

41 What I learned from empowering many teams

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SPEAKERS

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I've managed to use for over 15 years now. And for the last four years, I've helped other leaders transform to transform themselves, their teams or their organisation. And in today's podcast, I wanted to share one particular important thing that I always do to empower my teams. And it's because team leaders don't do that, that they stay in this vicious circle of always working hard of having to solve problems after problems and not having the time to think about the future, leaving them staying in this firefighting mode. So be sure to tune in for this episode, because I'll share with you what that is. And I will describe in details what I then do with my team. 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 passed 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 build meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart. Now, let's go back a little bit in time, in my late 20s, I became the manager of a small publishing team of five, that wasn't delivering great results. Now, of course, I wanted to prove myself and be recognised as a good manager. But I didn't want to work hard. And if you listen to my podcasts, you probably know that I'm obsessed with work life balance. And I also love change, I often stay a couple of years in a job. And then I want to learn something new. And so I change jobs most of the time internally. And that's how I stayed for 12 years in my previous one, but I changed jobs every two or three years, I think. And so I've always tried to empower my teams and tried to make myself as unnecessary as possible. And you heard me right, I try to make myself unnecessary. And I think that's the first mistake that new managers make is that they try to make themselves indispensable, like everyone need them. And so they feel important because everyone needs them. And I believe we have to make ourselves unnecessary. And this happened then, on top of running deaths, Department of this publishing departments, small publishing department have five, because I empowered them and made myself unnecessary, I got responsible for another publishing department next to that. And after a while I made that one empowered and made myself unnecessary there. And then I became responsible for another publishing department next to it. At a certain point, I also became responsible for marketing, sales, and customer service. And that's when I think that 40 or 50% of the organisation was already reporting to

me, and then I became the managing director. And what I've always done to get that empowerment with great results is team retreats. You have to stop with your team, especially when things are not going as planned, especially when you are way too busy. And you don't have time to think especially when you are exhausted, especially when the pressure is high. You have to stop time with your team. And I like to see this as a big hurdle. I mean, you are walking somewhere and then you are facing a big hurdle. Well, if you are only walking, it will be difficult to jump over that big hurdle. No, at that moment, it's much smarter, to take a few steps back, and then to run and then you can jump above that hurdle. And I believe that's what we need to do with our teams as well. Sometimes we have to stop, even if at that moment. Stopping means getting worse results, getting people disappointed because you don't deliver what you should deliver, or things fall down because you don't pick them up at that moment. You have to stop because there is never a great moment to stop and how did I manage to empower all these teams and then make them almost autonomous. And that allowed me then to take other things on my shoulders and to learn new things to really think about strategy. The difference was that I stopped with those teams to really think not only about our projects, because we're all good about thinking about projects and what needs to be done and all our dues. But we stopped because we also need to think about our processes, or the way we are working now is this the best way possible. And we also need to stop to manage our mood. So I often say we need three kinds of meetings, meetings, about projects, about processes, and about the mood. That's why I believe that you and your team, you should also do this retreat once or twice a year. And when we do that, we stop, at least for one day. But usually, we do that for two or three days. And I also organise a lot of these team moments for my customers, mostly executive committees, because if you never stop, you can never transform. And really think about what you really want. You can never dive deeper and think about what are the causes of all these problems that we are encountering, and you are never creative. You're never in strategic mode, you're only running, running and running. So now I started my own company. And we are a team of three today. And we still do retreats, at least twice a year. And I wanted to share with you what we did in our last retreats. Because maybe, yeah, maybe you don't know what you should do in a retreat. Okay, I'm going to stop with my team. But what should I do, then, we all we always think about, we should have fun. And we'll have a team building. And I truly believe that it's a very important element of that we treat. But we also need to do some work so that we don't fall back into that rhythm of going from one meeting to the next and working hard, hard, hard and not delivering the things that we want. So I'm going just to share what we did in our last key leader, BIM moments. And BIM comes from balanced impact and meaning, because I believe that's what we need to have those three elements. And this is based on everything I teach. This is based on all the retreats that I did with the teams in the previous 15 years. And that I also do with the teams that are my clients that I support during workshops, for instance, well, first of all, where did we do this retreat. So we are three, and we decided to rent a little house, in the south of Belgium in the woods. And it's because we are in the pandemic time, and that we cannot do a lot for the moment, we decided to choose that space because we could do some walks outside. But also because in that little house, there was a

there was a bubble bath, a Jacuzzi, a Sona and also a baby foot that we could split. So that's why we picked that one because of course, we want it to work together. But we also wanted to have fun. And so on the first day, the first thing we did was to celebrate because we had some great results. And you always have reasons to celebrate, even if it's only small things, I believe that celebrating is so important because we don't want to focus only on the things that go wrong. We also need to focus on the things

that go right. So we celebrated our great results, our collaboration, and we also thought about Okay, how are we going to reward ourselves and we decided that we would reward ourselves well, of course, we had some champagne and the bubble bath and great time together. But we also decided that next year, when it's possible, again, we would go to America to a nice conference that would boost us and that would really help us learn new things, but also spend a nice moments abroad together. Then we looked very shortly at our 2021 financials and how we did that year, and what were the different elements. And then we started to apply what I teach. And the first thing I applied or we applied is from our course that we called from overwhelmed to focus key leader where the first thing we did was Think about our values and purpose. And what do we want? And how we imagine, key leader this company in the next 10 years? How big is your team? How are we organised? How do we see ourselves in that team? How big is the team? How big is the organization's? Who are customers, etc. And with imagining that we also thought about, okay, what are now our values and our purpose. And of course, we've done this exercise for quite a while No. So we are refining this one every time. And our purpose is we help leaders build meaningful lives and organisations. And our values are balance, impact and meaning. And we did a little exercise where we defined those three words, those three values, and then passed the definitions to each other and then agreed on a definition for these three values that we have. And then we did the focused key leader exercise, which is make a list of everything that we do, everything that we did, everything that we do everything that went well, everything that could be improved. And also what are all the recurring tasks that we do daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, we use a project management tool, Asana, where we register everything that we do. And I'll talk maybe a little bit about that another time, but it's really useful. We also looked at that, so we looked at everything that we do. And we place this on a graph with two axes, what gives us energy and of course, that is very personal for each of us. And what brings added value, and what doesn't bring a lot of added value. And once we had that list, we would then continue with that list. But that's what we did on the first day. So celebrate, look at our financials, look at how we saw our company, what the values are purpose, and then this exercise with what gives us energy and what brings a lot of added value or not in function, of course, of the purpose that we had defined on the step before. And then in the evening, we went or in the afternoon, already, we went for a long walk together, then we went into the bubble bath this afternoon. And then the next day, we started today with what we call the key leader funnel. So from all these activities that either are not bringing a lot of added value, and especially those that don't bring us a lot of energy, what are we going to stop. So we looked at what are all the things that we could stop. And so for instance, we decided to stop the YouTube videos for now. And stopping doesn't mean especially that you will stop them from the rest of your life. But we decided that for now, we are going to stop the YouTube videos, we still publish our podcasts on YouTube. And if we have an interview, we will publish the interview with the video on it. But I will not make specific videos anymore for YouTube for now, we also decided to stop Pinterest because those two things were costing us a lot of energy. And we're not driving a lot of or we're not bringing a lot of added value. And then we did a very important step. We looked at our big processes based especially those that are costing us a lot of energy, but even the ones that give us energy, we really looked at our big processes. And we looked at how can we automate them and how can we reorganise them so that it takes us less and less time. And this is especially something that I always did with every team that I that I run is really look at the processes and look at that from our own point of view. Because sometimes there are steps in the process that where you don't get the results that you want, because for instance, and other departments didn't deliver what you need it. But I always bring it back to us. What can we do to improve

this and not what can they do and what we can do and that if somebody else is not delivering what we need is, for instance, have a better way of asking it or having a conversation or of course doing it ourselves which I wouldn't advise At the old time, but it's important to take 100% responsibility. So we looked at all our processes, and especially the big ones, and we we organised them. And we also we organised them. And we did that immediately in Asana or project management tool. So for instance, now, if a new organisation starts a programme with us, we have all the steps they described, we also made some videos of how some things need to be done in that process. And so when a new organisation starts, we only need to copy that process, change the dates, and everyone in our team knows exactly what they need to do. And even if somebody would not be present, because one step has been described, or we made a video, screen capture, if it's something with a computer of that step, it's really easy to do it yourself. Then we looked at how are we going to delegate or share things between us. And for instance, we found that the show notes and the blog that you you can see, you can read after the podcast that takes a lot of time, and we decided to external externalise that, and that is something that now my eldest son look at is doing. So it doesn't mean when you take 100% responsibility, it doesn't mean that you have to do everything by yourself neither. And then the last step is what are we going to batch for instance, this podcast, this is now the second podcast that I'm recording today, you, we release these podcasts only once a week, but usually, we record the podcast or several episodes at a time. Okay, so we we then looked at all the processes, and we described several of them together. And the other ones, we decided to assign them to all of us to make the description. And this is something that we discussed in our weekly meetings after that. Okay, then once we did that, we added these activities and processes in Asana, our project management tool, because there again, I believe that if you work with a tool, you know exactly what everyone is working on. And it's not a way of controlling things. It's just a way to with using emails and meetings because I know exactly what Daphne and Tatiana did. And they know what I did. I don't have to say, Well, I finished recording this podcast, you can know what sometimes I will say it, but they can see in Asana, okay, this step has been finished. No, I can do my work based on this step. And then we ended the day by first doing an empowerment evaluation of our own team. So I have developed an evaluation, and that I use with my customers that I use in my workshops. And of course, I wanted to evaluate our team be based on these criteria, and then discuss improvements. Now if you would like to do that. We have developed a quiz, an empowerment quiz that you can find for free in the show notes of this episode by answering a couple of questions. You get an empowerment score for your team and personalised lessons to help you increase empowerment. And of course, it's best to do this empowerment quiz with your team members and that everyone evaluates the team independently and freely so that you can afterwards discuss the results together, because what I see is that the team leaders tend to give themselves higher scores than the team members and this is also important to know so you can find the free quiz in the show notes of this episode on www.rebelleaderwithaheart.com/41 or on www.qileader.com/empowerment-quiz. And what we also offer is a free masterclass the tree secrets to inspire and engage and empower your remote teams in fast digital and uncertain times. You can also find the forum to enrol to this free masterclass in the show notes of this episode are on www.qileader.com/empowerment-masterclass. Okay, so, now that we have done this, this was the end have our second day No, sorry, I forgot something. After the empowerment evaluation, what we also did is I went for a walk with my sister, Tatiana, that's part of, of the team. And we did a little evaluation of each other or nice conversation, where I told her what I really liked about her what maybe I would like her to see improved. And she did the same with me also, of course, because it's a two week two

way street. And then I had the same conversation with Daphne, we talked about what I really liked about her What I would like to see improve. And she did the same with me as well. So we like to give, of course, permanent feedback. But that stays complicated. I think feedback, you can follow as many feedback courses as you want. giving feedback is something that brings a lot of internal experience, and that we need to practice and do with all our hearts. And that's why I believe that having a nice environment or a walk to do that is often nice. Okay, so that was the end of the second day. And then. So those two days were, in fact, focused more on the past. And then on the last day, we decided to look at the future. And what we discussed was what we call a value letter. So a value letter is really our offer our offer, what do we give for free? What is the first step that somebody could buy? And that gives them a little bit of value? What's another step that somebody could stand by that gives more value, etc. And we also talked about a membership that we are planning to launch in May, and how we should position this membership next to our course? What would be your ideal customer? What would be the exact transformation we offer? How would we translate that offer? And also check about the return on time of launching that because in everything that we plan to launch, we not only look at return on investment, we also look at the return on time? And then when would we launch our new courses or new cohorts for the courses? And when would we launch our new membership? So that's when we did then the calendar for 2021? When are we going to launch what then also the launch of our content, because the content that we deliver on the podcast is often aligned with our launches. And with all debt, we checked the financials. Okay, this is what we would like to do as revenues next year, this is the minimum that we need to do if we want to cover all the costs. This is what we believe that is possible to do. And we translated that then in how many programmes Do we need to sell from our portfolio. And then we edit again, the two dues in Asana or project management. To end we defined our next key leader moment with the team that would be the first week of May, if I'm not wrong. So that's what we did. We also cooked together, we did some karaoke together. Every day, we took long walks, where we talked and we had some fun. So it was fun work and also we meaning together. So I hope I have inspired you to also stop with your team for a moment to really think about all the things that you need to do what is a priority? How should we work in the future? What are we going to say no to what are we going to automate? What are we going to improve? Because I believe if we do that regularly, we can we become better and better. And we get our work life balance back also. So we are at the end of this episode. Thank you for listening. Don't forget to go to the show notes of this episode. If you want to do the empowerment quiz, or if you want to enrol for our free masterclass to increase empowerment within your team. And also listen to the previous episode, where I describe what the element is that is so important if we want a great remote team. Thank you 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 a friend The more the merrier. Thanks for tuning in and have a great week you rebel leader with a heart.