down and you go, hey.

[00:43:40.200]

Why don't we have a conversation about how we work together so that we bring out our best? So how do I bring out your best and you bring out my best? How do I not

bring? How do I avoid your worst? And how do you avoid my worst? If that's all you're taking from this conversation, that's brilliant. That's the essence of it. Now, I do have five more specific questions to ask and answer if that's helpful for you but don't get daunted by five questions. It's a conversation about how we work together is what makes all the difference.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Okay, well let's break that down. So the big metal question is, what's your best? And what's your worst? What, what gets revealed in that? What do you mean by that?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Yeah, so the first question is the amplify question and I friended as watch your best and when I was writing the book, I was like okay, how do I, how do I address the question? Yeah, I knew it was something about focusing on the light.

[00:44:37.000]

You know, in the world of change management, there are things like appreciative inquiry or positive deviance or appreciative intelligence. I know it's this idea of amplify what's working rather than read about what's not working, like that's powerful, but I didn't want to ask what are you good at? Too limiting. I didn't want to ask what your strengths are. Too abstract. I didn't want to ask what your values were. Also too abstract. I wanted to get a picture of when this person was in this weak spot. So the way to think about this first question, what's your best, is when do you shine and when do you flow? So, you know, this idea of the flow state from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the Hungarian psychologist, very long complicated name, I had to memorize the pronunciation. It is the idea that when you can get into that flow state and you have the perfect work and you're going to be lit up and your time speeds up and slows down.

[00:45:35.500]

You know, what's that? Tell me about that. What's the work that lights you up? And what's the type of working relationships with people? When you're at your best with that? Is it with people? Is it not with people? Is it working in a certain way with people?

[00:45:49.600]

What does that look like? And what's kind of essential to who you are?

[00:45:54.400]

I want you to paint that picture for me. Because if I get that understanding of what you are at your best, I'm like, first of all, I'm seeing it.

[00:46:05.900]

Even as you tell me the answers to this, you're lighting up around it. And I'm like, I want more of that. And hopefully when you tell your answers as well, they're like, they do the same. They're like, okay, how do we get more of this more often between the two of us? So it's a really strong start, which is, this is what it looks like when each of us individually are showing up at our best. Can you imagine how well we're going to work together if we can get more of that between us more of the time?

[00:46:33.700]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: And then do you go to what your worst? Like, what's a, what's a great day? What's a bad day? What's a great flow? What's the opposite of flow?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I wait a little bit later than that, for. Okay, to kind of, for me, I said, but here's the thing. Typically, when you ask this question, the invitation is to then be curious. So it when they when they tell you, you don't have to go. Okay, noted. Write something down and don't ask another question. You're like, tell me more about, I'm really interested in what happens if you can get really curious about that. And this curiosity, which is in service of the other person, helping them understand themselves. And that you do understand that other person such a gift. So here you are going look, I want I want I want to understand more about this so be nosy, be curious as people give you their answers because, unclear what you'll uncover, but you're going to uncover some interesting stuff.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: And you, you raised such a great question. Last time we talked, I think it was in a previous book, you know, what's on your mind and what else? That's such a great follow-up question. And what else? I've used that so many times since our first conversation. And it's funny because people tell you that I do that and then you and what else? And then it's like well actually the boom and then it so clarifying. So if you want a question to stick in your pocket, that's super easy to remember, just when someone gives you an initial answer just say, and what else?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: The way to remember that perhaps their first answer is never their only answer and it's rarely their best answer.

[00:48:18.600]

So if you know that, it just gives you an obligation to go, great, we've only just got started here. And what's miraculous about asking and what else, Carey, is most of

the time people don't even hear you ask it. All they hear is you holding the space for them to tell you more, longer.

[00:48:38.400]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: I've never had anybody go, excuse me, what? It's such an easy question and they always answer it because there's always something, I've never had someone say nothing.

[00:48:47.100]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Well, I have. I've had people go, I don't have anything else. You know what's wonderful about that? That's not a failure. That's a success.

[00:48:57.500]

You go, great, that's perfect. Let me ask you a different question then.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: OK, so you said there were five more.

[00:49:04.300]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Yeah, so the second question is the steady question. And this is like, what are your practices and preferences?

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Because we all have mechanics and logistics of how we show up and how we work and they all feel like common sense to us and they're not there. Our own quirky work habits that we've developed over time everything from how you file things, what you name, things what you like to be called. I mean, on a very practical level. Like my name is Michael Bungay Stanier. It is a complicated name, more complicated than I would have expected, but so be it. When I got married, I took my wife's name and so added Bungay to Stanier, but we didn't put a hyphen in there. So there's like this invisible hyphen. So people get my name wrong all the time. People are scared about how to say my name. Like I have literally Incorporated my company as the Banging Spaniel company because I once got a letter to Michael Banging Spaniel.

[00:50:05.200]

I was like, that's, that's too good to pass up. I don't like, I don't like to be called Mike. I like to be called Michael and, you know, one of the things that I've been learning in the last little while as people want to be clear about what their pronouns are. Well, hmm. Well, I wouldn't have guessed that 10 years ago, 10 years ago, the pronouns

were obvious, you didn't have to declare them. But, like, now, I want to know what people's pronouns are because it's not something that I worry about particularly but I want them to be seen and I want them to be heard and if they want to be called them rather than he then I will accommodate that. So it's everything from how you Slack, what meetings are, how you prefer your feedback.

[00:50:51.800]

I work with somebody at the moment and she and I have different preferences around how we give each other feedback. For me, I'm like, please just be as blunt as possible. Like I'm a bit obtuse, so it's really helpful if you kind of like hit me over the head with it. And I also have a really good self-esteem, so you don't have to worry about hurting my feelings because you can just lay it on me and I'm not going to take it too personally. Just feedback. Take what's useful, ignore the rest. For her, she's like, I'm really hungry for feedback and there are times I'm a little fragile because I've had some pretty rough experiences of that with other people in other organizations. So here's how I'd like you to lead into feedback.

[00:51:35.200]

So I can just get my feet from underneath me and I can just get myself ready to hear what needs to be said.

[00:51:42.100]

Still hungry for it, she just needs a slower lead into it where I'm like, accelerate please.

[00:51:48.400]

That's the sort of conversation.

[00:51:51.200]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: What is that question again?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: The question is, what are your practices and what are your preferences?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Practices and preferences got it, super helpful. Excellent. And I can see that. Yeah. Okay, third?

[00:52:02.500]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: The third and the fourth question, they kind of work together. They're the good day question, and the bad date question. So, the, the flip sides of the same coin and the key inside here, Carey, is your patterns repeat. So, what happened in the past is going to happen again in the future doesn't matter that the past was a different Church in a different congregation in a different group of people, and you were younger and more naive or any of that stuff. It's just going to keep showing up. So why not understand what your what those patterns are and be able to articulate them? So start with you know, when you've had a really successful relationship in the past what can we learn from that?

[00:52:44.500]

What did the other person do and say? And also not do and not say, and what did you do in say and not do and not say? Tell that story because that's going to make a really good working relationship. Come to life for the person you're in conversation with and do the same for those frustrating past relationships. Tell me about a relationship that drove you nuts. What was that like? What was done and not done said and not said, and tell that story, so that Person go. Oh, I'm getting it. This is the thing we shouldn't try and create here. I think it's really powerful Carey, for the frustrating past relationship.

[00:53:27.500]

The temptation is to complain about the other person because, you know, they're an easy target. They were messy, terrible men, Napoleonic, kind of whatever, status-hungry, power-hungry, selfish. You can kind of get into a bit of a complaining mode around that. I think it can be really powerful in a way that can be kind to you, you know, compassionate to who you are, to go, here's how I contributed to that bad relationship. Because you did contribute, it wasn't a hundred percent on them and zero percent on you. So find your way of saying, This is what I own in that dysfunction.

[00:54:10.000]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: It's like when someone complains about their ex, it's like, on and on, and he was or she was. It's like, did you play a role in that? I thought you might have.

[00:54:22.200]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Even if it's a hundred percent true. What they're saying about that other person? It's kind of like so what, between you and me, like that does nothing to do with me. It's you and me here. So I'm just interested in how you show

up and sure I'm interested in what I should avoid doing because you're telling me some of that. I'm really interested to go, oh you know you are unwilling to call me on my BS if I'm doing that. And that's really helpful to hear because there are times when I can go off and I can be full of myself, and I need to be called on it. And then, because this is all about sparking curiosity, you're like so this is a conversation we've got to negotiate.

[00:55:10.200]

Let me give you one more example of that and then we'll come to the fifth question. I had this conversation with a vendor the other day, so somebody who is helping me with some website stuff and you know, kind of in a slightly more low-key way we're in our first conversation and they're like, let's talk about the website and I'm like, great but for the website tell me when you had a client that you've loved. What was that like, what do they do? And when you've had some really bad clients, what did they do? And I'm going to tell you about the best vendors that I work with the ones that I love. And I give lots of business to, and I'm going to tell you about the ones who did one project. And I'm like, great, we're done, bye, and I will never call you again.

[00:55:53.100]

And one of the things that came up is that we really like vendors who are responsive to our stuff. You know, our clients who are responsive. So when they send them something, we'll get a reply within 48 hours. And I'm like, so I am sometimes called the VP of bottlenecking because if I'm not responsive, I'm very unresponsive. So we then had a conversation about how to manage me when I'm behaving badly. And that is really healthy, because we both now know what's going on. And they're now able to call me on it in a way that we've given each other permission on it.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: That's really good. Very astute. I wonder how often a vendor would have a conversation like that. One in a 1,000, one in 10,000. Like, it's probably pretty rare.

[00:56:38.300]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: By the look of shock on their eyes, when I asked them this question, and you're going to go, oh my goodness, what are our answers to that? Um, not that often. And that's part of the reason why it can be really helpful to give people a little bit of a heads up that you're going to get into a conversation around this..

[00:56:52.300]

Like, look, I'm looking forward to our kickoff conversation. I want to talk about the project in the brief. I want to start off by checking in with you about what a really good client-vendor relationship is going to look like. So I want you to think about what a great client is. I'm going to tell you what a great vendor is for me, and we can set things up by starting there.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You know, it's interesting because that also, on the part of the person initiating the conversation requires a fair degree of self-awareness. As you said, you know. Yeah, you're not as young and naive and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But like, I had an example this morning where I was working on what was supposed to be a three minute routine tasks and I clicked through to an article that was going out by email. I'm like, wait a minute, this isn't right.

[00:57:38.600]

It had been completely rewritten in someone else's name and they had taken my words. Now, we use a variety of firms, and could have happened a bunch of different ways but this is 7:00 a.m. nobody else is at work. So I'm not going to like start texting and calling people at 7 a.m. but you know it reminded me, I don't like surprises. I was totally surprised by that and I think when I'm 82 years old I'm still not going to like surprises, particularly if it's not a good surprise. So you know I fixed the article and got the byline right. And found some of my original language and it's like this on my blog. I wanted to sound like me, who rewrote this, haha blah blah blah. And then I'm like yeah, that hasn't changed, I'm much more modulated.

[00:58:25.000]

I have a lot more self-control than I used to, but that's still true. But you need that level of self-awareness to walk into a conversation with.

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MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: And so honestly, this book is a business book that disguises a bit of a self-help book. So each of the five questions has three exercises associated with it to help deepen your self -knowledge and refine your language and make your answers both more nuanced and more granular at the same time. I'm trying to give people the vocabulary to say, let me give you some subtle and useful answers to these questions, not just the kind of high-level jazz hands type of answers, which will be your initial answers to that.

[00:59:10.700]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Right, okay, question five.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Question 5, the repair question. How will we fix it when things go wrong, and the power of this Carey, is you're saying things are going to go wrong, not on the off-chance, things will go wrong. It's like, it always goes wrong. Something always goes off the rails, sometimes it's big and kind of explosive and kind of catastrophic, but mostly not. Mostly, it's a dent or crack, rip in the fabric, something happens, you know, a misspoken word, misunderstood expectation, a broken promise, you know, test is all sorts of ways that us messy complicated human beings, get the other messy complicated, human beings wrong, somehow.

[00:59:54.400]

So this opens up a conversation about what does it look like when it goes wrong and how do you fix it? How do I fix it? But what it really does is it says we have permission to talk about it when it goes wrong.

[01:00:07.000]

We have permission and a shared commitment to try and repair it when it goes wrong.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: That's super helpful.

[01:00:17.200]

Now, what else? Anything else about the five questions, the principles that we haven't covered that you'd like to cover?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Well Carey, I think you've brought up something really important. I want to say it again so people hear it.

[01:00:32.000]

The "and what else?" question from The Coaching Habit and The Advice Trap.

[01:00:38.000]

So helpful in this conversation.

[01:00:43.400]

At the same time, the real win in this keystone conversation is actually not so much the answers that you're hearing, although that's particularly helpful. It is the fact that you have started to make, and normalize, the fact that you're talking about the

working relationship and the health of the working relationship. So you now have permission to keep checking in with each other. Hey, how are we doing? How are you doing? How am I doing? What do we need to do more of or less of or double down on to make this the best possible working relationship? You get to keep checking in on the health.

[01:01:24.000]

You know, I saw a statistic the other day that said 70% of Gen Z workers leave their first job within a year.

[01:01:34.200]

I know it's like mind-blowing and I suspect a significant part of that is that well-known saying, people join organizations but they leave managers, and you don't want to have that manager but you definitely want to be that manager. So what this does is, first of all, it helps you not be that manager. Secondly, it says it is our joint responsibility to try and build the best possible relationship here, it's not just on me, it's not just on you, but how do we do this together?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: On that note, do you notice any generational differences when you roll out this concept and see people practice it? Because innately, I would assume a Boomer might respond differently to even this premise, then say, a Gen Z and to be fair to all generations, I think for a lot of people will be the first time they've ever had this conversation in their life. Kind of like when you ask the vendor what makes for a good client? What makes for bad client? What makes for a good vendor? They're like, what are you even talking about? Like, they talk about it in the break room. They talk about it, you know, amongst themselves, but they never had that conversation publicly.

[01:02:47.000]

So I think it's new and do you notice generational changes?

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I definitely noticed that people who are in the early phase of their career, are just less articulate about what they want, because they're still figuring it out. They're kind of more idealistic and more naive and more unrealistic.

[01:03:12.400]

And I'm like, yep, that's me as well. That was exactly what I was like when I was that age. And now that I'm kind of getting on, I feel slightly paternalistic about it, and slightly irritated by it, and slightly encouraged by it, in kind of equal doses.

[01:03:32.900]

So I do think that part of why you're doing this is to actually help people find the language and start thinking about this and you're moving them to emotion. This is a form of emotional intelligence, and an emotional intelligence can get learned and refined. And so you're building capacity in people to go, I'm learning. I hadn't even thought about that before, but I'm finding words that tell me about that. And it kind of ties back to the last question in The Coaching Habit series, which is, what was most useful or most valuable here for you?

[01:04:10.600]

Part of why that's so powerful to ask when you're in conversation with people. Is it stops and it says, learn from this conversation? What are you taking away? What are you noticing about this conversation? Become smarter. I think this is the job, as somebody who looks after people, in an organization, call it whatever you want manager or leader, or your role in a church. Church hierarchy. I'm a teacher. I'm trying to teach people who they are. So they build their confidence and their capacity and their sense of who the best of them are.

[01:04:50.200]

And when you ask, what's most useful, most valuable here for you in this conversation, you're helping them learn when you check in make it and go how we doing, what are you learning about you? And how you were on needs to be said that hasn't? Yet been said in terms of this working relationship, you're asking them to be smarter about who they are. You're helping them give language about who they are.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: It's been so helpful and thank you. You know, in both of these conversations you and I have had, I feel like I've grown as a leader. I've got to execute on this stuff but it's super helpful. Michael, is there anything else that you want to cover before we wrap up?

[01:05:35.000]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: I might just say that the keystone conversation isn't the end of it. It's in some ways the start of it It'd be it'd be kind of nice if it was a one-and-done thing Oh, we had a conversation four years ago about how to work together That's fine. But you know, if you're in a more intimate relationship, you know how well that works Yeah, we talked about how we were doing four years ago.

[01:05:55.100]

We're just coming on then, it doesn't work. So I have a kind of three -part theory around maintenance it is to adjust always, so you're checking in and going do we need to tap the tiller at all?

[01:06:09.500]

It's to repair often, keep checking and going have I missed anything? Is there something where we slightly ripped that we need to kind of fix and it's to reset as needed, because there are times where you like we need to stop this or we need to really kind of blow it up and start it again Because we need to reset to make this really work.

[01:06:30.300]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Wow. Okay, super helpful. Well thanks MBS. The book is called how to work with almost anyone followed and it's available. Widely. Is there special website or anything there is that I was you go to?

[01:06:43.500]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: Yeah, bestpossiblerelationship.com and there are never downloads there. There's also a video of me doing a keystone conversation, Ainsley on my team, Ainsley and I've been working together for four years but she's just been promoted into a new senior role. And so we're using that as a way of kind of reaffirming how we work with each other, but also resetting how we want to work with each other, as he moved to this more senior greater responsibility. So you can kind of see it in action.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Great and your pretty active on Instagram.

[01:07:16.100]

I follow you, so what's your handle on Instagram?

[01:07:19.100]

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: It's at [MBS_Works](https://www.instagram.com/MBS_Works).

[01:07:23.500]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: There you go.

[01:07:25.300]

Till next time, thanks so much MBS.

MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER: It's my pleasure. It's a great delight.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, I hope that helps you work with. Almost anybody. I certainly picked up some tips along the way. And you know what, I just realized I had to get more intentional about it. So if you want more details, obviously Michael's got a new book, but you can also see everything at the show notes.

[01:07:44.000]

You can go to careynieuwhof.com/episode594. We've got transcripts there. Got a few highlights along the way quotes you can share, and remember when you share this podcast, we get killer guests. Guests like Richard Foster. I picked up his books in the 90s and we have a powerful conversation. I'll give you an excerpt in just a minute. Arthur Brooks said yes to being on this podcast, Dave Ramsey is coming back, Mike Todd, John Crist, Professor John Lennox, Philip Yancey, man you loved him the first time around and Grant and Cheyenne Skeldon, man a whole lot more. But next episode Richard Foster and Brenda Quinn on the journey from being a type A leader to leading a contemplative life. The disciplines, man, I'll tell you we have a great conversation. Here's an excerpt.

[01:08:32.000]

Richard Foster: I knew Eugene Peterson pretty well and his congregation back east. But he kept his focus on Jesus and a sense he had or has a book, there's a book, *The Contemplative Pastor*.

[01:08:53.500]

And one of the old writers, George Fox would often talk about taking people off of himself and turning them to Jesus, their present teacher. And I thought, oh yes. See if I can learn in that direction. Now, I also pastored what the church growth analyst would call the large church, and it was a kind of place where things seemed to go right no matter what I did. I could enter the pulpit thinking I was in this lived in the slew of despond, and come out feeling like I lived on Mount Sinai. I mean just carried by the life of a congregation, wonderful people, and so it isn't it isn't size.

[01:09:47.400]

That hardly matters at all. See the great danger in churches is the ABCs, attendance, buildings, and cash, and if you focus, your attention there, you lost. No, no no. We focus our attention on a life with God.

[01:10:07.600]

Carey Nieuwhof: That one was a delight and if you subscribe, you will not miss it. Otherwise, it'll be like, oh yeah, that's right. I want to listen to that, right? That's what I do. I subscribe to the podcast I want to put into my regular rotation. It's a privilege to be in your regular rotation. Thank you so much for that. and before we go, I've got one free thing for you, and that's my email newsletter. I deliver it every Friday I work hard on this, so does my team. I want to feature the most fascinating and curious content about faith, culture, the future church, and other topics I find helpful as a church leader, I read pretty widely. I read articles, periodicals, social posts, watch videos pretty widely.

[01:10:47.300]

I'm trying to read deeply these days, trying to recover the lost art of reading in my life. So if you want to receive On The Rise, I link just it's a very short email and I link to all kinds of things that I found interesting that week. You can sign up for free by going to OnTheRiseNewsletter.com. You can join, well, almost 90,000 leaders who are getting that delivered to them every Friday for free, easy to subscribe, easy to unsubscribe if it's not for you, and easy to share with friends. So simply go to OnTheRiseNewsletter.com and you'll get my best picks for interesting, fascinating content that can develop and grow your leadership, or simply visit the link in this episode's description.

[01:11:31.100]

There, we made it easy for you. Thank you so much for listening, everyone. It's a privilege to do this with you.

I do not take it for granted and I hope this helped you identify and break a growth barrier you're facing and we'll catch you on the next episode.