Closed! with JUSTIN JACOBS

YOUR QUESTION SHEET

Carla Cox

Christian Service Center · Recording Friday, October 23

THEME Consistency in a Life With None: How You Earn Trust From the People Who Need You Most

SUBTHEME What a nonprofit partner can teach an agent about showing up for people in crisis

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The episode at a glance

What agents are there to get, and how Carla gives it to them.

THE STORY: WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

A couple who had gone eight years without a home got their own apartment after about forty nights on the Christian Service Center's 407 Connect bus, and Carla Cox said you never usually see success that early; the episode asks what it usually takes.

THE LESSON: WHAT AGENTS WILL WALK AWAY WITH

With people whose lives have had little consistency, trust may come from showing up the same way again and again, so the episode explores how an agent can partner with a local nonprofit and keep coming back on a set schedule.

THE PROMISE

Today Carla shows us how to earn trust from people whose lives have had no consistency, and how an agent can start showing up for them.

CARLA'S SUPERPOWER	Carla sees the people who walk in as neighbors, and she believes everyday consistency is what their lives have been missing.

Act 1 • Your opening

Word for word. Stop for two seconds at the pause: that's where the edit drops in the cold open.

ACT 1 0:00 to 1:30

Cold open - Forty Nights Was Early

"I need to hear how this ends."

YOUR OPENING word for word

"A couple had been without a home for eight years. After about forty nights on a shelter bus in Orlando, they got the keys to their own apartment. And Carla Cox said, 'You never usually see success this early.' Forty nights was early. So what does it usually take? Today Carla shows us how to earn trust from people whose lives have had no consistency, and how an agent can start showing up for them. **PAUSE 2 SECONDS** Carla works at the Christian Service Center in downtown Orlando, and the Center runs that bus. It gives people without a home a place to sleep, night after night. So let's find out what a bed every night has to do with trust."

RIGHT AFTER, THE ASK

If that couple's forty nights made you want to know what it usually takes, subscribe now, because that's what Carla and I are about to get into.

The questions

Follow Carla, not the list. Never skip a starred one.

★ must ask **SAY** a line you say out loud, right where it sits

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ACT 2 1:30 to 9:00

Before - Neighbors Down on Their Luck

"This is a real person. I know someone like this."

SAY · YOUR TIE Carla and I know each other through our partnership at HPM, working to help the people who need healthcare the most, with quality insurance and the government programs that can help them.

★ **1** Carla, a couple who'd been without a home for eight years got the keys to their own apartment after about forty nights on the Center's bus, and you told Spectrum News you never usually see success that early. Take me back to when you were studying sociology at UCF. What pulled you toward this work, and toward the Center?

2 Then you got to the Center's front door. What did the classroom tell you about homelessness that the front door proved right, or proved wrong?

3 Take me to your first week at the Center. What did you see walking in that you still remember?

4 The Center once wrote that you see the people who walk in as neighbors who are down on their luck and need some warmth. Where does that come from for you?

5 Your work runs on warmth, and you also went to Rollins for business school and talked about measuring outcomes instead of just handing out help. Help me understand how those two fit together.

If they go there
Take me back to that moment. · Who's the first person you couldn't stop thinking about? · Name the feeling: "That sounds like it stayed with you."

Plant
What's something about this work you've never said in an interview? (after her first week at the Center)

ACT 3 9:00 to 21:00

The climb - Not Enough Indoor Space

Tension. "How did they get through that?"

★ **6** What's a hard day at the Center you still think about? You pick which one, and start wherever you want.

SAY · CUE After that answer, count to three before you say anything.

7 In the 2024 heat you told Spectrum News you don't have enough indoor space for everyone, all day, every day. What does a day like that look like from where you're standing?

8 Spectrum counted up to five hundred people a day back in 2024. What does a normal day look like now, and is it even possible to make one person feel seen in a crowd like that?

9 How can you tell when someone who walks in doesn't trust you yet? What do they do, or not do?

10 A lot of people show up wanting to help. Where have you seen help go wrong, and what did it look like?

11 If there's been a stretch where you thought about walking away from this work, what kept you in the seat?

If they go there
Take me back to that day. · "You almost walked away?" · "What did that cost you?" · Let the silence sit.

Plant
What happens to an agent who shows up once, makes a promise, and never comes back? (after she describes help going wrong)

SAY · RESET So on the hardest days you've got more people than room, and that couple still got their keys after about forty nights. What nobody sees is what happened in between, so let's talk about that.

Recap what she actually said in Q6 and Q9.

SAY · ASK	Carla told us where she's seen help go wrong. What's the first question you'd ask a nonprofit before you offered to help? Tell me in the comments.
SAY · ASK	If you want to hear how that couple actually got their keys, subscribe now, because that's where we're going next.

ACT 4 21:00 to 31:00

The turn - Consistency in a Life With None

"Oh. That's what I've been doing wrong."

★ **12** You've said you don't have room for everyone, all day, every day. That couple still got their keys after about forty nights on the bus. What made the difference for them?

SAY · ASK If what Carla just said about that couple hit you, hit like. (use it here only if this is the big answer)

13 Back in 2021 you said offering consistency is really critical in a life that has no consistency. What does consistency actually look like on a normal Tuesday at the Center?

14 Eric Gray at the Center has said people stabilize fast with just a couple of good nights' sleep in a row. Why does the same bed, night after night, matter so much?

15 Think of one person who walked in not trusting anybody and later did. No names. Take me to the moment you saw it change. What did they say or do?

16 What do most people believe about the folks who walk through your door that you think is flat wrong?

17 Where does health coverage fit in for the people who come through your door? What do they run into?

18 If an agent called you tomorrow wanting to help the people who come through your door, what's the first thing you'd want them to do, and what should they never do?

19 Say that agent shows up. What should they ask your team before they ever bring up a plan?

20 How many times would they need to show up before the folks who come in start to know their face? Give me a real number.

SAY · CALLBACK Brenda Powell spent four and a half years as a caseworker at a homeless shelter in DeLand, and she told us the trust built and built and built. That's the same thing Carla's describing.

21 You work with partners like the city and like us at HPM. What's the fastest way an outside partner loses your trust?

22 If you had to explain what consistency does to someone who's never done your work, what's it like?

23 Let me read back what I think I'm hearing, and you correct me. With people whose lives have had no consistency, trust comes from showing up the same way, again and again, so an agent should start with one partner like you and keep coming back on a set schedule. Is that right, or what would you change?

If they go there
"Different how? What did you actually say?" · "How many times, before and now?" · Name the feeling: "That sounds like it meant a lot." · "Help me understand how those fit together."

Plant
Where was that couple a year before the bus, and where are they now? (right after her answer to 12)

ACT 5 31:00 to 38:00

The close - For the Agent Who Wants to Show Up

Respect, and a push to act.

★ **24** Back in 2021, the Center shared your hope of ending chronic homelessness downtown over the next fifty years. What has staying in this work cost you, and what keeps you coming back?

25 Earlier we talked about a hard day you still think about. Where do you stand with this work today, and with that fifty-year hope?

26 Somebody's listening right now who wants to help the people who need coverage most and has no idea where to start. What do you want to say to them?

27 If the Carla who was studying sociology at UCF walked into the Center today, what would you tell her?

If they go there
"What did that cost you?" · Let the silence sit. · "Where are you with it now?"

Plant
If you had to put everything we've talked about today in one sentence for an agent who wants to help but doesn't know where to start, what would it be? (after her answer to 27, before the challenge)

SAY · YOUR BOOK In my book I wrote, retention isn't a renewal problem. It's a presence problem. That's Field Entry 7.

28 Here's what I'd tell an agent: by Friday, call one local nonprofit that serves people in need, ask what their people run into with health coverage, and book a day to come back. Give me the Carla Cox challenge. What would you change?

THE CLOSED QUESTION

SAY · CUE Every guest leaves a question for the next person in this chair. You're the first, so this one's from me.

Who showed up for you when you needed it most, and did you ever get to tell them?

30 What question do you want to leave for our next guest?

YOUR CLOSING

word for word

"Forty nights was early. That couple had a bed every night and a case manager at the Center. Carla has said consistency is critical in a life that hasn't had any. Maybe the trust you're waiting on starts with coming back. Send this to an agent who wants to keep showing up. Subscribe, leave a comment. I'm Justin Jacobs. This is Closed. You, have a nice day."