

DR18 Divine Renovation Conference 11 June 2018 Breakout Session with Carey Nieuwhof

This is a broad brush transcription. Thankfully (as at 26 Jul 2018) this video is still available on Livestream via North Broadcast Group; however the first 35 minutes are full of sound recording problems. When the sound does get settled, the wait is more than worthwhile.

For a brief introduction to Carey Nieuwhof read <https://careynieuwhof.com/about-me/>

You can also find him on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/cnieuwhof/> , on Twitter @cnieuwhof and on Instagram @careynieuwhof .

When I was young I had a dream to drive on an autobahn. A few years ago I was in Germany and I shared this dream with my host, who graciously let me drive. I got up to 120 km/hr, then 150 km/hr and even 190km/hr – at which point I turned to my host and found him in panic. I was driving down this autobahn in a 12 year old Ford Focus station wagon, on roads for which Audi's and BMW's were designed. Do you find yourself with autobahn dreams and Ford Focus station wagon capabilities?

For the purposes of this talk I'm going to give you a bit of my back story, which we definitely won't have time for at tonight's session. My story is a story of church growth in a non-denominational context. Beforehand I was a lawyer, and met my wife in law school. In the middle of law school I experienced a call to ministry. Being in ministry creates a perfect storm.

When I was a lawyer my identity was clear. I was a lawyer by day, and a Christian too, although trying to work out how to do both at the same time. I had friends from school, and friends from the neighbourhood. What I did, what I believed, and my community of friends were largely distinct from each other.

A perfect storm is where three weather systems converge to create a weather event only seen about once every 100 years, wrecking crazy devastation to land and buildings.

The call to ministry required the relocation of our home. Now what I believe was also what I did, -a professional Christian - and where I worked was also where my community of friends was. My three streams of identity converged. Because I thought that more hours equalled more faithfulness, my family suffered. When we visited friends from church my wife would ask, are we visiting them as friends or as pastors? I still can't answer that question. Our life was now lived in a fish bowl. Whenever I had a bad day this situation became acute, because you can't exactly say, 'I hate my parish', when all your potential listeners are parishioners.

On one hand the church was going really well, and growing rapidly. On the other hand everything else was deteriorating.

Around this time I met Reggie Joiner, one of the founding pastors from North Point Community Church in Atlanta Georgia, who our church had been consulting with. He said, come and meet my boss, a.k.a. Andy Stanley the senior pastor. This led to an invitation to speak at their 2006 conference on leadership. To speak in front of some 2500 people for me was like being invited to play in the Super Bowl. It was an incredible moment, the talk went really well.

But when I got home, I 'fell off the cliff' and depression hit. Things were great on the outside, but had fallen apart on the inside. I had burnt out. I tried to sleep more, to rest more, but nothing made me feel better. I had been cheating sleep for years, and my emotionally my tank was drained. However my relationship with God was fine.

Several weeks in to this experience and I had to admit that it was not going away anytime soon, and in fact instead of getting better it was getting worse. I had to talk to the elder board at the church because this was something I was not going to snap out of – something was broken. They suggested I take a sabbatical, but I knew if I did that I would never return, and I also knew that God's call on my life had not expired.

The healing process took months. It was tough going through the motions, but on the inside still falling apart. Very slowly, some energy and enthusiasm crept back. After 5 months I was at 60%, and after 12 months I was at 80%, but it really took 3-5 years to get back to a 'new normal'. It was pointless to aim for the old normal, because that got me to burn out. I became committed to finding a new normal that would work.

Then people started asking, 'Cary, how are you getting everything done?' You see, this new normal was a whole other gear. Encouraged by these questions I started writing down the principles I had found during this 5 year process of recovery. It resulted in a course called 'The High Impact Leader' <https://thehighimpactleader.com/open-now>

What is your number 1 time management challenge?

Many people find that it is an inability to focus and complete a task. Mobile phones with their beeps cause many interruptions. I keep my phone on 'Do Not Disturb' mode in my pocket. Research done on the brain says that it takes 5-20 minutes to re-focus after an interruption. Opportunities are a church-word for distraction.

The secret to high impact people is that they *'do what they are best at, when they are at their best'*. Rarely do these things line up naturally, you have to be intentional about it.

There are 5 steps to getting there.

Step 1. **Abandon balance.**

The people you admire most are not balanced people. eg Elon Musk, Steve Jobs. They have an obsession, they are passionate people. Maybe you found someone like that in a coach or a teacher who was willing to go the extra mile because they saw something in you. These kind of people change the world. Embrace passion. Choose to embrace what you are doing with passion. The book, ['The Myth of Balance'](#) by Frank Bealer is very good on this. To achieve balance people work on doing fewer things or less of everything – that's OK if you want life to be a retreat rather than an advance. I want to do and be my best. Have you noticed that a rested you is a kinder you?

Step 2. **Stop just managing time.**

It gives diminishing results because time is a fixed asset. Every leader gets the same amount of time every day, be they president, prime minister or you and me. There's a difference between being efficient and being effective. Stop saying, 'I don't have the time'. The reality is, you do have the time – that's uncomfortable isn't it? I have the time for it, I just need to make the time. Admit you didn't make the time to do x, y and z. Most of the time you have to say

No. Make time for the relationships that matter. Start admitting, 'I had the time, but I didn't do this, I mismanaged my time'.

Step 3. **Start managing your energy.**

Not all hours are created equal. How many of you are morning people? How many of you are night owls? There are zones throughout our day when our energy is high, when our energy is moderate, and when it is low. There will be 3-5 hours each day when you are at your best and everything is working and flowing. Someone who really knew told me that even software engineers in Silicon Valley only produce 3 really good hours every day. So watch your own personal rhythms and patterns. There's no right answer, only your answer.

Not all tasks are created equal either. Of any ten job description tasks there will be some you love and some you hate. For some it is 'Wow, I can't believe someone pays me to do this'; for others it is, 'I can't believe I have to do this'.

For me, after getting up around 4-5am, I am at my best between 6am and 10am, I have moderate energy in the afternoon, and my low energy times are 4-6pm and 7-9pm.

So work out what energises you the most. It will be something you are gifted at, something that other people value and something that God consistently uses for results.

For me, communication has been my key gift. So I set aside my best hours, at least 3 days a week, for communication (writing, blogging, message preparation etc).

Since our brains lose charge a bit like our mobile phones, move to doing what you do best when you are at your best. I tend to do my emails late in the afternoon, or exercise, or both, during my low energy times.

Step 4. **Stop Reacting.**

No one will ever ask you to complete your top priorities, they will only ask you to complete theirs. It's just true. Each ask is asking for their priorities to become top. To combat this you need to decide – ahead of time – who you will and won't meet with. Most of us spend 80% of our time on stuff that produces 20% of results. It would be better to spend 80% of our time on what will produce 80% of our results.

Monday is usually fire brigade day to fix all of the weekend's problems; the microphones that didn't work, the musician who turned up late and unrehearsed etc. What happens? 1) Your people time gets spent on low productivity and low reward situations. 2) The people who are yielding 80% of your results get none of your time.

So spend your time with the high yield people who are not the problem. By doing this you will get them from 'good to great' and from 'great to amazing'. Let the 20% go, it obviously isn't working out for them, encourage them to serve in a different ministry or with someone else. These people drain your day. After you have spoken to your top performers, how do you feel? You feel great and energised.

Step 5. **Decide how to spend your time before others decide for you.**

Schedule time to do what you are best at when you are at your best. Work on a fixed calendar. Is your August 2020 planned out? Mine is. Life is a series of repeated events.

Mondays and Wednesdays are writing days. Tuesday and half of Thursday are meeting days, between 9am and 3pm; this forces efficiency. Meetings are the enemy of work.

I had to cancel many breakfast meetings, because that was my best time, although once in a while I will schedule some on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Saturdays are for the wife and kids, it has family written on it. That way if someone asks you if you are free on Saturday (so you

can do something for them) you can say quite honestly that you have a prior commitment. Friday night is date night and Sunday night is rest and relax.

Leaders who achieve the highest level of impact do their best when they are at their best.

Question and Answer session

How do you lead when you are not in charge? Read the [book](#) with that title by Clay Scroggins on this topic. Most bosses like to hear the Why behind the What. Even if in your work week 20 hours are already proscribed, you still have control over the rest of them. Focus on what you can control, not on what you can't control.

Balance. If you are making great choices, take sleep really seriously.

Was your burn out like a dark night of the soul? It took lots of very deep prayer and counselling etc to get through it. I have only recently learned to give thanks to God or my burn out.

How do you schedule team meetings if not everyone is a morning person? It isn't a perfect world. We ended up getting biorhythm studies done on all our team members. Office work hours were based on a factory model where the production line stopped if everyone wasn't there. Give your staff as much freedom as you can. Try to schedule meetings in everyone's mid-energy zones. If that doesn't provide the solution, meet in the middle between your high energy zones and theirs.

Where are you doing it, your work? Where I can work without distractions? Know yourself; where do you thrive? For me it was setting up a home office. Multi-tasking equals no-tasking, especially for men.

What about that bottom 20%? They do need care, but whose care do they need? Does it have to be yours? If you don't lead the top tier, they will go somewhere else.

What about funerals? Some pastors have a gift for bringing people closer to God at funerals and weddings, I don't. So funerals are not a strategic use of my time. I only ever do them for important people in my life. But then again, most of my congregation is young. If your congregation has 200 people or less, you can probably manage funerals ok. If you have more than 200 people, you either have to outsource it or staff around it. Think about who else could do it. Does it have to be you?

You can't respond to all pastoral requests. You need a system. Small groups that keep looking after each other are one way to get ordinary pastoral care to people. When you look at the big names in mega-church land it is never a one man show, it is a team of people with a leader. Where you get the true one man show is in the small churches with less than 200 people. You can find out more about how to set up a system at <https://www.breaking200course.com/enrollment-is-open> and learn about Breaking 200 Without Breaking You.

www.societyofsaints.net/blog 28 Jul 2018