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PODCAST

Episode 29: Overcoming Leadership Challenges with Candela Iglesias

0:00:00.0 S1: Welcome to the Neon Noise podcast. Your home for learning ways to attract more traffic to your website. Generate more leads. Invert more leads into customers. And build stronger relationships with your customers. And now your hosts, Justin Johnson and Ken Franzen.

0:00:16.3 S2: Hey, Neon Noise Nation. Welcome to the Neon Noise podcast, where we decode marketing and sales topics to help you grow your business. I am Justin. With me, as always, I have my co-host Ken. Ken, what's going on today?

0:00:28.6 S3: Not too much Justin. How are you?

0:00:31.1 S2: I'm doing great. We have a featured guest on today. She is an expert when it comes to leadership and team building, Candela Iglesias. Did I do that right?

0:00:41.9 S4: Almost perfect. Thanks Justin.

[laughter]

0:00:45.9 S12: Candela is a researcher in public health specialists by training. Has worked as a team leader and project coordinator with academic institutions, hospitals, and not for profit organizations. She relishes the challenges of leading multi-disciplinary teams. And she is passionate about using research and evidence to improve global health and social programs. Candela carried out her PhD in research at the Pastor Institute of Paris, and earned a Master in public health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has worked in Mexico, South Africa, France, and I believe, Norway. She is an avid hiker, and enjoys obstacle course racing and scuba diving. We're gonna have to hear more about that, for sure. Candela, welcome to Neon Noise. How's it going today?

0:01:33.5 S4: Hi. Thank you very much for the invitation. It's great to be here.

0:01:37.3 S2: Awesome! Do me a favor and fill in the blanks on anything I might have missed. And share a little detail about your background.

0:01:44.9 S4: Well, I guess you've said most of it. I basically, I think I came to leadership and team building the way many of us come actually. We come through the back door. We don't really have any formal training on it. And that's a little bit also what the book talks about. How do you tackle leadership and team building when you actually don't have any formal management training?

0:02:12.7 S3: Sure.

0:02:15.0 S2: Yeah.

0:02:15.1 S3: So you're the author, the book you're talking about is, "Build Your Dream Team: Leadership Based on a Passion For People." Who did you write this book for? Who's the audience? Or who's the best audience for to read this book?

0:02:30.8 S4: That's an interesting question, because originally I wrote the book for people who were like I was. Or where I was many years ago. And that is... You come into a leadership position because you're good at what you do, and then you continue evolving in your job. And now you get offered a leadership position, which is great. The only problem is you've never had any formal management or leadership training. You might be a great marketer. Or you might be a great designer, but you've never been in charge of a team before. And I think that happens to a lot of us.

0:03:07.6 S3: Sure.

0:03:08.6 S4: And then we all of sudden are in this position. And basically, we don't know where to start and we get overwhelmed fairly quicky. So originally that was a little bit the audience that I was aiming to for the book. But what's been interesting is that I've had many reviews and comments after the months that the book has been out telling me that, actually it's been very useful for people who do have that training. For people who have been in management and in leadership positions for quite a few years. Because they maybe

were stuck on a problem, or they were using certain techniques for many years. And then the book opened up other possibilities for them.

0:03:56.8 S3: Okay. So what are some of these challenges, or these problems, that either, whether I'm a brand new leader, I've just been promoted or placed as a team leader or a manager. Or let's say I'm a veteran, but I'm employing these tactics you mentioned that are identified aren't working well. What are some of these problems, these challenges, that you see these leaders face?

0:04:26.6 S4: I think that in the very beginning, people are faced with doubts in their abilities, so it's self-confidence issues. And especially when you don't have the training because you say, "Okay. Now I'm in charge of this group, and I said yes to this new job post, but am I ready to do that? Where do I even start, right?"

0:04:49.8 S3: Right.

0:04:50.3 S4: And then the second one is that very quickly we get overwhelmed because there's so many... When you are part of a team, you have a number of requests on your time, and you have tasks to do and so on, but when you switch to a leadership position, and you are in charge of a team, all of sudden the amount of requests on your time will double, or triple, or just grow exponentially. And all of a sudden you find yourself working extra hours, completely overwhelmed handling e-mails, and telephones, and then requests for meetings, and you're not getting your own job, your own work done. You're not getting any progress on your own projects.

0:05:33.2 S4: So I've seen this happen a lot. And it happened to me, of course, back in the day. And I think these are the two main problems that... Let's call people beginners are. And the other two sets of problems, I think everybody has them, like the beginners, the intermediates, the very experienced, the veteran leaders, everybody. And that is problems we all have in life, whether as team leaders or in our personal lives. And that's communication issues and conflict, handling conflict. But of course when you're in charge of a team the difference is that you can't just ignore other people, or ignore the conflict as you could do when you were a team member because now the efficiency of the whole team is on your shoulders. Right?

0:06:21.8 S3: Exactly. Alright.

0:06:24.3 S4: So you need to handle both communication issues and any conflicts that arises.

0:06:29.5 S3: Okay, so let's touch a little bit on a couple of these items here. Now, overwhelmed is one that I find interesting because you change this role, this position. If you're used to being the designer and now you're the leader of the designers, you're the team leader. You do have a different set of responsibilities that includes lots of things you've never done before and I could see very quickly how someone become overwhelmed. What are some suggestions that you could give us? Maybe how to overcome being overwhelmed. Because I think a lot of our listeners might be able to identify with this feeling.

0:07:16.6 S4: Yeah, I think it happens a lot and sometimes even to people that have a lot of experience. When a lot of things are happening at the same time the difference is that now you will have a lot of pressure from your team, and also from your bosses, or from the organization. Some of the things that I talk about in the book is one that you need to protect your time. No one's gonna protect your time for you. So you need to make sure that every week you have spaces for your own work where you don't get interrupted. And then you can always communicate this to your team, "these are the times where my office is opened, where you can come and we can talk. And these are the times where I'm going to be working on project and I ask you not to interrupt unless it's an emergency." Because emergencies do happen and you need that flexibility as a leader.
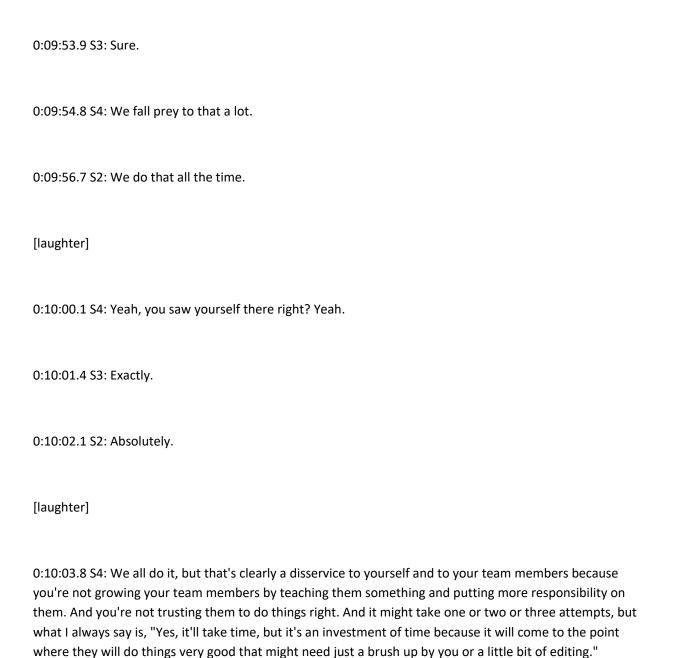
0:08:14.4 S3: Sure.

0:08:14.5 S4: So protecting your time I think is one of the most important one. And we can do that by creating what I call creating compartments, time compartments. This time compartment is for management and leadership. And then I go and I talk to my team and we have meetings or I go and talk to the bosses, or to the organizations, or other departments. And this time compartment is for my own work. And maybe you have a time compartment that is for growing your team members for specific performance reviews, or meetings with your team to see that if everything's going fine. So I think that's one of the best strategies that we can use.

0:08:55.7 S4: And the second one is something that a lot of people have trouble doing, and that is delegating. Because now you have a leadership position and you feel that everything is under your responsibility. And

that you should take care of everything, and be always available and always in control. And there's different reasons why people have trouble delegating. Some people have trouble delegating because they feel that there's their responsibility to do certain tasks. Others because they don't even know what they can delegate, like what part of the new job is their responsibility, and what can they delegate to the team. I see that a lot too. And also, and we all do this, everyone of us I think it's the part of saying, "Oh my gosh, it's gonna take so long to teach John how to do this. I just rather do it myself." Right?

0:09:53.9 S3: Sure.

0:09:54.8 S4: We fall prey to that a lot.

0:09:56.7 S2: We do that all the time.

[laughter]

0:10:00.1 S4: Yeah, you saw yourself there right? Yeah.

0:10:01.4 S3: Exactly.

0:10:02.1 S2: Absolutely.

[laughter]

0:10:03.8 S4: We all do it, but that's clearly a disservice to yourself and to your team members because you're not growing your team members by teaching them something and putting more responsibility on them. And you're not trusting them to do things right. And it might take one or two or three attempts, but what I always say is, "Yes, it'll take time, but it's an investment of time because it will come to the point where they will do things very good that might need just a brush up by you or a little bit of editing."

0:10:36.0 S2: Yeah.

0:10:37.0 S4: So it saves time in the long run. And then I think the last category is people that avoid delegating, specially with young people that are very new to the leadership position and so on, they don't want to be seen as not being in control or not doing their job, or even thinking that if they show someone else how to do it they might lose a little bit in competition because they're transferring skills to someone else. And they might have been very well known for that particular skill or that particular task.

0:11:16.9 S3: Sure. Okay.

0:11:18.2 S4: So I think in the book I talk about many of these reasons why we don't delegate and what we can do about it, and how can we delegate better. Because I think it's a great service to ourselves and to our teams and it creates more cohesive and more efficient teams for sure. And it makes our own lives easier. Right? As well.

0:11:40.5 S3: It definitely does, when in delegating, I found it always challenging with. I think even that latter part I think Justin will agree with me is you possess these certain skills that you feel have contributed to getting you where you are today and you work your butt off to learn those skills, they weren't just handed to you, and you're just gonna hand those over to someone else?

0:12:05.8 S2: I'm gonna just give this to somebody else? Right.

0:12:08.2 S4: Yeah, it's hard. It's very hard.

0:12:10.6 S3: But to accomplish the end goals, that is what needs to happen in general to get to where you need to go. Now, you mentioned creating time compartments. And I'm gonna ask maybe for a little bit more detail, maybe if you could just expand upon this just a touch. But the time compartments you're talking about, you're actually physically blocking time in your calender and putting it on the calendar? Explain more there about what you're doing with the time compartments.

0:12:38.4 S4: Yeah. One of the things that I talk about in the book is how to organize your time, and then you... The first thing I do in the book is an exercise for people who are completely overwhelmed at the moment and they can't even think about next week 'cause they just have so much on their plate right now. And what I ask them, one of the exercise that I go through in the book is how can you just... Getting things under control right now, what's on your plate right now. And once that is done, then you can start planning long-term. For a year, a one-year plan or a three-year plan. And then you drill down from there into quarterly plans and monthly plans, and then finally, weekly plans. So a lot of what I propose is based on these weekly plans. And that's where you create your time compartments.

0:13:31.7 S4: So you start planning your week, and then you say, "Okay, next week I have... I'll start with everything that I cannot move around." and that's a meeting with the boss, or a meeting with the board of directors, or we've been invited to this meeting with a client, etcetera. All the things that you cannot move, then you block first in your calendar 'cause you have very little control over those. And then you block time, you might always have, say, a team meeting every week on Fridays. So you block that time and that's always blocked in your calendar every single week. And then you can go and block specific times for what I call management and leadership. And I recommend doing that every day for at least two or three hours a day because that's when you basically... It seems like you're not doing much but that's when you're basically putting in the seeds for great communication and great team performance.

0:14:35.8 S4: And that basically means going around... Depends on the size of your team, but it means going around, seeing what each person is doing, what are they struggling with, how can you help them, and just being available for them and for meetings if they need it. So sort of like either an open office space of time, or actually moving around the office and going and talking to people, just catching up. And then, you book other times in your calendar where you tell people that you're not available. And that is not because you have a meeting or anything, it's because you're working on your own things, because you're planning your strategy, because you're writing a report, whatever it is that you're doing. And then you let people know because that's where miscommunication starts. You get interrupted and you get angry, and you always say, "If it's an emergency, if it's something really urgent," and then you define what urgent means and that's very important, "Then come and see me, and it's fine if you interrupt me."

0:15:40.0 S2: I think that's what's difficult is always trying to find the time to block out for yourself.

0:15:45.8 S4: Yeah, it is. It is. But it's very important because if not, you'll get behind in strategy and you get behind in thinking about how your team can do better, and behind your own work, whatever that work is. Whether designing or writing or etcetera.

0:16:01.6 S2: Yeah. Completely agree.

0:16:04.2 S3: It's challenging. I agree with Justin. It's challenging. However, I found if I don't put it on my calendar as an actual... As you called it, a time compartment, if I don't put it on my calendar in a block, I will let my door will be open and I will allow distractions, and I don't mean that to be in a negative way, but it's interruptions maybe is a better term, interruptions to disrupt if I'm really trying to get some flow going. Or I even find myself jumping back and forth trying to multitask with going into the managerial, walking around to the different members of the team, seeing how things are going, talking to them about projects, then going back and maybe trying to gain some traction on a project. And then the phone rings and then somebody pops in my office. So yeah.

0:16:53.4 S2: Forget it.

[chuckle]

0:16:56.5 S4: Yeah, that happens to all of us I think, yeah.

0:16:58.3 S3: Sure. And then it's five o'clock and it's kind of like, "Okay well, everyone's gonna be leaving here in minutes and then the phones won't ring, and no one will be here, and I'll start working on some things." And then the wife calls and says, "Okay, are you coming home? And what's for dinner?"

[chuckle]

0:17:16.6 S2: They got all their stuff done but you did not.

[laughter]

0:17:19.1 S4: Exactly, yeah. And that happens a lot, and I think what you said about, "Now it's 5:00 PM and now everybody's leaving. Now I'll have some calm time," that's fair enough. And a lot people use that strategy, but in the end you work late every day because that happens every single day.

0:17:37.3 S2: Yeah.

0:17:38.2 S4: Whereas if you actually put it in your calendar and you tell people about it and you just create a habit for everybody of respecting that time, you will get your work done in time. If not, just talking to people and management will eat up all your time, all your time every day.

0:17:58.3 S3: Absolutely. So, I have to ask you, the title of your book is "Build Your Dream Team," what do you mean by building? Are you suggesting... You're not suggesting firing everyone and then rehiring and...

[laughter]

0:18:12.9 S3: 'Cause that would put everyone on notice here really quickly.

[laughter]

0:18:15.1 S3: I don't think [0:18:17.5] _____ really would wanna hear that right now. So...

[chuckle]

0:18:21.5 S3: Are you talking more about molding others, molding the existing team or a combination of the both?

0:18:28.6 S4: Well, in many of the organizations where I have worked, I have had no control on who gets fired and who gets hired. And I think some... When you own your own business and it's your own team, you have a lot more control there, but sometimes we work for other organizations where we have very little control on who is on our team. So I've been thinking more about the second scenario that you've been painting right now, so how do we... You get a team that is already formed or more or less formed, and how do you build it into a dream team, into a cohesive team that likes to work together, that it's efficient and a team that you're proud of and that you're happy to work it? And one of the first things that I learned many years ago when I faced my challenge of, "Okay, now I have this team, what do I do with them?" It's like, "Oh my gosh, now I'm responsible for all these people." Was that basically there's a very big difference between a group and a team.

0:19:33.6 S4: We have groups of people, but groups of people don't necessarily have the same goal or the same agenda, and that's the difference with a team. When you actually move from a group to a team, you get a group of people that are on the same channel, that have the same goals in mind and they're rowing in the same direction basically.

0:19:55.6 S3: Yeah.

0:19:55.7 S4: And this is a process that has been very well studied by management experts and organizational experts. So the idea behind building your team is that you can either go by default, so you land with a team and you don't know them and they don't know you and then you just let things roll however way they roll and then you don't have much control on how that team is getting formed. Or, you go the proactive way which is what I recommend in the book of course, and that is understanding that there's four phases that every team goes through in their formation.

0:20:36.0 S4: So when you throw a bunch of people together, we all go through this process. And if you think back, what I like to tell people is, "Okay, think back to the last time you were in a PTA meeting or you joined a basketball team or you just got together with a group of people for a one-day retreat or whatever." There's always the same dynamics that happen and this has been very well studied, and those dynamics, those steps

are the steps in the formation of a team. The first one is called forming and that's the first hours, it's the, "Oh, I'm so nice phase," that I call it. We all want to show our best, the best of us, right?

[chuckle]

0:21:19.8 S3: Sure.

0:21:20.1 S2: Yup.

0:21:20.2 S4: Is we are super polite and then we're talking about the weather and we're being super nice, and...

[chuckle]

0:21:24.9 S4: Everything is going very well. And then we get... The team gets a task and then that's when pretenses start to drop and conflict tends to start to happen and that's called the storming phase. And it's called storming for a reason, because this is where things break down because this is where personal agendas will start emerging, and Jim says, "Oh, I want to do it this way," and you might say, "Oh, come on Candela, that's a terrible idea, we're not gonna do that that way." And Justin may say, "I'm the expert in this and I suggest that we do it this way." And of course people, they have the goal, the team's goal in mind, but we all have secret agendas and this is where they emerge, maybe very under the water, but they will still be there. So, I don't know, someone might want to showcase how good of a designer they are and not leave a lot of work for the others or someone doesn't like to work as a team and rather would work alone, etcetera.

0:22:33.3 S4: So when you know that this is coming as a leader, you can actually manage each of these phases. And in the forming phase for example, you can create some team building activities or some activities to get to know people and for people to get to know you and to create a sense of a team, of a group, some challenges that you all need to go through together, etcetera, team building activities. So I was talking about the storming phase, this is a phase where problems start to arise and politeness breaks down and etcetera.

Now, when you're ready for it, when you know this is going to happen, first you know it's just a phase, you know it will go away eventually, you know the team will start to work.

0:23:23.7 S4: If you don't know that in advance, you can lose motivation here and you're just saying, "Oh my gosh, how is this possible? How am I gonna get out of this? What have I done?"

[chuckle]

0:23:33.8 S4: But once you know storming is going to happen, you can plan activities that help the team share their hidden agendas and their anxieties or their worries. They might be worried because they don't understand the task or the goal correctly. They might be worried because they have too much work, etcetera. So using these activities, you can actually make sure that the storming stage, which will happen, goes as smooth as possible and lasts as little as possible. Because eventually, the team will come to what we call the norming phase and this is where the team starts laying down, "How are we gonna do things?" And then we start to agree, after all the conflict, we start to calm down, and we start to agree, "Okay, Ken is going to do this part, Justin will do this part, Candela will take this." And the team starts laying out the rules for the internal work, "Okay, we won't shout at each other. We'll be nice at each other. We'll have beers on Fridays," whatever it is.

0:24:42.8 S2: The beers on Fridays sound good.
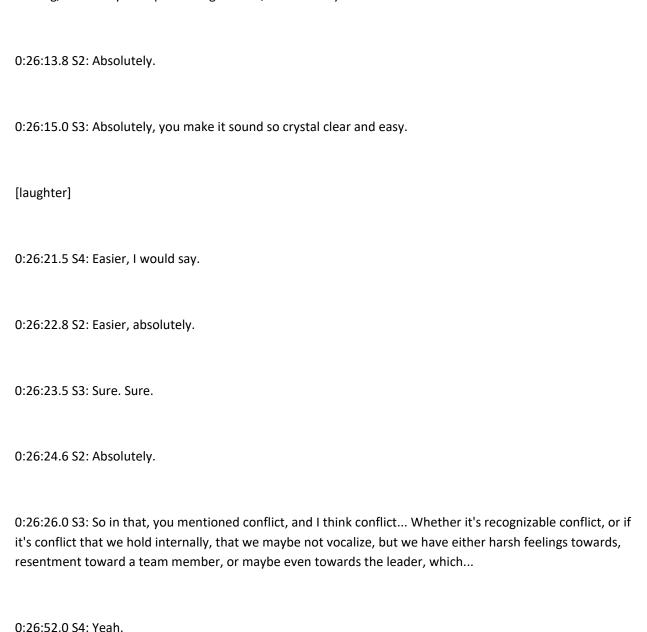
0:24:44.4 S4: Yeah! Exactly.

[laughter]

0:24:47.3 S4: And eventually, most groups come to these phase by themselves, but the idea is that you use the activities to bring them to these phase quicker, and in a more organized way. And then you can also have activities at the norming phase. You can actually, instead of letting the rules become unwritten rules, like people agree on things that are norms and these norms are normally unspoken. And you probably have a lot in your office, or even in your family. Like, "This is the person who makes breakfast. This is the person who

makes the bed," whatever it is and it might not be written anywhere, but those rules exist. The same happens in a team, so what you can do, is actually say, "Okay, let's write it out. Let's spell out, together, what do we want the rules or the norms of this team to be?" And then it's a common effort, and everybody agrees, because you've created those rules together, so it already facilitates a lot communication and conflict in the future. And finally, teams come to the place where you want them to be, and that's the performing stage, where people are actually working together efficiently, and things start to happen, and you start to get results. And even in that phase, you always want to have strategies to make sure that communication is flowing, and that you're preventing conflict, as much as you can. Does that make sense?

0:26:13.8 S2: Absolutely.

0:26:15.0 S3: Absolutely, you make it sound so crystal clear and easy.

[laughter]

0:26:21.5 S4: Easier, I would say.

0:26:22.8 S2: Easier, absolutely.

0:26:23.5 S3: Sure. Sure.

0:26:24.6 S2: Absolutely.

0:26:26.0 S3: So in that, you mentioned conflict, and I think conflict... Whether it's recognizable conflict, or if it's conflict that we hold internally, that we maybe not vocalize, but we have either harsh feelings towards, resentment toward a team member, or maybe even towards the leader, which...

0:26:52.0 S4: Yeah.

0:26:52.2 S3: Might you, so what... Obviously, conflict is not good, but what kinda impacts can that have on the team? And I think that you might have covered, but is there anything else you'd wanna dive into, or anything else you can think of, or the causes of this conflict, and why that happens?

0:27:11.5 S4: Well, conflict is the worst. I think, except for a very few people, most of us don't like conflict, and some of us, actually, very actively avoid conflict. This is also very culture-dependent and I've seen this in working in different countries. Some countries are happy to get into conflict. It's not a problem to get into a big discussion. I'm thinking, maybe of the French culture, and maybe a little bit, the American culture as well. Or the Italians, since that's a little bit of stereotypical, but...

[chuckle]

0:27:44.0 S4: Many cultures are less afraid of conflict than others. Then there's some cultures like mine, like the Mexican culture, and now, I found out, also, the Norwegian culture, that don't really like conflict that much, and we're gonna put a lot of effort into trying to avoid it. And that's where you, maybe don't voice your feelings, or your anger against a certain person, or your discontent, because something is not going right, so that's not necessarily... Open and violent conflict is not good, but the other extreme is also not very productive. Conflict can basically stop the productivity of your team, and it, also, makes people unhappy, and unwilling to go to work, and unmotivated, so it's just not a good thing. It's something...

[chuckle]

0:28:36.3 S4: That we want to, not to avoid, but to prevent or to treat, if it comes to that, if conflict is already there. And I think there's many causes of conflict, and one of the first one that always comes to mind is change. When there's change, there's gonna be conflict, almost always, unless you get very lucky, and you have very good strategies to avoid it, and that's sort of normal, because we all fear change a little bit. We're a little bit afraid of change. We don't like it that much. We were comfortable before and... Dealing with it, so basically, it's a good thing to know, that when things are gonna change, especially when you come in as a leader, it's a big change for your team, then there's going to be some conflict, right?

0:29:21.0 S3: Absolutely.

0:29:23.6 S2: Sure.

0:29:23.9 S4: And then, of course, you have what you were mentioning, there might be, fairer difference of opinions, there might be hidden difference in agendas, there can be personal conflict. You don't like a particular person in the team, but that doesn't mean you can't work with him or her at the professional level. There's not much you can do. You either leave the organization or you need to learn how to work with the people that you don't like that much.

0:29:54.6 S2: Right.

0:29:56.5 S4: And of course, the big, the big, big issue is always miscommunication or lack of communication all together. And that happens all the time and as much... It's sort of the big issue that we're always talking about, how to make communication better, right?

0:30:11.5 S2: Right, absolutely.

0:30:14.6 S4: And then, of course, and sometimes we forget this, even the nicest person can one day, just explode, and that might be because we're all human beings and we have our own stories in our heads and our own personal lives and personal issues and this is one of the things that I talk a lot about in the book. If you, as a leader, don't know anything about the personal lives of your team, and some see this as respect and some see this as separating personal and professional life, but if you have really no idea at all, you want to be able... These people won't come to you to tell you, you know, I'm having a lot of personal issues and I'm afraid they might be impacting my work. So you won't have a clue. And this might really affect the productivity of some of your team members and also create conflicts because that person is just being nasty to the rest.

0:31:10.0 S3: Sure. Or underperforming.

0:31:12.0 S2: Yeah, absolutely. Causing conflict.

0:31:16.5 S4: And then you mentioned as well this thing about personal issues. And one of the things that can also create conflict is that some people deal with lack of self confidence by creating conflict or being a little bit more aggressive than necessary, and that is also something that, as a leader, you need to be aware of.

0:31:39.2 S3: What would be an example? And I agree with you, but I'm just trying to put my finger... If someone lacking self confidence they would act out, they would be more aggressive you said?

0:31:51.4 S4: Well it can be more aggressive or they might avoid doing a certain task and then you don't know why they are avoiding it. And this has happened to me a lot. You ask someone to do something, they say, "Yes, yes, yes," and then you come back to them in a week and there's no progress. And you ask, "What's going on?" and they say, "Oh, well I haven't had time," and so on. And at a certain point you realize they're basically procrastinating. And when someone's procrastinating, normally it's not because they don't have time, but because they are afraid of the task or they're stressed about the task for one reason or other. So if you start from there and you say, "Do you feel confident on doing this task?" Or, "Where do you think the problem is?" Or, "Why has this not happened?" Then you can start digging into, a little bit into where the problem is, and if it's a self confidence problem for the person.

0:32:39.7 S3: Interesting. Okay, that's... And you say that and I recognize, maybe going back in my brain some instances of our team members, and even myself, where I've had a a task where maybe my self confidence wasn't as high, or the task seemed more daunting... And they always seem this way. The task always seems more daunting than it really is.

0:33:04.0 S4: Yeah.

[overlapping conversation]

0:33:04.9 S3: It's not as bad.

[chuckle]

0:33:09.2 S4: Yeah. Once you talk a little it's like, "Oh okay, that wasn't that bad."

0:33:12.4 S3: Sure absolutely. So one thing that I always find interesting is keeping a team engaged, keeping a team motivated and a leader... I don't know, is it the leader's responsibility? Does that fall completely on their shoulders? Or how can a leader keep the team motivated? And the flip side is also I think you mentioned a little bit in conflict, your conversation about conflict, about maybe people getting disengaged or getting burnt out.

0:33:45.6 S4: Yeah.

0:33:46.9 S3: So Motivation or being engaged in their work is great, but can you a talk a little bit more about what a leader can do to keep the team motivated and maybe avoid that burn out?

0:33:56.3 S4: Yeah, I think it is the responsibility of the team leader to avoid burnout in your team. But of course, you can't force people to not come to work or not to work late hours, because you know they need some rest, right?

[chuckle]

0:34:11.9 S3: Sure.

0:34:12.0 S4: People are gonna to do what they want to do. But I do think it's partly your responsibility to avoid burnout and I think team motivation, a lot of that responsibility lands on the shoulders of the leader, but it has to be also a shared responsibility. And I think stating that from the beginning, saying, "I want us all the be responsible for keeping each other motivated, and raising your hand if you think motivation is going down or you don't understand why are we doing this, or why is this important?" I think putting that out in the open is a very good idea.

0:34:47.1 S4: And as to keep a team motivated I talk a lot about strategies for that in the book and I think the first one is to treat, what I call, treating people as people. Your team members are human beings, they're not machines, they're not put there for the efficiency of the organization or the goal.

[chuckle]

0:35:12.5 S4: They're human beings, they have their own lives, they have their own problems, they have their own good days and bad days, and that's why I think it's important to... If a person knows that they're treated with respect and that you care for them as more than just another clog in the organization. That first creates motivation because people feel cared for and then it creates also loyalty to the team leader, and maybe also that extends to the organization. And there's been a lot of interesting studies, some of them done at Google, with all the huge number of employees that they have, on what keeps people motivated and a big factor is the leader. How their relationship with their immediate boss.

0:36:07.3 S4: And I think another thing is, and this has been also researched quite a bit, is that people feel that what they're doing is meaningful, and that responsibility, I do think, falls on the shoulders of the leader. We need to get to the point we, as leaders, are good enough to tell our teams why is it that what we're doing is important, and what's the meaning of it. And if you're not doing this, and this is also about how good you are at sharing your excitement or your passion for what you're doing, and what it will all mean at the end. And sometimes I think a lot of us, because we are overwhelmed, we have very little time, we just share the task, "Oh, okay, we need to do this, or we need to do that," or maybe we share the short-term goals, "Oh, okay, this is where we need to be in three months." But we forget the larger vision: What are we aiming for? What is the image in our heads that the other people can't see? We don't tell them about it, right?

0:37:11.1 S3: Yeah. That's so key because a lotta times, you'll work on a particular component, and you look at the task very literally, but I think sometimes, especially maybe design work or coding, which is what we're very involved with at Neon Goldfish, if we say, "You need to design this button, and here's the size of the button," the creativity of the designer or even of the coder would be limited if they didn't fully understand how it was going to be utilized and how it would fit into the rest of the environment.

0:37:48.3 S2: Yeah. Absolutely.

0:37:48.6 S4: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Into the big picture, no?

0:37:52.2 S2: Absolutely.

0:37:53.6 S3: There you go.

0:37:54.6 S2: Hey, Candela, if you had one piece of parting advice to our listening audience, what would that be?

0:38:01.0 S4: I think what I hear a lot is that people think, even today, people think leaders are born. They say, "Oh, no. I can't be a leader. I can't be a good team leader because you're either born a leader or you're not," but the truth is, it's not rocket science. A lot of us come through it without any formal training, and you can become a great leader. You can become a great team leader. There's a lot of information out there. There's my book, of course, but there's all the books and research that I drew upon to write this book, and we can all build ourselves into better and better team leaders and create great teams. And it's a learning process, and we're all learning all the time, and, to be honest, I find that it's a very fun ride.

[chuckle]

0:38:52.0 S4: So that would be my parting advice.

0:38:52.8 S2: Awesome.

[chuckle]

0:38:53.9 S1: It's not rocket science, you just dive into it and have fun.

0:38:55.5 S2: Dive into it. I love it.

0:38:56.6 S3: Sure.

0:38:56.6 S2: Dive into it and have fun, awesome advice. What's the best way for listeners to get in touch with you?

0:39:04.5 S4: I have a website where you can reach me very easily. It's candela-iglesias.com.

0:39:12.1 S2: I'm going to ask you to spell that for the audience.

0:39:16.2 S4: Yeah.

[chuckle]

0:39:17.3 S4: That's C-A-N-D-E-L-A dash I-G-L-E-S-I-A-S dot com.

0:39:25.5 S2: Awesome.

0:39:25.7 S3: And we'll include a link to that in the show notes, as well.

0:39:29.2 S4: Yeah, and then you can, from there you can send me an email, or you can go to the book. There's a link for the book, and you can buy the book on Amazon, either in paperback or on Kindle.

0:39:42.2 S2: Beautiful. Well, Neon Noise Nation, we hope you enjoyed our conversation today with Candela. Be sure to go over and check her out at her website. Candela, thank you so much for being on the show today. As always, the show notes from today will be available at neongoldfish.compodcast. Until next time, this is Justin, Ken and Candela. Neon Noise Nation, we will see you again next week.

[music]

0:40:07.0 S1: Thank you for listening to this episode of the Neon Noise Podcast. Did you enjoy the Podcast? If so, please subscribe, share with a friend or write a review. We wanna cover the topics you want to hear. If you have an idea for a topic you'd like Justin and Ken to cover, connect with us on Twitter @neongoldfish or through our website at neongoldfish.com.