

- Hey, thanks for joining us here at the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. Before we dive in to today's episode, I wanted to let you know about a few opportunities we have to help take your leadership even further. As many of you know, Craig speaks at leadership events throughout the year and around the country, sponsored by Catalyst One Day. And we have three events coming up, one in Oklahoma City, Pennsylvania and Seattle. To find out more information about any of those events or to register to attend, all you have to do is go to [catalystleader.com](http://catalystleader.com). That's [catalystleader.com](http://catalystleader.com). With that being said, let's go to this episode of the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast.

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

- Hey, welcome to the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. I'm incredibly honored that you'd spend a little bit of time with me each month. We are crazy passionate about building leaders. We believe that when the leader gets better, everyone gets better. If you're new to the podcast, we released a new teaching on the first Thursday of every single month. If you've got ideas about something you want to hear about, or maybe you have questions, comments, or any kind of thoughts, you can email me any time at [leadership@life.church](mailto:leadership@life.church). Also, if you'd like to receive very detailed notes before the episode actually comes out, you can go to [live.church/leadershippodcast](http://live.church/leadershippodcast) and you can hit a place where it says subscribe and then we'll send you the notes every month and you can have them there for your own personal study, or if you wanna go through these with your team, you're welcome to do so. What I want to do today is I want to do part one of a two-part teaching on the idea of anticipatory leadership. Anticipatory leadership. What we're gonna do in this episode is talk about the big ideas and then next month, we're gonna talk about some real practical ways that we learn to anticipate and then look at some big questions that we're gonna ask ourselves to anticipate what's coming in our market, in our ministry, or in our sphere of leadership. So let's dive in with the big thought. The biggest thought would be this. The difference between a good leader and a great leader is one who learns to anticipate rather than react. The difference between a good leader and the best of the best would be one who learns to anticipate what's coming rather than reacting to what they see. I like this Wayne Gretzky quote, famous Canadian hockey player who said, "Most players skate to where the puck is. I skate to where it's going to be." Great quote about anticipation. Here's what I wanna do. I'm gonna start off this teaching by telling you something that may not sound very pleasant, but it is very true. That is this. The life span of your current systems, structure, and strategy is diminishing. I hope you'll hear this. The life span of the way you're doing what you're doing right now, it is going away. The way you're doing what you're doing will not work forever. And this is a promise. It's not pleasant, but it's true. If you continue with your current systems, structures, and strategy, one of three things will happen over time. Number one, if you continue just doing what you're doing, you will eventually outgrow your systems, structure, and strategy. Number two, you'll stall out and eventually lose ground to your competition or whatever you would call your competition. Number three, the market will change and leave you in the dust wondering what happened. If you keep doing what you're doing now, you will not get the same results forever. Another way to say it would be this. What you're doing now will not work forever. If you don't believe me, just ask Kodak, ask Blockbuster, Polaroid or Border Books. For some of you, I just wanna say this as lovingly as I can. You're actually falling behind. Because you've been doing what you've been doing for a long period of time, you're losing ground and you may not even know it. What we need to understand is that there's so much changing in the world today. In my notes, I made a list of just a few of the big things I'm thinking about. For me, it's important to understand that the way people relate is changing. The way they talk, through social media and texting versus face-to-face, it matters in what I do. The way people shop is changing. That may impact your business. The way customers discover your business or the way people discover your ministry is changing every

single day. The way people form a first impression about your business or your nonprofit is changing. The way people watch shows, listen to music, read or listen to books, the way they enjoy content is changing all the time. And so if you are not changing, you're falling behind. So how do we as leaders anticipate and how do we grow into the future? Let me give you two introductory thoughts. The first one is this. What do you wanna do? As a leader, you wanna solve problems before they're big. Number one, you wanna solve problems before they're big. And number two, you wanna see potential that others overlook. See potential that others overlook. Let's talk about the first thought, solve problems before they're big. Some of you right now, in your organization, you've got some big problems. Here's what we all need to acknowledge, and that is this. Most big problems were small problems that a leader didn't address in the past. Lemme say it again. Most of the big problems that you're facing right now at one time were small problems that someone did not address and that's why they're big today. What we wanna do as leaders is we wanna see problems early and solve them quickly. We wanna see problems early and solve them quickly. Now, in your organization or your industry, you could have any number of different types of problems. Maybe the market is changing and leaving you behind. Maybe there's new competition emerging that's cheaper or simply better. Maybe your demographics are evolving but you're not evolving. There's so many different types of potential problems and we certainly cannot address them all. But I do wanna focus on something that will impact every organization that's growing or moving forward. And to do this, we need to understand that as you grow, you'll always face some predictable roadblocks in your systems and your structure. Any time you're growing, you're gonna face some predictable roadblocks that are coming in your systems and your structure. In fact, I came across an article that was really interesting to me about a concept developed by Hiroshimi Mikatani. I hope I said his name right. He's a CEO of a Japanese retail company and he calls his idea the rule of three and 10. The rule of three and 10. And this has been really helpful to me. I hope it'll be helpful to you. What he says is that everything changes typically around the third and the tenth step. And your organization, the structure will change dramatically around the third and the tenth step. To make this really, really simple, if you're, maybe you're married and you had one child, you were able to handle one child because essentially you had two-on-one defense. There are two of you, there's one kid. You have two kids then what do you do? You go to man-to-man defense. You take that one, I'll take this one, right? When you have three kids, what happens? Everything changes. It seems like it gets exponentially crazier. Now you're in zone defense, the type of vehicle that you drive changes, how you travel tends to change. It just got really, really complicated. I have six kids. Honestly, between about four, five and six, it was pretty normal. According to this guy's theory, if I had gotten to 10 kids, things would've changed pretty dramatically at 10 kids. I thank God for my six but I also thank God we never got to 10 kids. This would also be true in employees. If you hire one employee, things are pretty simple. You hire a second, it's not too bad. You get to a third and suddenly the dynamics of how you relate starts to change. Then, you get to four, five, six, seven, things are pretty easygoing. When you get to around 10, things would change again. This guy, he would teach that this would also be true when you go to multiple stores. Let's say you've got a pizza franchise. At one or two it's easy. At three, things change. Four, five, six, seven. At 10, things would change again. And so let's look at it. At three, at 10, then around 30, then around 100, then around 300, then around 1000. If you've got 300 employees, you'll probably have to change how you structure. Once you get to 1000 you'll need to look for this as well. And quite honestly, as a leader, as I look back at the organization that I lead, I would say this is absolutely and completely true. We have 27 locations in eight different states. When we got to three, the wheels came off. We had to completely reorganize. When we got to around nine or 10 the same thing happened. I'm now approaching 30 locations. We should be at 31 by the end of next year according to our projections. So I am now anticipating some things might need to change about how we structure our organization. You might say, "What in the world are we gonna need to change?"

And that could be all sorts of different things. The way you communicate, the way you report, how you organize your board, how you onboard, how you train, how you interview, who reports to who, and the list could go on and on and on. The bottom line is this. You can anticipate, using this idea, that you might be approaching a time where you need to reorganize your systems or the structure of your organization. We don't wanna wait until the wheels start coming off. We wanna anticipate ahead of time. We might need to make some changes. So for some of you right now, you're running confidently because things are working. But you have no idea around the corner there may be a change, there may be an enemy, there may be some type of opposition, there may be a breakdown, there may be competition over the hill. We wanna anticipate what it is and be ready for it. So, lemme summarize this way. The reactionary leader says, "I will solve the next problem when I see it." The anticipatory leader says, "I'll solve the problem before it's a problem." Let me say it again. The reactionary leader says, "I'll solve the problem when I see it." But then there are those of you, you're taking your leadership up. You're anticipating what could the next problem be, and you're solving it early, you're seeing it early, and you're solving it quickly. So we're gonna solve problems before they're big. And then we're gonna see potential that others overlook. Think about this. What do Elon Musk at Tesla, Steve Jobs of Apple, and Amazon's Jeff Bezos have in common? They see possibilities before other people see them. Okay? Same with some other young guys who couldn't find a hotel room, saw a need, rented a mattress, added a third guy to the team and what do we have after a lot of hard work? We have Airbnb. No one was asking for an iPad, an iPod or an iPhone until Steve Jobs started meeting some needs that people didn't even know that they had. Same with Travis Kalanick. He couldn't find a cab back in Paris in 2008, saw a problem that became an opportunity, and now we have Uber, which is now a problem for the whole taxicab business. Do you have a hunch? Do you sense that something is coming? Anticipate what is around the corner. A good leader will respond or react, the best leader will anticipate. Now, as you anticipate the future, let me tell you this. Get ready because this is really important. As you try to anticipate the future, remember, what you know may not be true. Let me say it again. What you know may not be true. Let me unpack that and illustrate it. The organization that I lead was actually on the front end of creating game-changing innovations for the local church. For centuries upon centuries, a pastor had the opportunity to minister to people through essentially one home base, one local church building. Well, around the late '90s, early 2000s, we were on the very front end of leveraging technology, learning how to develop leaders, and to do spiritual ministry not out of one site, but out of multiple sites. And this was a massive, massive, massive game-changer for what is possible for a pastor to do through local churches. I cannot even describe how this took the ceiling off of what is possible. Now, because my organization was on the front end of this, we developed strong theories and ideas about what works and what doesn't work. And a lot of people from the outside would say, "Well, you guys are experts at doing this type of ministry "and organization." Here's the problem. Because we're considered experts, we are incredibly vulnerable to what I'm gonna call the curse of confidence. You're vulnerable to this as well. Why? Because you're a good leader. You're talented, you've got experience in your field of expertise and because you're pretty good at what you do, you are vulnerable to the curse of confidence. Those who are overly confident, we have three problems. Number one, we find it difficult to listen to feedback because we think we know it all. Number two, we often answer more questions than we are asking. That's a problem for me. If I'm always answering questions and not asking them anymore, then I'm just giving out what I know and I'm not learning anything. Number three is, we assume too much and we stop innovating. I like the idea of what some call the prediction paradox. The prediction paradox. And that is this. If we think we're good at predicting the future, we probably will not be good at predicting the future. We need a posture of humility as we look ahead. Why? Because the more humility we have about our ability to make predictions, the more successful we will be at anticipating the future. Why? Because pride blinds. Lemme say it again. Pride blinds. We don't wanna be overly

confident. We always wanna be students. For example, Paul Schoemaker and Steven Krupp wrote a very interesting article about the Lego company, about how their overconfidence almost wrecked their entire company. Lemme give you some history. To me this is fascinating. In its 66 year history, Lego had never had a down year. Imagine that. Then, in 1980, Lego hit a massive growth spurt, amassing a stunning double-digit growth for 15 consecutive years. This company was on fire. Then, in 1998, profits plummeted in a single year from \$186 million down to \$48 million. Think about this. 66 years of consecutive growth, double-digit growth for a long time and then boom, the bottom drops out of it. What in the world happened? Well, this is what happened. Legos, their leaders, underestimated how much the digital revolution would change how kids play. So kids' schedules suddenly got a lot busier and their free time now didn't go to creative play. Instead, what did it do? It went straight to playing video games. And for those in the Lego industry, the change seemed like it happened overnight. So what happened? The company now has massive challenges. Here's what we need to understand. Your organization may have challenges right now. Remember this. New challenges always equal new opportunities. New challenges always lead to new opportunities. What happened to Legos? Well, George Lucas was preparing to release the first of three prequels to the original Star Wars franchise. So Lucasfilm proposed partnering with Legos to release Star Wars Legos. And the Legos Senior Vice-President didn't understand the movie industry, didn't like the movie industry, and according to a article I read, said, "Over my dead body." In other words, "We are not gonna do this." Thankfully for Legos, the grandson of the Lego founder saw the opportunity and signed the deal. Well, chances are you know what that led to. Now, Lego is booming with its own movie line and they've never been hotter than before. Why? Because the problem led to a new innovation and a new opportunity. Remember this. New challenges create new opportunities. New challenges create new opportunities. What do we do? We see problems before they're big, we solve them early, and we see potential that others overlook. I like what Steve Jobs said. He said, "Innovation is the ability to see change "as an opportunity, not a threat." Things are changing around you. This creates opportunities, not threats. Don't be afraid of the change. Mark Cuban said, "Whenever there is change, "wherever there is circumstance, uncertainty, "there is opportunity. "Wherever there is change, wherever there is uncertainty, "there is opportunity." I say it this way. Things are changing. Anticipate where things are going. Don't be afraid of the future. Create it. That's what anticipatory leaders are doing. Things are changing. Don't be afraid of what's coming. Anticipate the future and create it. So let's review and then get into some application questions. Review. The difference between a good leader and a great leader is a great leader anticipates rather than reacts. The way you're doing what you're doing right now, it will not last forever. Things are changing around you. If you don't change you're getting left behind. How do we grow into the future? We solve problems before they're big, we see potential that others overlook. Most of the big problems you have today were actually small problems you had awhile back and no one attacked them when they were small. So we see problems early and we solve them quickly. What does a reactionary leader do? A reactionary leader says, "I'll solve the next problem when I see it." An anticipatory leader says, "I'll solve the problem before it's a problem." Do you have a hunch? Do you have a burden? Do you sense that something is coming? You have an opportunity to do something about it. You don't fear the future, you create it. That's what anticipatory leaders do. We're gonna stay humble, we don't know it all. The more humble we are, the better we'll be able to predict the future. So, let's look at a couple of questions for application. You can go over these with your team. Remember the rule of three and 10. Organizationally, things tend to change at every third step or every tenth step. Maybe the market is changing, maybe you lead a ministry and your ministry is getting older, you're not reaching millennials, or Gen Z, and you find we need to change. Here's two questions to ask. Number one, ask yourself this. Looking ahead, what future problems can you solve early? Think ahead. What maybe is a small issue now? What kind of opportunities can you have to solve the problems early? Think ahead, ask your team, what kind

of problems can we solve now? Second question would be this. What theories do you have about the future? Think about it. What do you think is coming? What do you sense is coming? And then, what are you going to do about it? The best leaders don't respond or react. What do we do? We anticipate. Now, in next month's episode, we're gonna get practical and talk about how we actually do this. What I wanna say to you is thank you sincerely for being a part of our leadership community. It means a lot to me when you rate or review the podcast. Those of you who share it on social media, my gift to you is I'll work hard to bring you valuable content in a concise manner. Your gift to me is when you tell others about it. So thank you so much for getting the word out. What are you gonna do? Man, there's so much pressure to conform to who others want you to be. But you are not going to do that. What are you gonna do? You're gonna be yourself. You're gonna lead out of confidence, who you're created to be. Why? Because people would rather follow a leader who's always real than one who's always right.

- Hey, thanks again for joining us here at the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode and wanna go even further with additional show notes or resources, you can find all of that at [life.church/leadershippodcast](http://life.church/leadershippodcast). You can also sign up to have all of that information sent directly to your email inbox. And if you've been enjoying the leadership podcast, we would love your help. One thing you can do to help us spread the word is to simply rate and review it on iTunes. It's one small thing you can do for us to help spread the word and build leaders around the world. Plus, if you would like for Craig to answer your questions in an upcoming episode, we would love to hear them. All you have to do is email them to us at [leadership@life.church](mailto:leadership@life.church). Once again, thanks for joining us here at the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. We'll see you next time.