

#32 Bring the informal chat & fun in remote teams. But how?

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SPEAKERS

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In March 2020, COVID hit us pretty hard. And suddenly, we all ended up working from our homes, or at least most of us. And so in the beginning, this homeworking was quite nice. We thought, okay, no commute anymore, no traffic jams, then you could spend more time with your family or with yourself, you got more autonomy, you could organise your day as you wished it. Also, you had less interruptions from colleagues or things like that. And it also meant cost savings for the organization's and so like honeymoon, we mostly saw the positives of homeworking in the beginning. But then after a while, we started seeing the costs. For instance, a lot of us ended up not taking any pauses anymore, you didn't have to break of driving or commuting towards your workplace, you just stood up and could start working even before dressing up washing or your teeth or having breakfast. And so a lot of people started to remove the natural pauses and not replace them by plant pulses anymore. And then also what became challenging is the no boundaries, our home became our office, or was the office or home and so there wasn't a clear cut anymore. But when this is time I spent for myself and this is time I spent for work, which was a little bit easier for people that's went to an office and then that went home, that was a clear boundary. Also the no interruptions Well, it wasn't really no interruptions because we got interrupted by kits, for instance, or pets or the Wi Fi bandwith that wasn't sufficient for the whole family, or the delivery of your Amazon package. And so the interruption became, in fact, sometimes even bigger than the interruptions at work. And so for a lot of people working from home, went from being really great and relaxing to delivering even more stress. And especially for the people that spent their whole day going from one virtual meeting to the next one. Also, collaboration became even harder. And then what also happened was, the loneliness started to kick in. Because we miss the coffee talk, we miss the fun with colleagues, we really miss the social events. And so for many among us work became even more serious than before, and even more focused on tasks and to dues and projects and less and less on people or simply being there for each other. So how can you bring the coffee, talk to small talk the gossip, the fun when working remotely. And that's what I wanted to talk about in this podcast. I'm Murielle, CEO mom and educator, I used to work really hard and sacrifice the important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forwards past many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. Today, I'm obsessed with helping other leaders builds

meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart.

And so what we want, in fact, is to bring back these informal moments within our team, even when we work remotely. And what's ironic here is that to bring those informal moments within your team, you have to plan that formally. Yes, you heard me right. If you want these informal moments, you have to plan those formally. And I'm going to give you a couple of tips. A couple of examples on how you can do that. In the show notes of this episode, you will be able to download a bundle on how to bring these informal moments small talk and fun when working remotely. Just go to rebelleaderwithaheart.com/32. And you can download that bundle it's completely free. So what are the things that you can do to bring back those informal moments within your team when you are working from home? Well, the first thing you could do is to set up a specific chat for those informal moments. For instance, on WhatsApp or messenger on slack or on whatever platform you use, or also blend, a video conference specific for those informal moments, so without any agenda or without any formal agenda. And so there, it makes it easier because if people need it, they simply can join the video conference, or they can join or watch the chat. But if they want to concentrate on on some work, or really move forward on a couple of things, they don't have to do that. So it's not mandatory, of course, it's only if you need it at that moment. It's especially important if you have for instance, already a chat within your team, you don't want to pollute the chats with jokes with fun moments. Because maybe someone really wants to concentrate, I find it best to have them two chats, one for the informal stuff, and one for the really work stuff. The second thing that I would really advise you to do is to start your video conferences or your virtual meetings. With an informal moment, just check how people are doing, what are you doing? How are you? How was your weekend, or is somebody struggling with something, just start with this informal chat or tell a joke or whatever. But don't start your meeting immediately with the formal stuff and the to do's and the projects. A third thing you could do is set up online games. So you will find a lot of online games just go to Google and type in online games for colleagues and you will find a lot of examples. So you will find quizzes on online Pictionary or other games that you can play. Either at a specific moment, you could decide okay, from one to two, those who won't, we're going to play an online game together. Or you can send each other throughout the day. Pictionary question with the answer. And so there are also things where there is a ping pong that you can do during the day whenever it suits you. The fourth thing that could be nice to do is give a house tour or present your kids, your pets, just show the people in your team where you live, how your office is, who your children are, it's really nice to share that with each other because you get to know the people differently. And it creates also a bond, you could also host a talent show, for instance. So organise a specific moments where people can share their talents, not only their talents at work, of course, and often, you will know these talents. But maybe some people have talents outside of work, maybe some of them sing, or some of them dance or do a specific hobby or a very good in sports, or work with wood or paint or whatever. It's nice to do a talent show with your colleagues what I also like using in teams, especially when the teams are bigger in very small teams, it's no use. But when the teams are really bigger, I use the function that you will find on zoom that is called breakout rooms. And I believe that Microsoft Teams has also included this option in their system now. But breakout rooms, it's really easy. For instance, you have a meeting with 10 or with 15 people. And instead of all talking together, you could organise like a world cafe. So there again, go on Google and look at World cafe. But you can use this form of working to really gather information or gather ideas or discuss things all together. But with everyone in the teams that is contributing and

without losing precious time, because when you are 15 you don't want to give everyone three minutes of talking, for instance, because if you do that you will 45 minutes will pass. But if you use a breakout room where you divide the people, for instance, in five teams of three, and then you give each person three or four minutes, well then you will only spend 10 to 12 minutes discussing this. And then when you come back in the big group, you can simply ask what came out of yours and look at the conclusions and so this is also nice to do formal things, but also to use this breakout rooms for an informal chat. So instead of starting your meeting of 15 people with how was your weekend and everyone talks, and then you are an hour further and the meeting is almost finished, before you can start the real topics of that meeting, just do the informal in small breakout rooms, because then people can share, hear from each other and come back into group and you don't even have to share with the whole group what was happening in those smaller breakout rooms, then what I would also advise you to do is give social calls to people just pick up your phone and call a colleague every day, just to ask that person, how are you doing? and How are the kids and how was your weekend? And are you struggling with something, because I hear a lot of people that are surprised because a colleague got a burnout. And nobody noticed this because of course, when you're at the office, you have other senses you you can see more, you can feel more things, you can touch the person on the shoulder or whatever. But when you're working remotely, you don't have all your senses. And so you miss a lot of information. And that's why I believe that these social calls, simply calling a colleague to see how he's doing and what's what's happening in his life and what his he or she is struggling with. And has he watched a sports game that was this weekend or the elections or whatever. It's just simply nice to talk to each other. And as a team leader, you could of course, call each team member every day, I mean, not everyone every day, but every day of the week, call someone else. But you can also do that among colleagues and maybe organise yourself a little bit so that everyone gets a call and nobody is forgotten. And then one last thing also that you can do is to plan celebration calls. So you could for instance plan a weekly or bi weekly celebration, call. And there, you're going to celebrate the small wins and the big wins. And again, not only the small and the big wins from work, but it could also be a small or a big win from home, like how I moved recently. And yes, it's done, I'm in my new house or my baby started walking or whatever happens in your life that you would like to celebrate or a birthday, or whatever a wedding, you just blend those celebration calls as well within your team. Now in the show notes of this episode, you will find a link to a bundle. And this bundle has been specifically designed to bring the firm and small talk within your team. So if you set up a specific chat, within your team or within your organisation, we have prepared 10 cards that you can share every day or every two days or every week just you decide, of course the rhythm that you want to do that. But you can share these cards within that chat to bring this informal and fun. And maybe sometimes the more difficult conversations as well, within your team, the only thing you need to do is to download it and then one person chooses to pick up that informal chat with the team and to publish this card. And then you simply do what's on the cards. For instance, show us a picture of yourself if you knew that nobody would be watching that you were alone at home, how would you dress send us those pictures. That's for instance, something fun that you could share. And of course, here again, not everyone has to participate. But it's always nice if you have some people that participate and maybe others will only watch. But it creates really this this other very important atmosphere in your team. Because in a team, it's really important if you want to have the best possible team. It's really important to have conversations or meetings about projects. But probably you are very good at those already then to have conversations and meetings around processes. what went well, what went wrong, what should we do better the next time so that you keep

improving yourself and have less and less problems that arise? But then the great teams they also have conversations and meetings, about the mood within your Team because when the mood is great, you are able to tackle a lot more challenges than when everyone in your team is exhausted and tired. And that's why bringing this informal and the fun in the remote teams as well is so important. Okay, so I hope you enjoyed this podcast. In next week's podcast, I will talk about another topic for remote teams. And that is how to have difficult conversations when you are working hundred percent remotely. So be sure to subscribe to this podcast go to the show notes of this episodes on rebelleaderwithaheart.com/32 if you want to download the bundle and have more fun with your remote team, so subscribe. leave us a review and we will see each other next week for how to have difficult conversations when you work remotely by

Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a hearts if you want more go to rebelleaderwithaheart.com for show notes and past episodes. If you love the show, subscribe, leave a review and share it with your friends The more the merrier. Thanks for tuning in and have a great week you rebel leader with a heart.