

43 The easiest way to stop being squeezed between your manag...

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SPEAKERS

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I know you can deliver this project, even if you don't get all the resources you asked for. I trust you. You did it before, and you will handle it this time as well. This is what many people hear very often at work, or sometimes it's just, I don't care how you do it, just do it. It's your objective. And I don't want to hear excuses. So many people find themselves squeezed between management's expectations and what they think they can deliver with the time and resources they have. And that can put a heavy burden on your shoulders, you can feel completely discouraged because you know that you will fail under these conditions. And you don't want that. So how do you deal with those high expectations coming from your management from customers or from headquarters? And this is a question I get very often from the participants of my courses or of my workshops, and that's the question I'm going to answer 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 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 hearts now I also wanted to talk about an opportunity. I'm giving a free masterclass on the three secrets on how to motivate, engage and empower your team in fast digital and uncertain times. So I'm giving this free masterclass. And if you want to join, you will get a lot from it. You will also be able to evaluate your team and see how empowered it is you don't have to be the team manager to participate to this masterclass it can be very useful also as a team member. But if you want to join this master class, which is also very useful if you're working remotely or with hybrid teams, and I know a lot of you are just go to the show notes of this episode on rebelleaderwithaheart.com/43 or on www.qileader.com/empowerment-masterclass. And there you can register for free. And we will also open the doors to our new edition leading authentically in digital times. So a course to help you better deal with change, to change mindsets to change the culture of your team, or the culture of your organisation. And, even more importantly, to have impact with a work life balance. And for this edition, we also have a great bonus that has been asked a lot by the leaders that I have been helping and supporting in the previous months. And this bonus is leading to empowerment, where you will start with an evaluation or an audit of your team. And then in function of that audit, we

will give you specific content that will help you build high performing remote hybrid or face to face themes. So just go to the show notes of this episode. And you will find all the links if you're interested in joining this edition. Now back to the episode, we need challenging objectives if we want to grow as a person, so a little bit of stretch is okay. But when it's so challenging, that you're almost sure that you won't make it, it can be completely demotivating. Especially when this happens regularly. It makes you feel like you're not capable or that you don't have the competencies to handle this pressure. So sometimes, or very often for some of you, you need to push back. You need to take a deep breath, have the courage to push back. You say no, it's not possible. We have to make choices. We can do this or this but we cannot do both in this timing. And then you see the look of your manager who's really angry or disappointed. She understands you but she's really really disappointed and that might be enough to trigger a thought of her. I'm not good enough. I should not have said no. I should have been able to help handle that? And maybe No, because I said, No, I will not get the promotion, I want it or I won't have a great evaluation or no salary increase. So you might have said no, on the ones, your manager pushes back, because she's also under pressure to deliver things. So she's pushing back not to annoy you, not to punish you. But because in that moment, it's the only option she or he sees for herself or himself. And then you think, yeah, well, I have to prove myself, and I'll find a way to deliver it anyhow. And so you take more responsibility on your shoulders more work on your shoulders, you sacrifice more of your time. And at a certain point, you start losing your motivation, because you have this feeling that it's all too much that you can handle it all. And then maybe because you cannot handle it all, it means that maybe you're not fit for this position. Or maybe because of that pressure to deliver and your need to prove yourself your need to deliver everything that is expected from you. Because remember, this is a habit that was deeply ingrained in us since since childhood. And since school. Because of that pressure, unconsciously, you put pressure yourself on your team and your colleagues to become dominant and directive, not open to others saying no to you. So how can you react in a way to that pressure that doesn't sabotage your career, but also in a way that doesn't kill your work life balance.

That's what I wanted to share today. And I know I had a lot of pressure to deliver things in the past, I still have a lot of pressure to deliver things. And I know that people around me have never been as busy as today. And that the workload has never been as high as today. So it's really important to be able to push back even towards your manager or headquarters, or your CEO, or sometimes a big customer. But how can you do that in a productive way that doesn't kill your career, but also doesn't kill your work life balance. And the first thing I find really important, and and i know probably I've said this 100 times already, if you follow me, but the first thing is to really know what you want. What is important for you in your life? How does your ideal life look like? What's pleased to you give to your work and to your private life? How many hours are you willing to spend for work? And how many hours do you spend for yourself or your friends or your family? Because if you don't know that for yourself, it will be very hard to push back. And it's often because you can deliver that your manager asks a lot of you. So it's not because you can take this next project on this next to do and this other thing that someone asked you because you could deliver it, then they will leave you alone? No, it's just because you can. It's exactly because you can deliver that more and more people will ask you things. So it's really important for you to know how your ideal career and work life balance looks like. Because when you know that, you will then be able to keep that in mind. And try to remember that the next time you have to say no, because in today's 24 seven connected world, you could work 24 seven and still not seize

every opportunity or fix every trade that you are facing. And I often like to say this we live now in a world of opportunities, you can always do more always do better. And also the work is less limited than before. Before if you had to work in a field for instance, you knew when to start and you knew when the work was finished. But now with knowledge work. Work is never finished. You can always do better. Always do more always do more marketing, more research, more alignment. And so you have to decide when to stop on top of being connected 24 seven, meaning that you get requests from everywhere, and from all kinds of people. So it's really important in this world today to really know what you want from your life. And so very often, you'll have to say no, not because you're not capable of delivering, because you are, otherwise people wouldn't ask so much from you. But you will have to say no, because you want to be in charge of your life. And you have decided to manage your priorities in line with your values and in line with the life you'd like to lead. So that's why it's so important to always know what you want, and to remember that and maybe say it to yourself every day, and set your limits, maybe for you. Eight hours a day is enough, or maybe for you 10 or 12 hours, work a day is good. But you have to know what place you want to give your career and what place you want to give. Also to yourself to your family and your friends. Okay. But now, once you know what you want, and you know that you probably should say no to somebody, and somebody who's probably under high pressure, not realising that he or she is even putting more pressure on you. And I believe that saying no, in a productive way, is really an art that you should master. Because there is a way to say no, that makes you stronger, that strengthen your relationship and doesn't harm your career. On the contrary, it will even boost it in the long term. Now, I just want you to imagine yourself in this situation, your boss is putting pressure on you and wants you to deliver something that you know is not feasible within the time you are willing to spend on your job, or with the resources, you have the budgets or the people to help you. Or maybe you have too many people that are sick in your team. And so you know, it will not be possible to deliver exactly what he or she asks. And so you want to push back. So try to remember such a situation, what do you feel in your body? Do you feel a tension in your shoulders, a weight on your chest preventing you from breathing Well, a knot in your stomach or in your throat? How does your body react, it's always a great idea to listen to your body. Because often your body knows better and faster than your mind if this is feasible for you. So just take a deep breath and simply notice what is happening inside of your body regarding this request and regarding this situation. And you might think why do I have to pay attention to what is happening inside my body. I'm saying this because attention in your body will often be uncomfortable. And so uncomfortable, in fact that you might want to escape it immediately by reacting a certain way. And that certain way will probably be the way you've always reacted. And remember, since you have been a little boy, or a little girl, you have been educated to do everything that is requested. So probably saying yes, might be your conditioned behaviour. But it might be some something else. But the problem is, if you don't learn to understand what is happening inside your body, and learn to accept that sometimes you feel something that is uncomfortable, and you'd simply stay with it, instead of trying to escape it immediately by reacting a certain way. By learning to do that you will learn to free yourself from your conditioned behaviour. So that means you might instead of automatically say yes, by automatically getting angry, or by becoming dominant yourself and pushing back in a quiet,

not friendly way, or by freezing, or whatever the way you might react under pressure. Well, it's important to free yourself from this reaction. And try to put yourself in a position where you will be able to react in a productive way. And because remember, this is the art of saying no, your boss is probably

pushing too hard and your body knows it's too much. But for the art of saying no, I don't want you to react to your boss's behaviour. I want you to respond to your needs. So take a deep breath. Be nice with yourself at that moment and just accept those sensations in your body without trying to escape them and give some tenderness to your body. To your attentions by breathing deeply and simply noticing what is happening without trying to escape it, you are probably going to say no to your boss. And that is okay. And it's not because you're not capable. It's not because you're not good enough. It's because it's way too much what he or she is asking you, or it's unrealistic. And if you continue saying, yes, it will probably be at a cost of what you want from your life. And what you want to achieve, it might be at a cost of your work life balance, or at a cost of your health. So by saying yes to often different things can happen. First of all, the one that we all know is at a certain point, you might burn out, you get really stressed, you learned not to listen to your body, because I can tell you that your body is sending you a lot of science. But if you have learned to numb what you are feeling at a certain point, it will just come up at the moment that will not be helpful for you. So by learning to listening constantly to your body, it will tell you what you need, and you have to listen it because at a certain point, you won't be able to keep it any more like this. And that's how burnout often happens, people don't realise how far they are, because they have numbed everything they have felt so far, just for the sake of continuing to deliver. Because they believe unconsciously that if they don't deliver, they won't be respected. They won't be worth it, they won't be promoted, or just because it's a habit. So they ignored all the signals their their body sent them until the body shuts down. So that's the first reason why you cannot keep saying yes, even when somebody puts a lot of pressure on you. So secondly, if you simply say yes, all the time, to every request, or to maybe not every request, but if you say yes to a request that you in your hearts believe is not feasible, you might completely lose your energy and motivation. And that's when you might get resigned and might start looking for another job because it's not fun anymore to work under these conditions. A lot of people lose their motivation, not because they don't like their job anymore. But because they were not able to say no to all the pressure, and then they lost their motivation and energy. And thirdly, you might not disappoint your manager. Now, if you say yes, but you will later. And it will be worse for the both of you than facing the facts longer in advance. So if you in your hearts believe that it's too much, either. It's too much, because it's not feasible, or it's too much because you have to sacrifice too much. But at the end, you won't be able to deliver what your boss or your customer or the headquarter is asking. And it will make the situation worse when the deadline is there and you haven't made it. Then if you say it upfront for the both of you. So

the first step is knowing what you want. But this is something you don't do in the moment. Of course in a moment, you just remember why you're going to say no, you're going to say no, because you want this great work life balance. The second step is to breathe, to be nice with yourself and to accept your sensations. And the third step is to show empathy to your manager, even if he or she is asking you in a very dominant directive way. Because at that moment, your manager is probably under high pressure as well. She's not putting more pressure on you because she wants you to burn

out or to get demotivated or to fail? Of course not. She's asking this because at that moment, she herself falls into her conditioned behaviour. She is reacting to a situation instead of responding. And she might have the urge to control or to micromanage. Because maybe her thoughts are, if I don't deliver, I might lose my dignity, my respect, my worth my status or even my job. So often when people are putting pressure on you, it's not because they want to annoy you. And that's why I believe that

empathy is so important. So show empathy and put yourself in her shoes. Think about what she needs as well. So you have to think about what are the needs of the person, you're going to say no to, as well. And, of course, don't ever forget your own needs. So it's about understanding what the needs are of the person you're going to say no to, but also your own needs, then what I often see is people defending themselves or attacking the other person, I see this very often in meetings or in conversations, somebody said something to one person, I mean, you cannot handle this, it's like the last time and then you feel the need to defend yourself or to attack the other person. But I believe that these are reactions to behaviours that are not productive instead of responses. And you need to bring the conversation at another consciousness level. So instead of reacting to the behaviours, by defending or attacking the other person, I want you to show empathy and understanding, try to identify the needs, and the emotions of the other person and respond to that needs. When my boss put pressure on me and told me, for instance, I want you to deliver this budgets, and you won't get all the investments you asked for. But you know what, I trust you you've always delivered. So you'll find a way to deliver this time as well. Well, I hated this. For me, this was crushing me, it was crushing me, because I felt like it's not possible to deliver what you asked me and it's not because you're telling me that you trust me that it suddenly will be possible and that I will find a way. For me when the pressure is too high. It's it's going to demotivate me instead of, of make me work harder or push harder to deliver things. So this was crushing me. And I was incapable of accepting this decision. I felt like too much weight and an almost certainty to fail. And I hate failing. I'm still learning to accept failure, because I know it's part of being successful. But this is something that I have still difficulties with. And so when the challenge is too big, I'm like, set up to fail, and I lose all my motivation. Now, if my boss would say that in the middle of a meeting, like I don't care, Murielle just deliver that budget. I don't want to hear about your excuses. And he's in the middle of a meeting in front of shareholders or other colleagues, I wouldn't say no, at that moment. Because that might put him in a bad position. So I would say, Okay, this is really an important requests. And I know how important it is for you and for the organisation. And so I want to be sure that I answer properly, I don't want to make promises that I don't keep. So I need to check with my team and to make some new calculations, and then I'll come back to you. But then afterwards, I would say, you know, what you're asking me, it looks great in a PowerPoint, it looks great in Excel. But I can tell you that if you simply like leave it like this, first of all, I won't be able to deliver. And secondly, I feel really bad because I like to deliver, I don't want to be bad in my job, I like to be good at my job. But if the pressure is too high, I just feel like giving up and this won't work for me. And it won't work for you.

If I come back in three or six months. And I tell you, well, just like I thought I wouldn't I didn't manage to deliver this, because that will put you in a bad position as well. But I know you are under pressure. So I have to say no to this request. But can't we find a way where we help each other something that you and I can commit to but that doesn't put you in a bad position towards your manager neither. So really something that you can sell to your manager, and I can sell to my team and I feel confident I'm able to deliver or almost able to deliver and by expressing my note this way, it has always worked for me. How I did that was by showing empathy towards my manager. And I know it's not easy because in that moment you might be angry that he or she is putting so much pressure on you. But I believe that this is the best way to get what you want and what he or she wants Because we all want impact, but also balance and meaning. And if you're only having impact without balance, that's a really, really dangerous place because you risk burning out. And everyone is then worse off at the end. And I think you have to ask yourself that question, what is the price that you are willing to pay for that next promotion for that

good evaluation for not disappointing your manager or for that salary increase? Are you prepared to pay the price of your health, your mental health, your physical health, or your family life? Because if that's the price you're willing to pay, then of course, you can say yes, to many things. But if you're not ready to pay that price, well, you will have to say no more often. And remember that extremely successful people, they say no to almost everything, just look at Steve Jobs. Look at Warren Buffett's look at Elon Musk. They say no, a lot. They don't offer many products, they offer a couple of products with only a few options. And they put all their efforts on that instead of trying to do a lot of things. And then another thing I've noticed is that the people that say no, but say no, in a very human, constructive and empathic way. But still a firm no DOS, people, they often get the promotions, they often get more respect than the people that say yes to everything. And, and I often like to say in in my career, there were three times where I really had to say a big firm No. And I had a complaint to make. Because it wasn't okay, what people was my shareholders or my CEO was requesting. For me, it was completely unrealistic. So I had to have these conversations. And the first time, I had this conversation in the way that I described it to you so with a lot of empathy by expressing my emotions, also, by expressing my fears, I find it always useful to express my fears, because nobody can get angry at your fears, and it's very human to express your fears. Well, by doing that, the first time, they accepted my know, and they gave me a salary increase. The second time, they gave me a bonus of six months. And the third time, I was offered a huge promotion, that I refused because I decided to change jobs. But I believe that by saying no, people respect you more, especially if you master the art of saying no. While people that say yes to everything, and then in the end, burnout, or don't deliver, or don't perform as they should, because at the end you will disappoint If you say yes, every time to every request. Well, those people they don't get the promotion. So try to remember this, that when you say no, okay, in the short term, people will be angry, but on the long term, people will respect you more. And personally, I feel more comfortable with under promising and over delivering, that's how I function. And, of course, it's

always okay to challenge someone a little bit. And I challenge myself already a lot. But I don't like to challenge myself and commit myself to that challenge, and end up over promising and under delivering, really and think about that. And maybe this is a sentence you could use also when you push back towards your your boss, or customer or the headquarters or whatever. So how do you say no to crazy requests or simply to requests you don't want to take on because it's too much? Well, first, it's important to know what you want from your life and career and remember that because otherwise you will end up working way too much than what you had planned to do. Secondly, notice your sensations, accept them and be nice with yourself. Because that's the way you will be able to respond to a request instead of react to a behaviour. Thirdly, show empathy try to put yourself in the shoes of the other person. Number four is explain how it makes you feel that requests what your fears are. Just express them. Number five, should the request be made. In the middle of a meeting, and you want to protect the ego of your boss, or of the requester. Well, at that moment, don't say no in the meeting, but commit to commit, just say, you know what, this is really important. So important, in fact that I will come back to you with an answer, because I don't want to commit to something that I cannot hold on to here, then six, say no, and then have a discussion about answering and supporting both your needs, just try to look at Okay, what do you need? What do I need? And can we find here something that we can both live with? Okay, I hope you enjoyed this and it helps you Because remember, it's not because somebody asks you something that you have to do it, and you won't lose your job because you say no, or you won't lose your respect or be less valued because you say No, on the contrary, I know that we

not we haven't been educated like this, because in the past in school, when you said no to your teacher, you got punished for it. But I can assure you that no. If you say no, in a very constructive way, and then deliver what you promised that you would deliver. You will get even more recognition for that in the end. Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a heart if you want more, go to rebel leader with a heart.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.