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**Announcer:** The Art of leadership Network

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, it's Carey here. I think today's episode is going to help you thrive in life and leadership because I have Arthur Brooks in the house. I am so thrilled with this episode, it's about an hour of some of the most calorie-dense leadership gold you're ever going to hear on this podcast, and perhaps anywhere. Arthur over-delivered. I discovered him last year with his number one, New York Times best-selling book From Strength to Strength. I was going through a little bit of a rethink about the future of my life, and that book was so helpful. So we talked about that a lot more. And today's episode is brought to you by The Art of Building a Generous Congregation. It's my brand new course and you can go to [theartofgenerositycourse.com](http://theartofgenerositycourse.com), or click the link in the bio to learn more. And do you know that this is suicide prevention month? Gloom is on the front lines. They want to help people and you can go to [get.gloom.us/suicideprevention](http://get.gloom.us/suicideprevention) to learn more.

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Well, Arthur Brooks and I go all over the place in this episode. By the way, listen to the end, okay? If you're a church leader who's occasionally looking for speakers? That's enough said. Just listen to the end of this interview. Arthur Brooks explains the science of your ideal morning routine to maximize, dopamine and creative work. We talked about the secret of Oprah Winfrey's success and what it's like to actually work with or what is the real Oprah like? Why most people get stuck in their careers in their 40s, and how to move forward with passion and a whole lot more. Man, does he over-deliver on this one. Arthur Brooks is the William Henry Bloomberg professor of the practice of public leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School. A lot of words strung together. And professor of management practice at the Harvard Business School where he teaches courses on leadership and happiness. He is also a very popular columnist at the Atlantic where he writes the weekly, How to Build a Life column. He has authored 12 books including the afore said number one New York Times bestseller From Strength to Strength and his new book with Oprah is called Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier.

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And my goodness, do we get into the science. We revisit some ideas from At Your Best.

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If you're one of those people who have taken my course on productivity or have read my books on that, man, do we go deep on that and a whole lot more. So hey, I want you to know that last week I launched a brand new program called the Art of Building a Generous Congregation. And you know pastors, right? One of the great joys of pastoral leadership is you get to stand in front of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, and ask for money. Ok, that's a little bit sarcastic, but you know what? You likely have plans for a mission that aren't realized because you haven't got funding. Maybe you need a new staff hire. Maybe you want to really impact your community. You're just short of funds. Maybe you want to build a building and you don't have the funds. Or maybe you're just tired of being in budget shortfall week after week, month after month. So you want to see your congregation become more generous, but the process of talking about money, super, super awkward. So, The Art of Building a Generous Congregation will help you build a financially flourishing church and it will get you comfortable talking about money.

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I had to go through that same journey myself not an easy one and imagine casting a vision in front of your people that helps them build financial margin in their life, but also live on mission so that you can fund the ministry that you lead. So we talked about everything in the course from how to talk about money to every single email your church sends about money. How to do it, we pre-write them for you, and basically it's everything you need to know about building a generous congregation.

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Also, if you sign up now, running through a live work-through of the course. So you just need to join by September 29<sup>th</sup>, this is time-sensitive, just a few days left. So go to [theartofgenerositycourse.com](http://theartofgenerositycourse.com), or click the link in the description of this episode, wherever you're listening.

And earlier this month, I sat down with Devon Klein who leads the Explorer Connections program at Gloom. They are reaching over a quarter million. People connecting them with local churches and glue is supporting churches during suicide prevention month. Here's a snippet of our conversation.

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**Devon Klein:** Yes, Carey. This is a very important topic, as we know, every 40 seconds someone takes their life around the globe. And so this month Gloom is rallying together with a few partners to raise awareness and save lives. And we

really believe this is a collective moment where we can bring the best of what we have together to really make a difference.

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So, we're partnering with organizations like Stay Here, American Association for Christian Counselors, and Quarterbacks United, to make a difference during the month of September. We also know that 94% of adults believe suicide can be prevented. And research shows that one of the best ways that you can prevent suicide is to simply talk about it. And so, we're providing resources, to churches specifically, so that they can normalize this conversation within their congregation and also just help people be aware as to how they can also participate to save lives.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** So obviously, this is a very serious issue. And if you want to learn how you can help, go to [get.gloo.us/suicideprevention](http://get.gloo.us/suicideprevention). This is something really close to my heart. I've been in very deep seasons as a leader as well. And man, if that's you or somebody you know, visit [get.gloo.us/suicideprevention](http://get.gloo.us/suicideprevention). And now my conversation with Arthur Brooks.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Arthur, I've been looking forward to this conversation for a long time.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Thank you, Carey. Great to be with you, and great to be with your wonderful audience.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Yeah, well, thank you. You know, you are a Christian, Roman Catholic tradition. Your parents were evangelicals. I'd love to talk about, in your early days and even now at this point in your life and career, as things are really taking off for you, what your faith has meant to you.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Well, my faith is the most important thing in my life and it's, as you know, I grew up in a strongly Christian family. I had a kind of a mystical experience as a teenager and I became a Catholic, which was troublesome for my

parents, but they kind of, I think found their way to appreciating it because they thought that probably Catholicism was better than drugs.

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As far as adolescent rebellion goes, you know, fine but that's really, you know, been my home, and I married a Catholic girl, you know, straight and she's a good strong Christian. And you know, the wonderful thing is that now my life, you know, the rhythms of my life revolve around that I start every day, going to mass at 7:00 in the morning, and I finish every evening at 9:00 praying the rosary with my wife and we make sure that we read scripture every day. And so, it's a lot of the same or similar sort of Catholic versions of the rhythms of a lot of the people who are watching this podcast, but it's also pervaded by my secular life as a social scientist. One of the things that I committed myself to doing was having an order of operations in everything that I do. I mean, I study neuroscience and social social psychology and behavioral economics and I teach the science of happiness at Harvard University, which is not known as a great bastion of evangelical or Catholic faith.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Not anymore, no.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** No, not so much. But I do have an order of operations in the things that I do, which is that, and this is what I recommend to everybody, that they have a mission that they can separate out into the order of operations. So for me, everything needs to follow four steps.

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Everything that I do has to glorify God, to serve others. I need to be having an adventure, and making a living, but it has to be in that order.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So that's what you mean by your order.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, that's what I mean by an order of operations.

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And so if it's not glorifying God, I've failed at the outset. If I don't feel like I'm serving others with my work and lifting them up, it's failing. And then the other things are nice to have. I mean, to enjoy my work and to make a living, what an incredible

blessing it is. But those can't go before, you know, love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Well I think there's an aspect, a branch of Evangelical Christianity, that's rediscovering not quite mysticism. I mean certainly you know charismatic you can you can talk about that all day long but like even John Mark Comer who's a frequent guest on this podcast is exploring. Well every it sounds like a Protestant adaptation of Ignatian spirituality, Etc. Where there's a discipline and an order or it's Franciscan etc. He's got a new book that we'll talk about on this show later, what was the mystical experience you had to the extent that you're comfortable sharing it, Arthur?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Sure, no, of course I've even written about it. A little bit, not in any great detail. I was a teenager and I was on a trip to Mexico City. I was with a musical group from the Christian High School I was attending at the time. I was a sophomore in high school and we were touring the shrine of Guadalupe and Mexico City and, you know, for my Protestant sisters and brothers. That's, that's a really important site because that's the side that holds the tilma of Juan Diego. That's the poncho that Juan Diego's wearing when Catholics believe he was an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him and imprinted herself on this bamboo or not bamboo. It was a cactus kind of fabric and, and imprinted on this, and it's displayed in the trying to run a loop, a, which is this Basilica and in Mexico City.

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And, we know in point of fact, that after this occurred that the Spanish conversion to Christianity of the native population exploded.

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So before the Spanish were making a pretty bad marketing case for Catholicism, which is, you know, convert or there's going to be trouble. It turns out not to be the best way to convert people to Christianity, who knew, right?

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And after this happens, the idea was that Juan Diego, this peasant guy, he's up in the hills outside Mexico City, the Blessed Virgin Mary appears to him, the mother of Jesus appears to him, and she's a mestica, she's a woman of mixed race. Now this is hard for us to know how incredibly transgressive this is, that the Blessed Virgin

Mary is going to be a woman of all races, and appearing to people in their own race, and this is a big deal in the 17th century, and the result is that seven million indigenous Mexicans converted to Christianity in the following nine years.

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And there's this belief among many Catholics, the Virgin of Guadalupe that image. She's the patron of the Catholic Church of all the Americas, including United States and Canada. And, there's a belief among Catholics that that when you look at this, there's a conversion process that occurs. It's like what a bunch of ridiculous superstition. And I was sitting in the church and I was looking at that tilma. I was 15. I didn't even know any Catholics, and she was looking at me, man. And, and every place I went the eyes followed me. Of course, I didn't realize that there's a technique and painting you can paint Elvis on velvet and the eyes will follow you.

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Okay? Right. So, but that wasn't it. It wasn't that I think there's some magic in there. It was that I couldn't stop thinking about it. I couldn't stop thinking about the mother of Jesus, looking at me and saying join me, I love you, join me.

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And I thought about it and thought about it and thought about it and, you know, went back to my home in Seattle and I went to the local Catholic Church. I didn't know anybody, didn't know anything about it, and learned a little about it and read and read and read. And a little after my 16th birthday, I entered the Catholic Church, you know, Munch much to the great Chagrin of my Evangelical grandfather Minister, Dean at Wheaton College early in his career. But, you know, he's in heaven now and I think He's probably saying ok, yeah. Not bad. Okay, fine. Good.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Yeah. That would almost feel like apostasy I'm sure in some traditions, right?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, for sure. I mean like my grandfather was the CC Brooks. Was a kind of a was a big shot in those communities in those days. He was the director of the Methodist Mission School in the Navajo Nation where my father was born.

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And then they moved to Wheaton, where he had been, it's more of my grandfather had been a student. My aunt and all of my relatives studied there. My aunt dated Billy Graham in college.

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So I'm telling you, I'm evangelical royalty.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** But you told me, I mean, before we hit record, you said that your faith is, and I mean, you said that in your order of principles as well, right? Your faith is so important. You devote a specific amount of time and resources to trying to advance the gospel. So I'd like to hear more on that, but you're not known primarily within Christianity. There are people we have in this podcast who are primarily known within the Christian world. You're primarily known in the academic world, and now the author, speaker, thought leader, secular world, but a very, very strong Christian at this stage in your life.

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How do you order that? let's just start there. How do you approach that and talk maybe about what you some of the decisions you made.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah. You know, that one of the, I think one of the mistakes that a lot of Christians make in the secular world, most of us have secular jobs. I mean, most of us aren't professional Christians. And we're, you know, we do our thing, you know, your plumbers and electricians and truck drivers and, and college professors. And the truth is that there's a priestly aspect to all of these professions if we're willing to live our faith with naturalness. You know, Christianity comes to most people not through kicking down the door and shoving her crucifix in people's faces, or, you know, convert today or burn in hell. It's just not compelling, you know? That's not how most people converted. Most people are converted by Christians in their lives with whom they have friendship, and for whom they have admiration.

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Admiration and friendship are are the sword and shield of missionary work for Christians in ordinary life. We're supposed to do our secular jobs.

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You know, there's a movement in Catholicism called Opus Dei, which in Latin means work of God, of course.

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And that's based on the concept of the sanctification of ordinary work that your work is your mission, do it well.

Be admired for the excellence that you actually bring to it and then it's a Godly thing to do, and so when you're discovered as somebody who's trying to work for the betterment of other people, to lift people up and bring them together and bonds of happiness and love, they'll want to know what your own personal, you know, nuclear fuel source is, that's the truth and the friendship that you can bring that has virtue. And that is truthful, and is something that people actually want and that they're hungry for and there's too little of the world today.

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Well, that turns out to be my Evangelical friends, I will say winsome, right? Winsome, this kind of an Evangelical word, right?

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It's magnetic, is the whole point. And so my missionary work is doing a good job in my work and making sure that publicly it's in the service of others and each day as I wake up, that I dedicate it to the glory of my savior.

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What are some of the decisions you made about how you spend your time and resources?

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Well, part of it is that I'm a product of research. So I've dedicated the architecture of my life to following what I believe is revealed in the work that I study. So, you know, I study and I study, you know, philosophy, neuroscience, social psychology, and behavioral economics. I'm a social scientist by background, you know, as I'm a PhD social scientist, but I have to range across these other fields because I teach the science of happiness at the Harvard Business School.

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So, I have to cover a lot of different fields as a scholar, and as I'm looking at the research, I'm thinking, I'm going to give people a lot of advice because, you know, I



write a column in the Atlantic head of build a life and the end of every column is okay, do these three things and I'm a guinea pig on myself. The result has been that the architecture of my life is largely based on empirical regularities, which is just a kind of a nerdy way of saying seeing what works in the data. So, as a young man in my 20s I was a musician. I was a professional musician for more than a decade and I was kind of an undisciplined character, you know, eat what you want.

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You want to smoke a cigarette, smoke a cigarette, which I did. I shouldn't of. Thank God I quit a long time ago. You want to drink a beer, drink a beer, you know, that kind of thing.

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And the truth of the matter is that, that lack of discipline that lack of structure to my life, wasn't especially helpful to me.

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So today you know I have a very, very structured life that I know actually will bring me to my best self make it possible for me to you know live the witness that is my work. I mean I get up at 4:45 in the morning, I work out for an hour every day. I go to mass every morning, then I have my coffee and then I have a period of really high dopamine levels that makes it possible for me to focus on creative work for about a three-hour period, and then I can structure other things on top of it. So making sure that my body is in good shape. I'm eating right, I'm making sure I'm getting adequate time with my wife, making sure, because again, this is basic sustenance and then I finish my day praying, such that I can start again, the next day. And all of this, by the way, all of this is based on the science. But it's also based on the common sense and and, and the experiences that I've been lucky to have my life.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Can you break down that morning a little bit more? I know, you know, people are doing cold plunges and only eating this, et cetera, et cetera. But you mentioned the dopamine levels. Can you explain, because I agree, my last book was about what I called your green zone for a lot of us, our best time is in the morning. And, you know, you can have a morning routine that competes with that or cooperates with that. I'd love to drill down on yours a little bit more and the science behind why you make those choices.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Sure, sure. I mean, this is, and again, I've done this somewhat through trial and error, but mostly through what the data suggest is the best way to optimize my brain chemistry such that I can work most faithfully. I can work best and in the highest quality.

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Dopamine is a neurotransmitter, it's actually a neuromodulator and it's, you know, we often think about it as sort of a reward drug inside our brains but it's not that at all, it's a neurotransmitter of anticipation of reward and so it increases when you're in the hunt for something that you really like, it makes you desire, it makes you crave. It also makes you focus, it makes you creative when you're focused a lot.

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So what you really need, to be quite specific, is a lot of dopamine in the prefrontal cortex of your brain when you have an insufficient amount of that you might be diagnosed with ADHD, for example. That's the reason that most of the ADHD drugs, their dopamine enhancers for the prefrontal cortex. This. Also one of the reasons that Nicotoids, the active psychostimulant in cigarettes for example, that you nicotine that it's like a short-acting ritalin insofar as it stimulates dopamine to the prefrontal cortex of the brain. That's why kids who will feel normal for the first time when they're smoking as adolescence because they have a tendency to have an insufficient amount for the focus that they need to be in school or, you know, enjoy life. That one kid who smokes a cigarette and everybody else is saying gross. And the one kid says, awesome. I finally feel good. And that's because it's actually self-treating which is how a lot of addictions actually work. So to assuming that you don't want to smoke cigarettes, what you want to do is you want to optimize this this neuromodulator so you can do good focused creative work, this requires that you set up a sequence in the morning but also that you not waste your time.

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Morning is the key time for doing this. Now, a lot of people do it in different ways, cold plunges and all kinds of supplements, et cetera, different strokes for different folks. But for me, what's required is getting up before dawn and working out really hard without taxing my intellect. So what that means is I'm not gonna try to listen to a complicated lecture on neuroscience while I'm trying to bench press 225 pounds. That would defeat the purpose of what I'm trying to do, but I actually do a lot of weight training in the first hour of the day.

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Then I shower and I go to mass with my wife so I can have my soul on point and I can focus and concentrate in using the meditation that actually comes from worship.

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And then after that, we go home and then I drink my coffee. I don't drink coffee for the first couple hours after I'm awake. And the reason is because when you first wake up, your brain has a lot of adenosine floating around. Adenosine is a neuromodulator that inhibits the activity. It slows you down and makes you tired. You have a lot at night so that you can actually go to sleep. And you're always balancing excitatory and inhibitory neuromodulators so your brain's in balance. The reason that caffeine is effective, is it looks, molecularly, just like adenosine, and it fits into the receptors and so it blocks adenosine from going in and making you tired. So coffee, or caffeine, doesn't pep you up it stops you from getting relaxed.

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And you get jittery when there's not enough parking places for adenosine to modulate to moderate you a little bit. So that's what's going on. So but if you'd if you drink your coffee too early, there's still a lot of adenosine in there and it'll be floating around waiting for you to metabolize the caffeine, and as soon as you do it'll all go into the slots and you'll crash at 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon. So if you don't want to crash and early afternoon, don't drink your coffee for the first couple hours in the morning. So you clear the adenosine naturally and then all the parking spots are clear and you're good to go on your coffee. So that's what I do. I drink a, you know, a lot of coffee and all this together is putting me in the right zone and then I can get up to three solid hours of actually really, really creative writing but that means no devices, no interruptions, no phone calls. There's only a few people that can intrude on that, which is basically my wife, kids, daughters-in-law, grandson, et cetera.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Yeah. Interesting. And it's funny that you pick three hours when I was doing research for *At Your Best*, you know, there's Cal Newport stuff, there's a lot of stuff out there. You know, my range is three hours on a good day, assuming you're rested, assuming you've had a good morning routine. Maybe if you're under a deadline, five hours, but like when you're doing creative work, that kind of cognitive load that requires creation, editing, thinking, et cetera. From writing a research paper to preparing a lecture to writing a sermon or strategic planning. What is the science behind the narrowness of that window?

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Because when I was young, I thought I had eight hours of that. And then I woke up and went, no, you don't. You, on a good day, you have three.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, and neuroscientists have looked at this quite a bit and what they find is that it's just not optimal for you to be all day long,, you know, in a high state, you know, a lot of dopamine flowing in your prefrontal cortex. I mean it would be exhausting for you. It probably wouldn't be physiologically healthy, as a matter of fact, and people are not designed to do that because, you know, most people's routine is not designed for super highly concentrated creative work, so we didn't we weren't evolved to get, you know, 10 hours a day of concentrated effort, is the truth. Now, the reason that you can do 10 hours of super concentrated effort if you're taking modafinil or, or, or Ritalin or something, is because that is just going to open the spigots and either stop the uptake, the reuptake of the dopamine, or it's going to give you more dopamine to your prefrontal cortex for longer and so that's really what those ADHD drugs do. And this is the reason there's a black market for them when kids are studying for their finals at universities.

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Because kids who don't have ADHD, what they want is 10 hours of creative time. That's what's going on so that your three and Carey and Arthur's three hours becomes 13 hours for the 19-year-old kid who's using illicit dopamine reuptake inhibitors which is super bad for you when you're doing nothing.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** And then what happens, do you crash after?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Oh yeah, yeah and it's also it's addictive. It's really bad for you. I mean it's like these are psychostimulants, I mean, this is meth, man. I mean it's not exactly, but you know, there are trivial similarities between most of the of the dopamine-enhancing ADHD drugs and and methamphetamine. And so you don't want to mess around with this, you take it as directed and only as needed and you don't take it because you forgot to study and you got a paper due tomorrow. It's really bad for you to do, it's really destructive, but that's the reason is because we're not built to do that because in troglodyte times, humans didn't need to do that but also just by trial and error, creative people have always looked at that little window. So Ernest Hemingway, for example, he only wrote two hours a day, first thing in the morning. He wrote, and first thing in the morning for him, because he was a drunk, was probably 10 a.m.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Until the room got warm, right? Or something like that, until the room was no longer cold, or whatever his test was.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Of course he was in Havana, so it was probably always warm. But he would also, he would have his typewriter in a closet facing a wall on a shelf, and he was standing up, looking at the wall inside a closet, type for two hours to keep really, really focused. And he got that two-hour window every day. Now, one of the problems with using alcohol at night is that alcohol is a big dopamine enhancer, which is one of the reasons that people really, really like it.

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The problem is that you'll spike your dopamine, and your dopamine will crash after you've artificially enhanced your dopamine, which makes you feel really crummy. That's part of the hangover.

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So, if you drink at night, you're going to get less dopamine in the morning. One of the reasons, I don't use any alcohol at all, is because I can't afford to give away my morning dopamine because I want a little fun at night.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. What happens with, so you're getting out of your peak creative time, your heavy dopamine time by late morning or lunch right on a typical day. What do you do with the afternoons 8?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** So 8 to 11 is when I can really crank. 11 to 12 is when I'm wrapping things up and doing things that are less creative. And I put all of my, and again this is subject to my schedule because I'm on the road 48 weeks a year. I mean, I do 175 speeches a year outside of Harvard, so I'm in the road a lot, but even when I'm on the road, my staff works really hard to make sure that in the hotel I get eight to eleven.

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So I'm still able to do that. I get to the gym, I go to mass, there's a mass every plac. The great thing about being Catholic. It's a franchise system. It's like it's like 7-Eleven or McDonald's or Starbucks. Has won every place and it's the same.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Someone's got that 7 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. mass or whatever.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, someone's got it. Yeah, hard. And you know, I'm usually in cities to and then I get down to make sure that I'm doing it almost always, even when I'm on the road. But then in the afternoon is when I put in, I mean, since Corona, everybody's just zooming all the time, and so I'm, you know, doing zoom meetings, and Etc. And back in the day before I was doing the kind of career that I have now which is largely public education, I would be cleaning data sets or something that required a little bit of attention, but it didn't require actual creativity. You have to use your brain time optimally to the end and tailor your schedule to the type of work that you have to do that fits what your abilities are, which fluctuate over the course of the day.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** And the theory is declining ability as the afternoon goes on in terms of creative cognitive work. But I'm probably best known for my podcast. I do a lot of writing. I do the prep in the morning. I do the interviews in the afternoon. Any problem with that?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** No, no, quite the contrary. I mean, it makes perfect sense that you're most creative doing your prep in the morning because as a professional, you can have the conversations that actually execute the podcast. You don't actually need all the dopamine in your prefrontal cortex to execute the podcast itself, but you do need to have the ideas. And so you're using that during your prime time.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** And when you're working with guests of your caliber, most people aren't available in the morning, but they are surprisingly available in the afternoon.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** And now we know why.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Now we know why. I feel like we could spend the whole hour on this, but I wanna touch on some other things. That was incredibly helpful. Thank you.

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Got a new book coming out. You're working with Oprah Winfrey, give us the backstory. How did that happen?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, I know. It's really a blessing to work with Oprah Winfrey. I mean, she's an iconic character, right? And obviously, I've known who she is and been influenced by her since I was young, man. She is a reader of my column in the Atlantic How to Build a Life. And she read it quite assiduously all the way through the Coronavirus epidemic, use lockdown like everybody else and she said, she would look forward to it every Thursday morning. And she's like, who is this guy, it was a guy locked down in Boston while she was locked down in Montecito, California. And then, one of my books From Strength to Strength came out in 2022 about how to design your life so the second half is productive and creative and happy we're going, she read that in a medium. She read it. She said she read it in the first two days that it was on the market and she called.

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And she's like, this is Oprah Winfrey. And I'm like, yeah, and I'm Batman, but it was Oprah Winfrey. And she wanted to talk about my book on her podcast, which is the book podcast called Super Soul, she's outstanding, she's a super strong reader, fast reader and reads very comprehensively, she's obviously incredibly bright but she's just so good at that. She was quoting passages from my book by memory to me while she was interviewing me about From Strength to Strength, it was extraordinary, but was also like a house on fire. We got along so well because we see the world the same way. I mean, the the bottom line of all of my research is that happiness is love.

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Give more, love of the divine, love of your family, love of your friends, love toward everybody with the way that you earn your daily bread. And she's like, we gotta do more. And I said, I agree. So we did a couple of little projects together and she had the idea of writing a book that would democratize a lot of the happiness science for millions of people. So we started writing it. I went away, got a house on the beach over a bunch of the winter when I didn't have to be in Boston, and just looked at the Pacific Ocean and wrote and sent chapters to her and we went back and forth. And that's the book, Build the Life You Want, The Art and Science of Getting Happy.

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It's got a thousand academic references that won't bother anybody because it's written in as accessible a style as we can.

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And we also read it for the audiobook together. And it's our opportunity. It's our privilege to bring the happiness science to millions and millions of people. And we see the world in just so much the same way and it's a fun friendship and partnership.

[00:30:57.800]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Hmm. Well, congratulations on that. And I want to know, there's a great podcast I listened to years ago. I imagine it's still floating around there on the internet called The Making of Oprah, fascinating, from her days when she was at a regional station. Trying to make it big, long before she was the Oprah everybody would know.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** She lived in Baltimore early on right?

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Yeah, great memory. What did you learn about Oprah and her skills in leadership, her ability to work with people? Like what did you learn about the making of Oprah as you interacted with her?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** So I don't know as much about the backstory as a lot of people do. And part of the reason is because I don't usually pay attention to much to, you know, the private lives of famous people, but in my career, I've met a lot of pretty famous people, you know, I was the president of a big think tank in Washington DC before I came to Harvard and was doing this work, and I would be a lot of politicians. And now, since I've done this work on happiness, I've met a lot of actors, and, and, and sports figures Etc. They're usually not what they look like in public. And part of the reason is because they're people, they're ordinary people, you know, the flesh and blood, etc. and so looking perfect in public, people can be quite disappointed when they're not perfect and private. Oprah is the same in private and in public, it's really extraordinary. I mean she seems nice in public. She's nice and private, she seems normal and public. She's normal and private.

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She's easy to be around in public. She's easy to be around in private. She's got good judgment in both places. And this is really amazing because she doesn't have a normal life. I mean, she doesn't go to the supermarket and she can't because she's probably one of the five most famous people in the United States, maybe the world.



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And yet she's maintained an equanimity. She's maintained a perspective on life.

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And she does this through the relationships that she cultivates to people who really are close to her. And what she learns from other people and what she tries to give. She's kind of cracked the code in a lot of ways, which is to be well, give a lot, love more. I mean, she's really cracked the code in her own life. And so the result of that is that it's really, I think it's that she's the best template for what true success should look like.

A lot of people become very successful with money and power and the admiration of strangers and fame etcetera, and they become really, really, really miserable. And Oprah is an example of somebody who's been able to live that life because she's used that platform consistently to lift other people up,

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** I can see the Synergy between you and her in that area, because this is something that, you know, you're devoting a portion of your time, a Porsche None of your income to giving loving serving helping what? As you've watched your own progression as a leader. Over the decades. What dials have you turned up that have resulted in more happiness when it comes to generosity and building a life of Happiness?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Um, it's not always been easy. I mean, the reason that I study happiness is because it doesn't come, so super naturally to me as in completely naturally, not supernaturally. Now, if it doesn't come company.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Are you naturally cynical, or naturally glass-half-empty?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** I'm not naturally cynical, I'm just naturally melancholy.

[00:34:24.200]

And, you know, I'm naturally blue. And there's a reason for that. I mean about half of your emotional baseline is genetic. And we know this from identical twin studies that are separated at birth and adopted into separate families that that half of your Baseline mood and Boolean to depressed is genetic, you know, your mother literally made you unhappy.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** No psychiatrist needed.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, exactly. And, you know, both of my parents were, I mean, there was a there was trouble. I mean, they were great parents who loved me and loved each other and love the Lord, but you know, I mean, I come from gloomy stock, man. And the result of that is that it was always kind of an uphill slog.

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And it was hard because, you know, I'm married to it. You know, in the book, in *Build the Life You Want*, one of the things that we talk about is the psychological personalities that people have. There's a great test that we have in the book that's been very psychometrically vetted called the Positive Affect Negative Affect Series, PANAS. And you can take it in the book and you can find out what is your mood profile, your one of four. Everybody is one of four. Either you're high positive and high negative, a high affect person, that's called a mad scientist. You have intense positive and negative emotions.

[00:35:41.000]

Or you're high positive and low - that's the cheerleader, right? Everybody wants to be that it's not. It's actually not the greatest for lots of reasons. We talked about in the book, but everybody wants to be that you can be high- and low-positive. That's the poet.

[00:35:55.100]

Or you can be low-low? That's a sober unflappable, low affect person. That's the judge. Each one of these is a gift from God, but you have to understand it and you got to manage it in the right way.

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You also need to marry somebody who complements you and who understands you and can help you moderate, you know, the parts of you that need to be changed. If you're a judge, you might need to in muster some enthusiasm. If you're a mad scientist you might need to tone it down. And and so this is really important because, you know, learning that about myself over the years has made it possible for me to understand exactly what was going on with my own genetics.

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I think that my problem is I'm a super mad scientist.

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Which means that I'm a super high affect person and my problem isn't that, I'm not happy enough. The problem is that I've got too much unhappiness, you know, that's the problem, and that's what makes it feel like a kind of a melancholy but it isn't and understanding this made it possible for me to, to to, to moderate to manage my negative effect. And that has been a game-changer is just the science has been a game changer for me. So for example, one of the best ways that if you're a high negative affect person that you can lower your negative affect is by lifting weights by getting into the gym, by beating up your body in a healthy way, very important because that lowers negative affect, it doesn't raise positive affect. It will say, it makes me happy to work out. No, no, makes you less unhappy.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Thank you for that, I agree.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** So if you're not a high negative affect person, you won't get very much psychological benefit from the gym. And I can tell when somebody says, I can't stay on a workout program, I say, now I know that you're a low negative affect person because you're not getting the benefit that actually comes from it. So we need other techniques to keep you in the gym is the bottom line. But that's, learning about that has been really, really important so that I can, I realize this, not that I'm a melancholic per se, I'm not a depressive per se, it's just that I'm too negative. And so I need to, I'm not insufficiently positive, I'm super positive, but I'm also super negative. So I need to work on that. And that's one of the things that Oprah and I talk about in this book is, understand yourself using the science, change your habits appropriate to your personality and your profile, manage yourself, get happier, and then you can focus on the parts of your life that really matter to build the life you want.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Well, I can't wait to get a hold of the book and do the test. I imagine I'm a mad scientist as well. High affect. I have very strong emotions, positive, or negative.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** What's your wife?

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** I think, oh, you know, that would be interesting. Rule number one of being married for 30 years, do not guess what your wife would be. I think she would be maybe the poet. Yeah. Or or the lower affect, you know, where it's a little more muted on each side.

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She has more difficulty accessing emotions but Toni, you can you can please, I'll edit this out if I'm wrong.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Well, you know what's interesting because if you both take the PANAS, you'll understand each other better and my wife and I did. My wife is a cheerleader. So she, you know, almost mad scientist but she's a cheerleader. And so before we knew this, before we able to put words to this, it was my natural negative affect, high negative affect levels, you know, they're hard on her. They're really hard on her.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Oh mine are very hard on her. Like, why is everything so extreme?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, totally, and she's a judge, and you're a mad scientist, you're perfect for each other if you understand each other. So, you know, that's the reason the creative collaboration with Oprah is incredibly fruitful, she's a judge. Absolutely unflappable. Absolutely unflappable so I find her incredibly steady and I find her judgment to be impeccable and she finds me quite entertaining, so, you know.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Oh, that's great. Hey, she is known, and I respect her so much, as one of the best interviewers out there. Did you pick up anything in your interaction with her about what makes her such a killer interviewer?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah, I asked her that and I've noticed that because she's interviewed me and I've seen her interviewing other people a lot, of course. I say, what's the secret? And the answer is, she loves her audience and she's asking questions for them. That's what she's doing. She's channeling the people that she loves. She's offering up interviews for the people who are watching. She's saying, this is what the people watching want to know and I'm in the privileged position to be the one asking the questions.

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And by the way, this is the sanctification of work, is to be a vessel for greater good, to be a vessel for God's work and to uplift other people. And she's personifying that. That turns out to be the secret. It's incredibly humble, it's humility, actually.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** That is so good to know because I've wondered about it and her questions are good and there are competing schools on interviewing. Larry King is like, I never read the book. Well, I devoured *From Strength to Strength*, right? Because Larry's theory was, and he's been very public about this, you know, it's like most people have never heard of my guests and if they've heard of him or her, haven't read the book, and he goes, so why don't I just go there? And I feel that way like, you know, I'm working out of the basement of my house and I used to sit in the back row and take notes, and what I try to do is bring backstage conversations to my audience, but I'm going to study Oprah's interviewing in a more detailed way, because I think it's an area you could really grow in.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** No, she's literally the best at that, man. We've all watched her so much. And she's great. She's actually great.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** And she does love her audience. You can see that they were wild about her. She was wild about them. And yes, I have to get to *Strength to Strength* and I know we got a few minutes left, do you mind if we switch gears?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** I love it.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So I was at a period last year where I was re-evaluating, I was 57, re-evaluating the future of my life, you know? Had stepped out of the lead Pastor role of a church a few years earlier and doing this full-time these days, doing a lot of speaking. Not quite as much as you but, you know, around the world across America, speaking to leaders and really kind of fell into malaise. And I'm like, I think I have a clear vision for the future, and numerous friends recommended *Strength to Strength* that had just come out in 2022. I devoured it.

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And there were a couple of just real moments, fluid versus crystallized intelligence. I wanna talk about real friends and deal friends, and interesting problems. Those were some highlights that really helped me in a period of three or four months to get a super clear, white-hot vision again for the future. And your book was just so instrumental.

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So I want you to know that.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** I'm so happy. I wrote it for you.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** I think you did, I think you did, Arthur.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** I wrote it for me too, quite frankly. This is me-search, once again. But the truth is I wrote the book because I was looking for a book that could give me a roadmap to understand what was going on, this liminal phase in my life where I felt like one thing was ending and another thing was beginning but I didn't know what it was. And so I was looking for materials on it and I didn't find the book. So I said, well - my wife said, I guess you need to write it. Yeah and that was really why I wrote the book.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** How old were you when that angst hit you or those questions hit you

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** About 50 is when I was thinking about that, and really that's actually kind of, you know, there's an ancient traditions that say that, you know, the Hindus talk about the ashramas which are the quarters of the perfect life and that the to go from the hard-working householder to the person that stepping back into a state of enlightenment that's called vanaprastha, that's supposed to happen today. 50. It's also thought of as for in Hindu tradition as the second adolescence, okay. And there are and there is you know, if you read the Upanishads or you know, the ancient Hindu scriptures, you'll see that they talk about how to do that but there's like the social scientists have not done the work.

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So I thought, okay, so I went back and looked at the intelligence literature about with a cognitive strengths natural are different points.

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Like two case studies about people who have navigated it successfully or unsuccessfully looked at the difference between people who got happier and happier as they got older versus those who got unhappier and unhappier with a lot of surprises and then it looked at the practices of the people that were doing really well in the second half of their lives and that book became well, you know, space of course, every Christian and Jew watching this podcast knows that from strength to

strength comes from the 84th Psalm, you know that the ancient Judaic blessing, may you go from strength to strength, is the whole idea and that's what we all want to do, but it's not as simple as just like. Yeah, go be strong.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Right. Because there is this sense. I mean you make, and if you can summarize the research for those who haven't read the book or aren't familiar with it, but it really was clarifying, like the whole Nobel Peace Prize, fluid intelligence, that happens very young in life, right? You're young, you're planting a church, you're starting out, it's your first job, it's your first calling, it's your first career. I mean, I was in law briefly before this, and I'm like, I'm going to be in the Supreme Court by the time I'm 30. That didn't work out, I ended up being yanked into ministry. But you know, you have that ambition. And then I noticed in my 40s, I'm like, whoa, the ground is shifting here. So what happens in those first 20 years of adult life, 20 to 40?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** So this is the work of Raymond Cattell, who is a great British social psychologist writing in the 60s and 70s. And Cattell noticed that there were two kinds of intelligences that people got at different points of life. Everybody gets both.

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But the first kind of Genius that he would see would be sort of your Mark, Zuckerberg genius is in your 20s and your 30s where you just keep getting better and better and better at innovation, focus, energy, working memory.

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You're just really good at your kind of a ninja or a cowboy.

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You're able to solve problems on your own and people who are truly excellent at anything using the mind or creativity. They have this fluid intelligence in abundance, it's just raw brains but you get better and better and better. The problem is that it peaks, and we've subsequently learned from the Neuroscience literature that it, there's structural reasons in the brain for this, but it peaks in the late 30s, or at most the early 40s, and then it starts to decline.

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And so people find that they start to burn out in their mid-40s, classically. You know.

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It's like I used to love this job and I don't, I guess I'm tired of it. No, no, you're not making progress and it bums you out. All happiness at work, or in life, comes from progress. God makes us for progress, not for stasis, you know, we're not supposed to get to a goal and stay there and enjoy it for the rest of our lives, you know, you can't enjoy anything for very long, but you can sure enjoy getting better and better and better and better with your runtime, your mile time keeps going down. Your bench, press keeps going up. Your productivity keeps going up. Your salary keeps going up we're metric-driven.

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The scale keeps going down, whatever your thing is that you're working on, but as soon as you stop, there's no reward. You know, if you go on a diet you can gladly forgo the foods that you crave if the scale is going down, it's such a reward, but your reward when you hit your goal, is you never get to enjoy the food you like ever again for the rest of your life.

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Congratulations, you know, we're progress-oriented people. And so that's why people burn out once they've crossed the top of their fluid intelligence curve. They just noticed that they're not getting better at what they were doing before. They might be plenty good at it, they just like it less. And that's a huge problem. This is, you know, midlife crisis time. People quit, you know, they want to quit their jobs. They don't know, I hate being a lawyer. I thought you liked being a lawyer. I used to like being a lawyer. I don't know why I don't like it anymore. I can't, I'm not in the zone, I'm not in my groove. Yada, yada, yada, yada. Well, what's going on there? That's the bad news.

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It sounds horrible. Like, you know what? Life is best at 39 is downhill from there. In that aspect, yes. But here's the good news. There's a second intelligence curve that comes in behind it that's increasing through our 40s and 50s and 60s. It stays high in our 70s and 80s and 90s. We get this for the rest of our life. That's called crystallized intelligence.

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It does not rely on working memory. It does not rely on indefatigable focus, or innovation, you're not going to come up with a single new biotech idea. However, is based on pattern recognition, wisdom teaching ability, and using the things that you already know, it's like having an incredible library and knowing how to use it. That's the reason, by the way, professional historians, they tend to do their best work after 65. The reason is because of the pure, crystallized intelligence. If you're a history Professor, take care of your health because your best books are coming in. Your 80s, is the bottom line. But if you're a poet which is a pure fluid intelligence thing, we are inventing new stuff with words, you do half your work before you're 40 and the best half in the first half. So if you look at Ezra Pound or T.S. Eliot all their best poetry was in their 20s and 30s and they lived into their 80s and that's because they were fluid intelligence, guys, and must have been really frustrating for them.

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A lot of case studies of famous people were that is, in fact, the case. So the point is, that you should be focusing on fluid tasks early and crystallized tasks later.

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For example, if you're lawyer, you should be a star litigator and 30, and you should be the managing partner at 60, that's where you're identifying talent, training up new people figuring out the patterns and what's actually going on with the firm. And the cases you're using your, your instructor, or Professor intelligence at 60. If you're a startup entrepreneur at 30, big new biotech or software idea, you should be VC at 64, you know, venture capitalists where you're figuring out the next great. You're great at identifying talent, but you don't have to be the talent.

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And this is true for all of us. When I was 35, I was writing academic journal articles that were so mathematically sophisticated, I can't read them today. I literally don't know what they say. But today, I have a weekly readership of a column that's public education in the Atlantic about the science of happiness of 500,000 people.

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And I couldn't have written it when I was in my 30s. It would have been like bloop, bleep, bleep, bloop, bloop, nobody understands what I'm talking about.

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So, and the reason is because I looked at the data, I'm a child of the data, and I said, trying to keep doing these articles is not gonna work. But now I can explain things.

I'm a much better professor than I was in the past. I mean, right now, people watching us and listening to us right now are not neuroscientists or social scientists, but we're talking about some very sophisticated research right now in language that anybody can understand because we're crystallized intelligence guys, not fluid intelligence guys.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So this was, I'm going to play it a real case scenario, AKA my life, and I remember my 30s fast growth. Curve, you know, fastest growing Church. In our denomination became was largest the whole deal. Then I burned out, thank you for the predictive research on that at around 41, but I remember being 42. And, for the first time in my life, on the other side of burnout, I started to recognize patterns I couldn't make heads or tails of in my 20s or 30s. I people would leave the church. I'm like, I don't know what happened, but I was moving too fast to stop.

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And then at 42, I'm like, oh wait a minute, I know what's going to happen next, and then boom, boom, boom.

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And sure enough, that's what happened, and I'm not a prophet, but I'm like pattern recognition.

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It just started to make sense and it came together. And now what do I do?

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Basically, people ask me if we really get into a detailed conversation, I do pattern recognition for church leaders, right? That's basically what I do these days, and that's my writing desk.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** That's what coaches do. If you're a football coach, you're doing pattern recognition effectively. It's like if you do this, this is what's going to happen. How do you know? Trust me, that's pattern recognition.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So that is the metamorphosis from fluid to crystallized intelligence in a nutshell?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** that is exactly right. This interesting is you see this in sports, a lot? Where you're a player, let's say you're the, you're the quarterback of the football

team, you know, just Innovative thinking really quickly and then you leave and you become a coach and then later you're a color commentator on television, right?

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The tight-end just moved this way. This is what's gonna happen in this play. Have you ever seen Tony Romo actually do color commentary up for NFL football?

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Not a football guy, but most of the people listening to this are.

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He's so good, is he?

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** He sees them line up and he says, what's gonna happen on this play. And it's always right. Because he has crystallized intelligence because he's an old guy. That's what he's got. And he doesn't have the fluid intelligence to actually get down on the floor. He also probably doesn't have the knees to get down on the field. But that's what he's really, really good at. And he's like a walking, crystallized intelligence machine doing football commentary. It's amazing.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So talk to the leaders who are 45, 50, 60 years old, still trying to live for the glory days. You mentioned Einstein, who really, and I read Isaacson's biography. I mean, he didn't have a lot of breakthroughs past 40.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Nobody does, and if you look at the, you know, rock and roll musicians, they don't have interesting hits.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** The stones are still playing but haven't had a hit since 1981.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** They're like 100 but they're singing stuff that they were doing when they were 25. You know, I Can't Get No Satisfaction was number one on the charts when I was one, and I am 59 years old. So yeah, that was a long time ago

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** The year I was born. I'm one year younger than you and it's like come on but they're still out there and they're still selling it out but nobody wants their stuff from 2014. U2's getting to that place, too.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Innovation comes for most people, and again, you know, your results may vary, right? But the point is that, and once you figure this out, by the way, you can do all kinds of creative work, but it's synthetic, not innovation, and synthetic means you're synthesizing a lot of other people's work and telling him what it means. So, now, when I write books, I'm reading volumes of research that and the researchers are incredibly Innovative, but they don't know what their work means. They don't know. And they don't have it in the context, the story about actually how this affects people's lives. They're just coming up with amazing discoveries and hanging them on the Christmas tree in various places, like, no, no, here's what it means. You know, this relates to this release to this and Aristotle asks this question. And this reminds me of what the neuroscience says about the insular cortex of the brain. When leaders say, the following sets of things and the social science, the social psychology literature has run experiments that show that it's actually right. And here's how you can use it in three ways that's crystallized intelligence and that's really creative but it's it's synthesis, not innovation.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So give some advice and we'll pick, because if your VP basketball operations are already doing the whole organization, et cetera, et cetera, for an NBA franchise, but for the average pastor, or priest in your tradition, who's 53, which is close to the average age of pastors these days, where do they play to their strengths? Where do they hit their head against the wall?

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Their strengths are coaching and teaching, coaching and teaching. So it's, you always move into a role where you're identifying talent and developing talent as you get older. That's what you want to be doing.

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**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** So you're less the operator, more the sage.

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**ARTHUR BROOKS:** You're more the instructor. Always it's your instructor curve. Now that also means that you're instructing people at a broad level, but not trying to have the big original breakthrough, helping to interpret what is out there and what it actually means. So that means that, by the way, that one of the greatest things you can do as a theologian late in life is write commentary.

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All right is actually writing commentary, because you're pulling from a million different sources and you're saying how it all hangs together and you need to know a lot, you have to have a big library in your head.

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Plus, you're trying to explain it to other people. So you're a teacher. So that's an ideal kind of thing to do, for example. So if you're going to be doing pastoral work, you want to make sure that it's especially good to be doing pastoral work for younger people in the profession.

[00:56:10.900]

As you get older cultivate the newer people in the profession if you can go into teaching a class or two and then be doing the kind of synthetic work that looks big picture as opposed to having that you know the new huge breakthrough that nobody's ever seen before.

[00:56:26.800]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Well it'll be wonderful to get around to one day if we ever get that opportunity. But in the last few minutes, I got to skip down to the thing I've quoted, probably most about the book, which is just a small section in your son, came up with it. But I've shared this probably a hundred times in the last year. Real friends, deal friends, real friends, deal, friends, can we talk about that?

[00:56:48.300]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah. Yeah. You know, we have a great Surgeon General Vivek Murthy who was also the Surgeon General under President Obama. And after he left the administration because when Trump came into the White House, he had four years to do some thinking before he came back to the administration and he wrote a book on loneliness because he thought it was the biggest Public Health crisis. I had him on my podcast and I said, what's the biggest Public Health crisis? He didn't say, coronaviruses, he didn't say gun violence, he didn't say opioids, he said loneliness, and he knows what he's talking about loneliness. It lies behind the opioid epidemic and so many other problems that we have. And the evidence is really clear that people have fewer and fewer close friends who know them well. Why? It's not because we don't have contact with people. Although, since the coronavirus catastrophe, I mean, look, this is the dark one at work pulling us apart from each other, making sure that people stop going to church for years at a time. It's just, it's complete insanity that we fell for that one from the devil. That's quite something. You gotta give the dark one his dues. He's good at his job.

[00:57:58.200]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** He's sharp, he's sharp.

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** He knows what he's doing. Anyway, so that's off-subject, sorry. So the point being that Vivek Murthy and so many others have found that the number of close friends who know us well is falling and has been since about 1990. And that's contemporaneous with many of the decreases in general happiness levels in the population. This does not mean that we don't see other people. It means that we're not connecting deeply with others.

[00:58:24.000]

That's the difference between what I call Deal Friends and Real Friends. Deal friends are the useful people around you at school or at work to people that, you know, help you out, and you might even like them. The real friends are the people who are not useful to you. They are beautifully, cosmically useless. What you have is love and you know, if you don't do the work, you're going to lose your useless friends, is the bottom line, you're going to lose because, you know, it takes time out of your schedule to cultivate friendships. You know, this that we're not, this is not the America anymore where you, you know chill out with a guy across the fence out back and open a can of beer and you know talk about the Red Sox. This is just not happening in the same way that it used to in the past because of the structure of American society, and especially for all the hard workers that are watching this podcast. You've got to go out of your way to make it happen. And, you know, I saw it in my own life and I saw in the data and by the way, this goes back to Aristotle Aristotle talked about virtuous friendships that are atelic, which means they don't have a specific tilos, they're useless and their way.

[00:59:26.300]

But beautiful because they're usually based on a common love.

[00:59:29.000]

This is one of the reasons, by the way that, you know, I have a very, very close friend in Atlanta. It's a guy don't work with. It's a guy I don't live near, his name is Frank Hannah and I just love him. And we have this we have the, you know, this common love, where you know we're followers of the master and you know, we love the same thing. We're interested in sports kind of. And he said, just in my work and I'm interested in his work and we go out of our way, I sit on his board and he sits on my board and, you know, but these are pretexts and I talk to him every week because he's my real friend and he never ceases to ask me questions about my faith and I

about his. We've gone to Rome together to meet the Pope. You know, these are the field trips that real friends have. It's not necessarily religion. It might be building birdhouses or...

[01:00:14.900]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** But the deal is when the work goes away and you're not speaking 175 days a year and you're not writing books anymore, you and Frank are still going to be friends.

[01:00:24.700]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Oh, yeah. Frank and I are going to be like old dudes on rocking chairs a couple of times a year talking about the good old days.

[01:00:32.400]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Arthur, I can't believe our time is gone, but I want to thank you so much. This 600 episodes in, this is an extremely calorie-dense episode. One to rewind and listen back to over and over and over again. I learned so much.

[01:00:46.000]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Thank you.

[01:00:46.600]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Okay. Direct us where you want us to go.

[01:00:49.600]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Well, it's the new book is called Build the Life You Want, The Art and Science of Getting Happier with me and Oprah Winfrey. And you can find that and all my columns and all the books. And even if you want to take a happiness class, you can go and find it at [arthurbrooks.com](http://arthurbrooks.com). All one word, [arthurbrooks.com](http://arthurbrooks.com). There's a lot of resources there for Christian people and secular people and everybody else. But you'll see pretty quickly, my fellow sisters and brothers. In the Christian faith. You'll see that there's a faith that pulses through everything I do, at least, I hope you'll see that. One thing I'd ask Carey to you and your fans is that you'll pray for me and as I do my work.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** I will. I do have a prayer journal and you know, I will add you to my prayer journal. I pray for leaders, one particular day of the week and I will add you Do you want to mention what you told me before we hit record about your availability?

[01:01:42.600]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Yeah. Oh yeah. This is an interesting thing. You know, for the longest time I would, I did research on tithing. And you know, the biblical tithe is giveaway a tenth of your money. My dad always, you know, my dad was always in a city was to either one time I asked him, I said, Dad pre or post-tax?

[01:02:03.000]

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** That's a great question.

[01:02:04.100]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** And he said, I always give before taxes, and I said, I'm like Dad after tax. Come on. What's wrong with you? Why, why are you giving pre-tax?

[01:02:11.600]

And he said, just in case. He was a practical guy, he was a mathematics professor. Anyway, as I was thinking and doing research on that, it became very clear to me that the better, more robust understanding of tithing. It's not just 10% of your money. That's just table stakes, man. It's 10% of what you got that creates value, you know, and that's that's maybe your love or maybe your attention. It's maybe your relationship to other people. Are you giving away 10% of what really is valuable in your life? Are you giving away 10% of your love? You know, maybe to people who don't deserve it as far as thinking to myself, what can I do that really creates value? And, that's actually my ideas. My bread and butter is my ideas. Synthetic crystallized, but ideas nonetheless. I thought, what am I doing to tithe that?

[01:03:00.700]

And so to that end, I actually hired somebody who works with me in my office, the company that I have, to spread the ideas of happiness, who's in the business of making sure that I'm tithing and then some. It's usually about a third of my time is dedicated to sharing these ideas, not for money, but for people who can use these ideas, largely in the Christian community. So to that end, anybody who's watching us, I'm on the road all the time, if you want me in your pulpit Wednesday evening talking about the science of happiness to fellow believers and I'm in the area, I would very, very much welcome an invitation. And if it works out, all the better.

[01:03:41.700]



**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** Wow. All right. Well, brace yourself, assistant. This is an audience that may take you up on that offer. And Arthur, that's extremely generous. I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed this. Thank you so much.

[01:03:53.100]

**ARTHUR BROOKS:** Me too. Thank you, Carey. Thank you for what you're doing. God bless you.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF:** God bless you.

[01:03:57.500]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, I told you to listen to the end, wasn't that generous of Arthur? What a great conversation, I hope to have him back in the future. My goodness, what an incredibly generous sharp human being he is. And if you want more, you can go to the show notes, you can go to [careynieuwhof.com/episode599](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode599). You can also find transcripts there. I got a DM the other day, someone going, Hey, what are your guests recommended XYZ? Just go to the transcripts, you'll find it. And this is brought to you by The Art of Building a Generous Congregation, and by Gloo. So, if you are tired of broke thinking in your church, or you simply want to fund your vision go to [theartofgenerositycourse.com](http://theartofgenerositycourse.com). If you act, now you'll get into a live walkthrough of the course with me. And by Gloo every 40 seconds, someone takes their life around the globe. Gloo is doing something about it, you can participate in the solution by going to [get.gloo.us/suicideprevention](http://get.gloo.us/suicideprevention).

Well, from one great conversation to the next. Next episode, I have Jim Davis and this was delightful. He's got a brand new book which I highly recommend called The Great Dechurching, and we talked about why people have stopped going to church. We talk about the fastest and largest church attendance shift in US history, hint, it's down, not up, and a lot more, here's an excerpt.

**Jim Davis:** On a percentage scale, the previous largest shift that we have had was the 25 years post-Civil War. And, you know, people are either returning to church or going for the very first time immigrating, whatever.

[01:05:39.500]

Our last 25 years, the shift is 1.25 times greater, just going the opposite direction. In terms of numbers, our shift is larger than the first Great Awakening, the second Great Awakening, and all the Billy Graham Crusades combined just going the opposite direction.

[01:05:58.500]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** That's coming up. Also a really cool personal conversation with Dave Ramsey, Judah and Chelsea Smith, Mike Todd, John Crist, Philip Yancey's coming back. We've also got Jenni Catrin, and a whole lot more coming up on the podcast. And did you know that there are 500 million podcasts worldwide? That's a lot of podcasts and you know, a lot of them, they sputter and they die. But you can easily miss the gold that is out there. So with all these options, here's what I want you to do.

[01:06:27.400]

I want you to discover The Art of Leadership Network. You hear that little stinger on my podcast? It's like, The Art of Leadership Network. Yeah, well, there are other podcasts there too. People like Jenny Catrin, Adam Weber, Chris Cook, Toni Nieuwhof, Rob Meder, and more. You can follow the Art of Leadership Network on Insta and then you'll know exactly where to find the leadership conversations you need. So it's a great follow, go to Instagram, check out the Art of Leadership Network. Once you follow it, we will see you there. Thank you so much for listening everybody, I truly appreciate you. If you've listened this far, thank you so much. If you haven't subscribed yet, please do, maybe share this episode with a friend, and we'll catch you next time on the podcast. I hope our time together today has helped you identify and break a growth barrier you're facing.