How to drastically reduce virtual meetings & boost engagemen...

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In this podcast, I'm going to talk about how to drastically reduce virtual meetings and boost engagement. Never in my career have I seen so many people feeling exhausted, disengaged, anxious, or stressed. The workload is extremely high everywhere. I've already heard about doing a capacity analysis several times in companies in the hope of hiring more people. But then often there is no budget or we don't manage to fill the position because we're in a war for talent. Or when we've hired the workload stays high. And we realise that hiring new people might not have been the solution that would lead to less workload. Yesterday, a manager told me that of the eight people in her team tree resigned, one to completely change career and the two others are going to travel. Everywhere people are reviewing their priorities, and the great resignation has started leaving even more workload for those who stay. People are also missing the fun of collaborating the deeper conversations with their colleagues, the informal exchanges that inspire or give this boost in motivation. Work has become very transactional and focused on tasks and projects. And when a team organises an online cooking lesson, a quiz or an online chat, fewer and fewer colleagues come because it doesn't give them enough energy anymore. And of course, when you spend many hours in a virtual meeting, you feel drained, and the perspective of doing something fun in another video conference isn't appealing. According to research from Professor Jeremy Bailenson, the founding director of the Stanford Virtual Human Interaction Lab, there are four primary reasons why video chats fatigue humans, the first one is an excessive amount of close up eye contact, and that is highly intense. In a normal meeting, people will variously be looking at a speaker, taking notes or looking elsewhere, but on video calls, everyone is looking at everyone all the time. Secondly, seeing yourself during video chats constantly in real time is fatiguing. Thirdly, video chats dramatically reduce our usual mobility. In person or audio phone conversations allow humans to walk around and move. But with video conferencing, most cameras are fixed, meaning a person has to generally stay in the same spot. Movement is then limited in ways that are not natural. And the fourth reason why video chat is fatiguing people is that the cognitive load is much higher in video chats. Bailenson notes that in regular face to face interaction, non verbal communication is quite natural. And each of us naturally makes and interprets gestures and nonverbal cues subconsciously. But in video

chats, we have to work harder to send and receive signals. So you can of course apply some quick wins to reduce the video chat fatigue, like with using your video chat window, use the hide self view button so that you don't see yourself anymore. Put your camera further away from yourself so that you can move more, and give yourself an audio only break. And by that of course I mean turning your camera off, but also looking away. Don't look at the other people don't look at yourself, just give yourself a break and listen and still talk but without camera and without really looking at yours that will allow you to recharge your batteries a little bit. So implementing these four solutions will slightly help. But in fact, a great way to boost engagement remotely is by drastically reducing your number of meetings and your workloads. So how can you achieve this? You need to redesign teamwork because hybrids or remote work only enhances what was already present in your team. And by hybrids, I mean working partly remotely and partly from home. So if you're working workload was already high at the office, it became even higher when working remotely. If you had many meetings before you even have more meetings today. And today, most teams have only replaced their face to face meetings with virtual ones. Some have added chat to it. But that is often the extent of hybrid work. And clearly, it doesn't deliver the results we want. We feel drained, stressed, we're tired of these back to back meetings. Do you remember when companies started digitalising. Very often, they started by doing the same as what they've always done, but online. And in the beginning, it led to more work and it wasn't very efficient. But then came the realisation that mindset culture, business models and processes needed to change if you want it to succeed in your digital transformation, and many companies profiled completely changed. Well, the same is going to happen with hybrid teamwork, mindsets, habits, culture, and processes of successful hybrid teams will drastically change. And the teams that don't design their teamwork carefully, will probably remain in the vicious circle of working hard and feeling disengaged. So in fact, I'm here to tell you there is light at the end of this dark tunnel, you might not have to quit to feel meaningful and engaged again. And if you listen to my podcast, you know, I'm all about helping people find meaning balance and impact in their life and career. And working on yourself, of course, is key, you have to change your mindsets and habits if you don't want to drone introduce. But it's not enough changing your teamwork, your processes. organisational structure and systems is also necessary if you want to find that impact and balance. And that's why I also created the course leading to empowerment, where you will carefully design great teamwork with your team. Now, there are five steps if you want to implement great teamwork. And the first one that is really important is you need to increase empowerment within your team. And to have empowerment is not simply about giving more responsibility to team members you have for success criteria, clarity, autonomy, fearless team, and you need an authentic leader to have empowerment. Now, if you're curious to know how your team is doing in empowerment, you can do a Free Self Assessment, just go to key leader.com/teamwork. And you'll find that free assessment there to measure how you're doing on these four success criteria and what your empowerment score is. So the first thing you need is empowerment. The second thing you need is hybrid communication. So it means synchronous communication. And by that I mean what you're doing now, meetings is a synchronous communication, it happens at the same time, when you're chatting and the other person is responding immediately, then you're also doing synchronous communication. Well, if you want to drastically reduce your meeting time, you also need to embrace a synchronous communication. And you can do that with project management tools, with emails, but I really love these project management tools, where you will describe your processes and see what you are working on and see also what other people are working on. Then you also need an interrupted work time. Because that is necessary. You need time to think to recharge your batteries to be creative to step back to analyse something, and then you need planned spontaneity. So in hybrid communication, you need synchronous communication that we all know you will need to reduce that. We need a synchronous communication, uninterrupted work time and planned spontaneity. And then what

we also need is making the work visible because you're not at the office anymore where you can see what other people are working on or hear what they're working on. You need to make the work visible. And that's where a team's playbook where all these aspects of empowerment but also all your pros says your objectives, your roles, your decision making, how you're going to communicate, where all this is described, and everyone can find anything back. So you need empowerment, and you need hybrid communication. The third step you need for great teamwork is to manage not only projects, I know you're really good at that. But you also need to manage your processes and the mood of your team. So processes, it's about looking back, what went, Well, what went wrong, how can we improve it, describing them, documenting them and improving them on a regular basis. And again, I like to make them visible. And that's why we use a project management tool where all our processes are documented. And that makes it really easy to then copy a process and apply it to a new project. And you immediately know what are all the steps that we need to implement, and who's doing what. And regularly we look back at them what went well, that we continue what went wrong and could be improved. And we change our process to have less and less problems arising. And then of course, you need to manage the moods and measure the mood. Also, you're not at the office anymore, so you don't know how people are feeling when they're far away from you. So you need to measure that. And plan informal meetings and plan spontaneity, which people will come to if they're not spending all their time in meetings. The fourth aspect you need is cultural alignment. Because with empowerment, visible communication, managing processes, these are all new habits. And this culture is the sum of the habits within your team. So if you want cultural alignment with those new processes, it's all about changing the habits of the people of that team. For instance, the habit of documenting things to habit of giving feedback to each other, the habit of not looking at mistakes as something bad, but something we learn from especially necessary if you want that fearless team that you need for empowerment. So first empowerment seconds hybrid communication with visible communication and sync, a synchronous communication. The third aspect is to manage your projects, but also your processes and your mood. The fourth one is thinking about your culture, because all the other aspects will require new habits. And the last one is an excellent onboarding. Because there we see also that more and more people have a sense of self doubt, they feel their head, they suffer from the imposter syndrome. So in a meeting, and especially a virtual meeting, they might look like they know what they're doing. And they might look confident, or sometimes, but they simply don't speak, it's might be because they have doubts about themselves. And what we've seen in the statistics is that people that have started in remote teams and in hybrid teams, without having an excellent onboarding, will they suffer much more from this imposter syndrome than the orders. So it's really important there again, to plan carefully the onboarding of new people, otherwise, they will leave very soon. And you know that it's already hard with this war of talents to hire people. So when you have found someone great, you better do everything that is important to keep that person happy in your team. So those were the five elements empowerment, hybrid communication, managing processes and mood, cultural alignment and excellent onboarding. Once you've implemented all this, and designed your collaboration with your team, the number of meetings will decrease engagement will increase. You'll reach better objectives and work will be fun again. Now, I want you to look at your team is teamwork carefully designed or was it left to chance. Now if you need help with this, you can go to key leader.com/teamwork where you can assess your team but you can also see what you will learn in leading to empowerment where we will design carefully team work with your team