

- [Announcer] This is the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast.

- Hey it's great to have you back for another episode of the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. And I just want to say thank you for listening and also so many of you have written in or told us on social media that this is making a difference and that really means so much to me. I hear that a lot of you are getting together with your leadership teams, I think that is so smart when we can read books together, listen to podcasts together, create a common language. And when we're growing together it really helps strengthen the whole organization. I also want to say thank you for spreading the word on social media, if you haven't already subscribed I would encourage you to subscribe to this. It can come to you every single month on Youtube or Itunes or Google Play or however you listen or watch and that way every single month on the first Thursday of the month there will be a little 20, 25 minute shot in the arm that will help you grow in your leadership. We believe and know that when a leader gets better everyone gets better. Email questions or ideas or thoughts any time that you'd like to at leadership@life.church and if you would like the notes that are very detailed sent to you before the podcast releases you can just go to leadership@life.church and click on the place to subscribe and then we'll send you the notes every single month. Let's dive in and what we are going to do in this episode is were going to talk about kind of part two of how do we grow in our ability to anticipate what's coming as leaders. The title I'm calling it is Three Questions for Anticipatory Leaders. Let's go ahead and review the big thoughts that we covered in the last episode then we'll dive in to new content today. A big thought is this, the difference between a good leader and a greater leader is one who learns to anticipate rather than react. We also recognize because everything is changing around us so rapidly that the way we're doing things will not work for ever and ever. If you're not changing you're being left behind. So how do we grow into the future, two big thoughts we covered. Number one is we're going to solve problems before they're big and number two is we're going to see potential that others overlook. We're going to solve problems before they're big. What we're going to do is recognize that the big problems that we have today were probably small problems yesterday that nobody addressed. So we're going to see problems early and we're going to solve them quickly. The reactionary leader says this, I'll solve the problem when I see it. The anticipatory leader says I'll solve the problem before it's a real problem. We're also going to see potential that others overlook. Do you have a hunch, do you have an idea, do you feel the market's moving in one way, do you see a need that people are going to have that they don't even sense yet that they have and you can meet that need. See what would happen if you take a bold step and anticipate by leading into the future. Now when we're predicting we're going to stay humble. The more confident we are that we know what is going to happen the more likely we are to actually miss it. We are students and we are teachable. The more humble that we are about our ability to predict the future the more successful that we'll be in anticipating it. What are we going to recognize? Things are changing. So we're going to anticipate where things are going, we are not afraid of the future. As leaders, what do we do? We create the future, we anticipate where the market is moving, what kind of needs people have, and we make decisions today that will thrust our mission forward in the future. So let's dive in to new content today and we're going to try to answer the question, now how do we do this, okay? If we're leaders and we want to anticipate where things are going, how do we grow in our ability to anticipate. Let's talk about the what, the why, and the where. Thought number one is this, we need to see what is happening. It seems obvious but I don't want to pass by this. We need to become very good at honestly assessing our current situation. We need to excel at situational awareness. What, what is the true current state of your organization? What is the true current state of your mission, of your non-profit, of your marketplace, what is the true current state? And we have to work very hard to be honest because let me just say it this way, nobody lies like leaders, okay. Those of you who are natural born leaders or entrepreneurs you tend to be optimists and because of that you like to see

what's good, you often have a difficult time telling the truth about things that are not working. And what we as leaders, we want to believe that we are succeeding, we don't want to believe when things are going wrong and so we have to work really hard at this. For example I have 27 leaders of local churches that report to some people who report to me. So we get together four times a year and we work on assessing and developing their leadership. Well I asked them to rate the momentum they had in their current locations on a scale of 1-10. Here's what was interesting, Is those who rated themselves eights, nines, and one guy even rated himself a ten, all those people were actually lowest on my scale of looking at real numbers. And this is a very common principle, those who are actually struggling the most often have the most confidence of just how good they are at what they do. In fact there was a whole study in 1999 that came out about this thing where people over-assessed their confidence, especially when they're on the lower thrung of skill or ability. We have to work very hard to accurately assess where we are in the whole organization. So how do we do this? As leaders I want to encourage you, analyze everything, analyze everything. Look at your product lines, look at individual stores, look at the culture and the health of your teams. Look at the state of mind of your leaders. Look at your leadership pipeline. If you lead a church look at the ratio of people who are in small groups. Look at the front door, those who are new coming in, look at the back door, how many people are leaving. Look at your process and systems of assimilation, how do you get people involved. Look at your culture of generosity. Look at the diversity of impact, are you reaching different age groups or different ethnic groups? Look at the quality of your leaders, look at the spiritual climate, look at everything. Look at the numbers, look at what you feel, look at what people say, look at what people don't say. You want to analyze everything, the feelings, the culture, the mood and the climate. Then you don't want to just look at what is happening inside your organization, but you also want to look at what's happening outside of your organization. Because what's happening outside will eventually impact what you do inside. I want to look outside of just the ministry world and I want to see as a leader what's happening in all sorts of other spheres because eventually it will either impact how I think or it will impact what I do as a leader. For example I'm studying some different things about how people relate or consume. I'm looking at social media, how people relate to each other. Because that ultimately impacts what I do in leadership. I'm looking at evolving values, how do people behave? I'm looking at attention span, how do people learn? I'm looking at consumer purchasing, how do people consume? I'm looking at schedules, what do people do with their time? I'm looking at education, how people learn. We want to see what's happening on the outside because that will impact what we're doing on the inside. And we want to accurately assess our current state. Where are things good, where are they not good, where are we hitting it, where are we not hitting it, and we really have to work hard to tell the truth. Leaders, please listen to me. Do not lie, look at the numbers, look at the data, face the truth, how are we doing, and that's where we start. What is the current state of your organization? So number one, we want to see what's happening. Number two, we want to understand why it's happening. See what is happening then we want to understand why it's happening. In other words, if something isn't working, why is it not working? This is so important. The flip side is true as well. If something is working we want to know why it is working. I like what my friend, pastor and teacher on leadership Andy Stanley says, he says if you don't know why something is working when it is, you won't know how to fix it when it's not. Powerful quote. Why is this not working, why is this working. So if you're stalled, why? Is it because you have a weak leader, a bad location, average customer service, why? If you have a product that's lagging why is it lagging? Is it because you lack marketing, is it because the competition is beating you, is it because your market lacks awareness of what you have? If your ministry is flat, why? Is it because you're insider focused, your people are not friendly, you're not teaching vision and passion, you're not building disciples, you've got an incompetent leader, ask yourself why. I like this Ralph Waldo Emerson quote, he said the person who understands how will always have a job. The person

who understands why will always be his or her boss. Why are things happening? Now, when you want to assess why things are working or not working what I want to do is I want to encourage you to ask 21 questions. Now you may say why in the world would I ask 21 questions? Let me unpack this with a story. I had a hurt shoulder and I was talking to one of the best trainers, a doctor that I know, and he started asking me questions about my shoulder. I thought this is probably a relatively simple injury and the diagnosis is probably pretty obvious to him, but he asked me question after question after question. After about 15 questions I thought certainly he's through then he kept asking questions and kept asking questions and kept asking questions and finally he said here's what's wrong with it and here's what you need to do. So I asked him when did you have the diagnosis? And he said, well honestly before I had asked the first question I had a hunch about what was wrong, but I've trained myself never to go with what I think is true. I'm going to exhaust every question that I can possibly ask and ask with a very open mind so I don't make any wrong assumptions. I listened to that, I wanted to write down every word that he said. And he said I trained myself to ask 21 questions. So I asked him why 21, and he looked at me real seriously and he said because 21 is more than 20. That's why. We're going to ask a lot of questions and 21 is obviously just a number pulled out of the air but we're going to ask questions, questions, questions, we're not going to assume that we know why something's working or why it's not, we're going to ask questions. What we're going to do as we are asking these questions is we're going to recognize we are gathering information, not to confirm our biases. We're gathering information and we're asking open-ended questions and we're just absorbing information. And what I want to encourage you to do is sleep on it, a night, two nights, three nights, more if you can. And the more information you gather from all of these different sources the more you'll start to connect the dots. And you'll start to recognize that sometimes the real problem is actually two or three layers before what is obvious. So often we miss what the real reason is because we're just staring at the obvious symptom and not getting down to the root of the issue. We're going to ask questions, ask questions, all sorts of questions. Then if we have time we're going to start connecting the dots and start to recognize maybe we can understand the root of why this happening or why that it's not. When we understand the why it's so much easier to recognize the where. We have to start with the why, when we understand the why we can turn what looks like a problem into potential, because we can diagnose accurately why there is a problem. Always remember this, problems reveal hidden possibilities. That sounds like something that someone would tweet and it sounds kind of cheesy, but it's not. It is absolutely true. Every time there is a problem, there is an opportunity. That is what innovation is, is turning problems into something and answering them and solving them again and again. What are innovations, very simply innovations are solutions to problems. Every time you see a potential problem ask yourself how can we solve it? This is what anticipatory leaders do. Anticipatory leaders are solving future problems before they become present realities. This is why we anticipate. So let's think about this. What's changing in our world today? One of the things that's changing is retail, how people shop. For example I used to walk into a store, I don't walk in to stores ever. Everything I order, I order online. So what is this doing? This is creating a problem for retailers. The big malls, they're going to be emptying and are emptying currently. Big box stores, this is a problem if you're in retail but was is this, it's an opportunity for someone else. In fact as someone who is starting churches around the nation, we just made two different offers on big box stores because the prices are going down, their availability is going up and I see opportunity like crazy. What's a problem for some can be an opportunity for someone else. Also what is a problem in my world? Schedules are so busy right now, those of you who are trying to utilize volunteers and maybe have ministries, the weekends are crazy, crazy, crazy busy. This is a problem. In my world, people almost don't have time to come to church. I know they should but the reality is when we look at it they're at soccer, they're at dance, they're at football, church isn't that big of a priority to them. So I can whine about it, complain about it, or I can do something about it. Problem leads to opportunity. At

four of our different locations we have test services on Monday night. Monday night, can you have church on Monday night? I've never heard of it before but at these four different locations it's actually going really, really, really well because this problem led to a new innovation. Don't complain about it, do something about it. Every time there is a problem look for what is a solution. As we anticipate where society is going how can we see a way to reach people or to meet needs that they're going to have in the future. Here's the way I like to say, here's just a little formula. Problem plus reaction equals solution, right? This is how most people do it, I've got a problem, so I react to it, then I have a solution. Here's another way to look at it. Anticipation plus problem equals innovation. Anticipation, I see something coming, ope, there's a problem, equals innovation. Let me say it again, I hope this will speak to somebody. This is the normal road. Problem plus reaction equals solution. Here's something better. Anticipation plus problem equals innovation. So what do we do? Number one, see what is happening. Number two, understand why it's happening. Number three, we want to interpret where it needs to go. Where does is need to go? And this what sets good leader apart from great ones, okay? We don't just understand what, not just why, but where things are going. Now, when you have a hunch and you think you know where things are going, remember you are not going to be right every single time. Nobody is, and that's okay. If you are waiting around until you're 100% sure to do something, you will always be too late. Let me say it again. If you are waiting until you are completely sure you will always be too late. When you have a theory, chase it. I would suggest just as a discipline that you start creating theories about where things are going in society. Just create theories. I have some theories, I'll share some of my theories with you. I may be dead wrong, you may laugh at me and argue with me and you may be right, probably you are. But I'm creating theories. I think the younger generation might start rejecting social media. It's just a theory. Facebook is already for old people, vine died it seemed overnight, I think the younger generation might get tired of it, they might reject it, or certainly change how they use it. I think car ownership may be a thing of the past, especially in big cities. I think that people will essentially get self-driving uber cars and it's going to be cheaper than owning them, I think car ownership may be a thing of the past. I think that higher education is becoming too expensive and the return on investment is not what it used to be. I think the way people prepare for the job market in the future is probably going to change. Clothing, I have a theory, that within the next few years most everything will be custom ordered. That a computer will look at your size, they'll make one piece of clothing that will come just for you. I think the grocery store knows what I'm ordering all of the time, my order is already delivered. I think they're eventually going to anticipate what I need, when I need it, and send it to me, these are my theories. I could be dead wrong on all of them, but here's what I'm doing. I'm training my mind to look at what is happening, why it's happening, and then anticipate where it's going. I like what this doctor said, a nobel prize winning doctor, he said innovation is seeing what everybody else sees and thinking what nobody else thought. I love that. Is seeing what everybody else sees, but is thinking what nobody else thought. Train your mind to go beyond what is. Not just what, not just why, but where you think things are going then do something about it. Are you going to make mistakes, yes. But you are a bold, courageous leader. When we make mistakes we're going to make aggressive mistakes, we are not going to make passive mistakes. Breakthroughs, they're always a result of action, they're never a result just of chance. Why do we as a church, I lead a local church, why do we have a Bible app that's on over a quarter of a billion devices? The reason is because we saw an opportunity, a 17 year-old part time kid designed an app, 81,000 downloads happened on the first weekend, the kid went full time on the Monday following that weekend and now we have a team of some of the world's greatest developers pouring their lives into it. What did we do? We saw an opportunity, we didn't get it right but we were first to market and now we're able to help a whole lot of people with a free Bible app, why? Because we saw where things were going, we had a hunch, and we seized it and now we have something that is very, very special. You won't always get it right but do not be afraid of

being wrong. You can actually fail your way to success. Don't be afraid of change, remember, hidden in change is always an opportunity for those who have eyes to see it. Let's review. What are we going to do? We are anticipatory leaders. We want to see what is happening. We're developing true situational awareness, what is the true current state of your organization? Don't just look at what's happening inside your organization, look at what's happening outside and learn from it. See what's happening. Then understand why it's happening. If something isn't working why is it not working, if something is working, why is it working? If you don't know why it's working when it is, you won't be able to fix when it's not. I love the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote, it's worth saying again, The person who understands how will always have a job, the person who understands why will always be his or her boss. Ask tons of questions, ask 21 questions. Listen, absorb the information, connect the dots. What are innovations, what are innovations? Innovations are simply solutions to problems. Every time you see a problem ask yourself how can we solve it and you may have a breakthrough idea. What do anticipatory leaders do? They are solving future problems before they become present realities. What do we have, normal mindset. Problem plus reaction equals solution. What do we do, anticipation plus problem equals innovation. Number one, see what's happening. Number two, understand why it's happening. Number three, interpret where it needs to go. When you have a theory chase it. You're training your mind to go beyond what is to what could be. What I wanna do now is I want to give you seven questions and these questions could literally help open your eyes to what is coming for your organization. Seven crazy important questions, I hope you'll go over these with your team. Question number one, what is the true current state of your organization? For some of you the truth isn't going to be pleasant, you have to tell the truth to get anywhere. Number two, why are you successful or why is your organization flat or why are you struggling, whatever it is get to the why. Number three, where are we as leaders overly confident about the future? We might ask what could go wrong. We want to lead with a little healthy paranoia every now and then. Where are we overly confident? Number four, what has changed on the outside that could impact what we do on the inside? What's changing in the market, what's changing out there, even unrelated to our field of business or ministry, this change that could impact what we're doing. Number five, so important. If we were starting today, what are we currently doing that we would not do? Wow, okay, that's worth your whole 25 minutes. This is so important. If we are starting today, what are we currently doing that we would not do? Once you name it, why are you going to keep doing it? And then finally, the last question is this. If we were starting today, what would you attempt? If you were starting over today what would you attempt, and then what's keeping you from attempting it? I want to tell you personally thank you so much for being a part of our leadership community. We are very, very passionate about building leaders. Thank you for writing, thank you for reviewing this, thank you for sharing on social media. Look forward to being with you again on the first Thursday of next month. What are you going to do? You're going to be yourself as a leader. You have gifts, you have talents, you have a personality that is there on purpose. Be yourself, why? Because people would rather follow a leader who is always real than one who is always right.

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