Podcast #86 how to start slowing down without feeling guilty...

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Hello there, everyone, before diving into today's podcast episode about how to actually slow down, I wanted to talk about a free webinar I'm hosting on March 9, about how slowing down boosts your impact and makes you feel happy. And it's for all the overachievers and workaholics out there. Because I know, it feels great to be a hard worker and to conquer the world, isn't it until it doesn't anymore, and you feel like a human doing instead of a human being, or like you've been run over by a truck, so it's time to hit the brakes and stop the rat race. Join us for this webinar, where we'll show you why running around like crazy isn't the best strategy for you. And your team will show you how your new phone slow mo power can boost your impact and make you feel happy. So you can join by going to key leader.com/events And that is q i leader.com/events. I hope I'll see you there. Now enjoy this week's podcast. Today I wanted to talk about why it is so hard to slow down and pause and what you can do about it to finally manage to do it. In podcast 82. I explained why the workload has exploded worldwide and why we're so busy. And then in Episode 83, I show what the scientific benefits are of slowing down and taking breaks. Slowing down and taking breaks allow you to be more energetic and more performance and not lazy. For instance, you only get creative when your rational brain stops. And if you face problems, which is quite often in a volatile world, and you can't stop to analyse the problem, and to find the most creative way to solve it, you'll probably end up solving symptoms of that problem, and only have a small impact. If you run a lot and don't take enough breaks to recharge your relationships will suffer from your stress and fatigue. At home. And at work. You will interpret situations more negatively and will more often react or snap at people instead of being empathic. So your relationships will suffer on top of this not pausing enough will also negatively affect your decision making. And so although there are a lot of scientifically proven benefits of slowing down and taking breaks, many of you still struggle to actually do it. And so let's dive into the different causes in today's episodes. This is rebel leader with a heart N My name is Murielle Machiels. The first reason the pressure to perform. The first reason why people struggle to take breaks is this pressure to perform. In today's fast paced world, there is a lot of pressure to be productive and efficient all the time. People feel that if they take a break, they might fall behind their colleagues and not meet their goals. This pressure can be even greater in some careers where there is a lot of competition. In these fields. It's common for people to work long hours, and sacrifice their personal life in order to get ahead. But like I said, research has shown that taking breaks is actually crucial for maintaining productivity and avoiding burnout. Studies have found that taking regular breaks can increase creativity, improve decision making skills and reduce stress levels. It's important for people to recognise that taking a break doesn't mean that they're being lazy, or unproductive. Instead, taking breaks is a way to recharge and refocus, which can lead to increase productivity in the long run. But where does it come from this pressure to perform? Well, I think I've already said this,

but in school and in early childhood, you have been conditioned, like Pavlov conditioned his dogs. So in school, you only got good grades if you did everything that was requested from you. And also if you only relaxed

Once work was finished, which today is never, of course. And so not only did you get good grades by doing that, but you have unconsciously linked your self worth to delivering and working hard. And so when you don't do that, when you don't deliver, when you don't work hard, immediately your conditioning kicks in. And you have these feelings of guilt of feeling not good enough of being afraid of what others might think, maybe people will think you're lazy. And that leads us to the second cause of why it is so difficult for you to pause. The second cause is not facing the emotions that appear when you pause. Because it can be difficult to stop and take a break, because it means facing emotions and feelings that we may have been avoiding. When we're constantly running busy and focused on work. We don't have to think about what's bothering us or what we're feeling. And when we take a break, we suddenly have the time and space to confront these emotions and feelings. And for some people, this can be a scary and overwhelming experience. They may be dealing with feelings of anxiety, depression or stress. And the thought of having to confront these feelings is daunting. But it's not only that sometimes you just feel uncomfortable, a little bit guilty. And that's enough to suppress these feelings and continue being busy. It's easier to keep busy and avoid these emotions than to face them head on. And it's important to understand that it's normal to feel scared and overwhelmed when we take a break. Or it's normal to feel uncomfortable when we take a break in the beginning because it's your conditioning that kicks in. Just like Pavlov's dogs are salivating when they hear the bell. When you are taking a break, your conditioning kicks in. And there is a little voice in your head saying you're not good enough, you're lazy, you're not worth it. So it's completely normal. But it's important to recognise that taking a break is a necessary part of maintaining good mental health and being performance. By facing our emotions, we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves. And we can find ways to cope with the challenges in our lives. Negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, anger, sadness, are natural and unnecessary parts of the human experience. However, when these emotions are constantly suppressed and not faced, it can lead to several very negative consequences. Research has shown that avoiding or suppressing negative emotions can lead to increased level of stress, anxiety and depression. And this is because our emotions are stored in our bodies, and not processing them means that they accumulate and continue to affect us. This can manifest in physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension, sleep problems, as well as mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. So it's really ironic, but if you don't listen to your negative emotions, they will only become bigger and bigger until it can take over your life and really have a very big impact and negative impact on your life. And then suppression of emotions can also affect our relationships and interactions with others. Because we might struggle to communicate effectively, which can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. It can also prevent us from forming deep and meaningful connections with others. Just look at yourself. How do you feel when you're stressed? anxious, depressed, how is your relationship doing with others? Then also, suppressing negative emotions can have a long term effect on your mental and emotional well being. It can even prevent you from learning and growing and can

can lead to a lack of self awareness and emotional regulation skills. And so you get into this negative loop, where in fact, negative emotions are feeding more negative emotions that are feeding more negative emotions, until it really becomes like a monster inside of you or something inside of you, that takes over your life, your performance, your relationships. So the best way to deal with emotions is to simply notice them, and accept them. And accepting means just that. I accept that it's there, I

accept that I'm feeling it, you might not like it, but you just accept that it's there. And then again, research shows that in a couple of seconds, that emotion will go away when you fully surrender and except that it's there.

Another reason why people struggle to take breaks is the fear of missing out. In today's connected world, it's easier than ever to be connected to work 24/7 People are always worried about what's going on at work and what they might think be missing out on if they take a break. And this constant connectedness can lead to burnout, but also simply to a decrease in your productivity. The fear of missing out can also lead to feelings of guilt when people are taking a break,

you might feel that you should be working all the time, and that taking a break is a sign of laziness. And this can make it difficult for you to fully relax and recharge during your time off. So it's important to recognise that taking a break and disconnecting from work is a necessary part of maintaining good mental health and productivity. By taking breaks you can recharge and come back to work with fresh energy and clear mind.

Finally, there is the guilt that many people feel when taking a break. Some people feel that they should be working all the time, and that taking a break is a sign of laziness. This can especially be true for people who are self employed or who work in high pressure jobs. This guilt can make it difficult for you to take breaks and fully relax, you may feel that you're not living up to your own expectations or the expectations of your colleagues or boss. It's important for you to recognise that taking a break is a healthy and necessary part of work. In conclusion, taking breaks and slowing down is essential for good mental health and productivity. It's important to recognise the pressure to perform the emotions you might feel the fear of missing out and the guilt of relaxing and to address these issues in order to create a more balanced and sustainable work environment for you, of course, but also for the people who might lead. taking breaks can increase creativity, improve decision making skills and reduce stress levels. Now, I just wanted to go over now this feeling of guilt, or the feeling of feeling lazy. When you stop. How can you best deal with that? Because many of us feel guilty or lazy when we take a break from work or slow down. And this is a very common experience and it can be very difficult to overcome. But it's important to remember that taking breaks and slowing down is essential for your well being and performance. To deal with a feeling of guilt when you stop. Try with framing your perspective. Instead of Ewing taking a break as wasting time. See it as an investment in your health, well being and performance, which will allow you to be more productive and more effective in the long run. It may also be helpful to set clear boundaries for work and personal time. And this has become very difficult in hybrid times because what we see, again across the world is that this boundary between work and personal time has been blurred. You don't know when work stops and when your personal life starts anymore. But by setting these clear boundaries for yourself, you will be able to disconnect from work when you're not working. And you won't feel as guilty for taking a break.

When these boundaries are blurred, you will constantly feel guilty because you will constantly think of all the things you need to do, and that you're not doing because you're relaxing, and you're relaxing won't be as productive. And to deal with a feeling of laziness, when you stop, try to engage in activities that energise and motivate you. For example, go for a walk, do some exercise, pursue a hobby or interest. And this will help you feeling more productive and fulfilled. Even when you're not

working. Many of us see relaxing, as putting ourselves in the sofa and binge watching a Netflix series. And yeah, it's okay to do that sometimes. But if that is your only way to relax, you probably won't really recharge your batteries. Another helpful strategy is to practice mindfulness and self compassion. Remind yourself that taking breaks and slowing down is a necessary part of a healthy work life balance. And that it's okay to give yourself time to rest and recharge. In fact, you are reconditioning yourself and reconditioning yourself to be more productive and feeling better in these fast changing digital times. Because the conditioning that you have had since childhood, of always working hard and delivering everything that is expected of you won't really be helpful anymore in today's overloaded times. So see this taking breaks and slowing down as a form of reprogramming yourself for the digital times. Now, the other question that I often get from people, once they understand the benefits of taking breaks, and and recharging is that they are afraid of how it's going to be perceived by colleagues, by a boss by a customer, that doesn't really know the benefits of taking breaks that is still in this conditioning of working hard and delivering on everything. And so it's understandable to feel apprehensive about taking breaks and slowing down, especially how it will be perceived by others at work. However, you know, know that taking breaks and recharging is essential not only for your well being but also for your performance. And so here are a couple of tips for dealing with these fears. The first and most important one is to communicate with your colleagues, your boss, your customers, explain your reasoning for taking breaks, and why it's important for you to recharge. It's not because they are not important, it's because you want to deliver an even better job. And most people will will understand and support you if they know the reasoning behind your actions. Secondly, especially if you are a leader with a team. But also if you're simply a colleague, lead by example, if you're in a position of authority, lead by example, and encourage others to take breaks and we charge as well. This will help to create a more positive and supportive work culture. Because of course, if you're the only one taking breaks, and everyone else around you, is working hard and running, and feeling stressed, and that's the normal, it will be harder. It's way easier to learn collectively. So set an example and try to convince others by simply being that example to do that as well to slow down and take breaks. Thirdly, we've already talked about it but set clear boundaries. Make sure that you have a clear boundary between work and personal time, so that you can disconnect from work when you're not working. Because this will help you avoid feeling guilty for taking a break. If you never set clear boundaries, people will keep asking you think and it will be very difficult for you to say no because you're tired and you want to take a break with these boundaries. Your colleagues, your customers, your boss will know that okay, now I know that after five she's never working. So I'm not going to ask her something unless it's really extremely urgent. And this might be scary at first, but I can assure you from experience is that when you set clear

boundaries from you for yourself, it might make people angry and disappointed at first in the beginning, but on the long term, they will respect you way more than if you don't set boundaries for yourself. And lastly, be confident, we remember that taking breaks. And recharging is an important part of being a performance worker. So be confident and show it you're taking a break, because you want to have more impact. You're not taking a break, because you're lazy. And if you embody this, you will be confident in your decisions, and trust that they are the best for you and your well being. And it will radiate on others as well. So in conclusion, taking breaks and recharging is essential for your well being and your performance, even if others may view it differently. By communicating with others leading by example, setting clear boundaries, using your brakes wisely and being confident you can overcome any fears and concerns, you may have no, go to your calendar, set your boundaries, decide at which time you want to close your computer, stick to it. Put also very important meetings with yourself in your calendar, so breaks that you will use either to recharge your batteries, either to analyse a problem or to be creative, but set these very important meetings with yourself in your calendar, and also decide when you're going to stop working. Another benefit of doing that is

that when you don't set boundaries for yourself, and you think that you have all the time in the world, that if you haven't finished, you will continue working beyond the boundaries that you haven't set. Of course, well, there is a strange phenomenon that happens as well. When we believe that we will be able to do everything on our to do lists, we often start with the less meaningful thing with the task that the colleague that is shouting the most is asking for us with the latest email we received. And so we start working on the urgent things instead of the important things, you will see that also when you start setting boundaries for yourself. That's also when you know, Okay, I'm leaving at five. So I know I won't have time to do everything. I have to work on this and this first, and that's when you will prioritise your big rocks. Well, if you constantly believe that you will be able to do everything by working harder or running faster, you will probably work way more on the urgent stuff and not the important stuff. So I hope I have convinced you and given you some tips and tricks, but also change your beliefs a little bit and that you will start your new life with way more boundaries with slowing down more and taking breaks by rebel leaders with a heart