

Episode 1: Limitless Leaders™: Self-Leadership and Overcoming the Barriers to Becoming a Limitless Leader™

[Introduction]

You're listening to Limitless Leaders™ Podcast, accelerate your mindset, collaboration and performance by developing limitless self leadership, leaders, teams and organizations. Now over to your host - Renée Giarrusso.

[Annemarie Cross]

No, this is not Renée. In fact, my name is Annemarie Cross and I'm hijacking the microphone, for this very special series. We are turning the table around as steps up to the microphone, she's got so much wisdom and insights and expertise on limitless leadership™, and what it takes to become a limitless leader.

So we said, let's feature you over the next three episodes. So welcome to your show, Renée.

[Renée]

Thank you very exciting to be doing this. Very exciting.

[Annemarie]

It is. Now for those of you who have not yet had the privilege to meet or work with Renée. She's a leadership, she's a communication and team performance expert. And she has been working in that area for over 15 years. She's been passionately working with leaders with teams and organizations. She's helping them to flourish by maximizing their performance through targeted communication, leadership, collaboration and connection.

As I mentioned, this episode's part of a three part series. And in this episode, Renée, you're going to be talking about limitless leadership™, whether you're a solopreneur, with a small team, or maybe just even on your own, or you're a leader of a large team - that's relevant for you, or maybe listeners are aspiring to step into a leadership role.

Now in this episode, you're going to be talking about barriers to become a limitless leader and what to do instead. In the second episode, let's just share with people because we want them to, to follow this whole journey across all three. In the second, we're going to be talking about limitless leaders™ how to develop a highly motivated top performing team. And of course, in Episode Three, Renée, you're going to be talking about limitless organizations, how to create a successive pipeline of highly effective future leaders.

And of course, we're going to share at the end of this episode, how everyone can get access to all three podcasts. They are going to be transcribed if people want to read through that.

And we're also going to give them access to your limitless leadership™ diagnostic tool. So promise to share more on that soon.

So let's dive in: leading from the inside out. Something that you believe in Renée, can you define what leading from the inside out means to you, and why this is so important when it comes to limitless leadership™?

[Renée]

Leading from the inside out is all about self-leadership and awareness. And that starts with you. And you can't be leading a team and passionately be on purpose if you don't know yourself.

And awareness for me is really vital and in knowing you know, what you're thinking, what you're telling yourself what you're feeling. And the feedback you get from the outside world that really helps define who you are as a leader.

I look at self-leadership a bit like building a house. So the foundation of a house, you know, you can do a foundation of a house very quickly. But if it's not solid, it doesn't matter how beautifully built it is the house white last the test of time. And it's a great metaphor around self-leadership. And you know, I really do believe we have what we call three dimensional leadership.

So leading self before others before decisions. And the beautiful thing is we're all leaders of self whether you have a team or not. I really you know, I work with obviously a lot of leaders, but I work with a lot of people that are leading themselves and decisions and influence within the businesses the work in.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, I love that. So it really starts with that. So first, and of course, we're going to dive into that a little bit deeper today. But limitless leadership™. That's something as we mentioned, you're passionate about I'd love to get the backstory if you will On how you came up with that phrase limitless leadership™, what does it mean to you and why

[Renée]

Yeah, limitless knows that know me I I do have a limitless mindset probably about eight years ago was when the word really resonated with me, it was my big word for the year and as remained so. And limitless to me is having no bounds, you are evolving, learning and unlearning and never putting a ceiling on who you are or what you could achieve.

I believe everybody is limitless and and you know, people I work with if they really want something that just excites me, because if they've got the will and the motivation, they will make it happen. Limitless is really the sky's - the sky's the limit. And having a limitless mindset, which I've been doing a lot of work on, really sets you up to get traction as a limitless leader.

[Annemarie]

Yeah. Now I have had the privilege of reading through your book, *Limitless Leadership™*. And I know that you spoke about three keys being really important when it comes to limitless leadership™, you talk about commitment, communication, and of course connection too. Can you share a little bit more around each of these.

[Renée]

Yeah, the three C's of being a limitless leader™. So I think first of all, you have to have true commitment. A lot of people have compliance, but commitment is an issue. But it's internal. It's knowing in your heart of hearts, why you do what you do. And I think that's that's, that's vital. The second is effective communication. And really, that's to me, the main piece of anything that we do.

So you've got to be an effective communicator. Communications, all about the response that you get. So as a leader, having those cut through conversations, and deep connections are important. And the third is all about having what I call a true deep connection. You know, we sort of get caught up being human doings, not human beings, and we become I think topical connectors. So it's 'Hi, how are you', we finished people sentences, we're not present, we're not mindful. And I think it's about having less relationships, that go deeper, to connect at a deeper level. And that, to me is a profound thing. And it's missing. And when it's there, the power of that is amazing.

[Annemarie]

I love that you shared that. And of course, we're going to dive deeper into some of those barriers. Because sometimes as leaders, if we're leading team, we're not aware of some of the things we may be doing or not doing that is inhibiting us from becoming limitless leaders™. So let's talk about some of those common barriers and how they show up in the workplace, maybe even how it's negatively impacting the outcome and what we should be doing instead. So what would you say that would be a really one of the key barriers that you will?

[Renée]

Yeah, there's quite a few, as there are in anything in life. And I've seen a lot over the last, especially the last decade working in many organizations. There's six key barriers, and I suppose the first one is leaders not allocating enough time to leading. So they may be time poor, you know, they're rushing around, they busy, they bogged down, their mindset stifled, their health might be compromised, and their work life balance. The impact of this on a team and obviously each individual is the quality of performance, deadlines and missed, connection and development of individuals in each team is stifled. And I think what happens is as a focus on what I call maintenance tasks, so highly operational task, versus where they should be a focus, which is really on progressive tasks, and creating future leaders.

There's a lot of things you can do, I guess, some key tips top of mind, is to reframe. So you know, it's self management, not time management, time is an elastic. So people that say to me, I've got no time, you're never going to have more time than

you have. Now. It's about saying to yourself, we've all got the same amount of time, you know, and there's people that achieve a lot in a little amount of time, leveraging the cracks the time, you know, if you've got that 10 minutes, get some ideas down or have a deep conversation. Delegate to grow others, I think the only way you can grow and get time back is to delegate the things that you don't need to be working on now. So that you can focus on what really matters that's quite progressive. I also really believe that self management affects your headspace and your energy. And I always say to people, you know, if you get home at a decent time, spend time with your family or your kids, but you're on the phone, or you haven't looked them in the eye and you're on your laptop, that's going to affect your headspace, therefore your energy. So that's something we can control with discipline.

A model that I use with a lot of my clients is what I call balanced leadership. And it's really a time model. Picture three columns, you know, you have lead people. So that's all the things like coaching, running a strategy, workshop, all that legacy piece stuff, then the next column is managing activity. And that's the column people just go in overdrive. And that's all the operational day to day stuff we need to do, but we tend to focus too much there. The third column is self development. And you know, the more you can develop your self, the more your leadership will lift. And I think delegating some pieces of the operational, so at home and operational thing would be mowing the lawn or doing the washing, not really rewarding. Where is the leading would be painting the decking or renovating? So that's how I sort of look at it. You know, and I say to clients probably want 70% progressive type task and focus versus 30% in the operational.

[Annemarie]

That's good. And I think you hear so many, as you said, leaders struggling with time and some of those aspects and how we can really start to control our time rather than being controlled by our time and the commitments makes a huge difference.

[Renée]

Totally. And just one other thing I want to add is recent ICF - International coaching Federation statistics show that, you know, leaders that have a coach and a disciplined in and jealously protect their time with a coach have a 57% improvement on time management, because there's a focus there and they consciously aware of leveraging their time.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, one exercise I'm sure you might do this with your clients as well, Renée, is to do an audit of their time. And even if they spend about an hour or two, just tracking the attention yet has been taken all the time, they realize just how much effective tasks we working on and the distractions.

[Renée]

Yeah. And on that something I've just been working on that I really haven't shared yet is you know, with your diary, block your time in colors. So I've actually got some clients at the moment that are blocking leadership type tasks as blue, and

management as green. And you can straightaway see the pattern – am I leading, or managing and to me leading is like Batman, managing Robin, they go hand in hand. But you know, you really want to be doing more of the leading?

[Annemarie]

Great, great tips there. So that was the first barrier. What's the second?

[Renée]

Probably the next one is a lack of coaching, I guess it's a good segue into that I'm very passionate about coaching. And I think a lot of time many leaders don't coach because they have lack of time, lack of expertise, lack of understanding of the benefits of coaching. And they might not like feedback. So therefore the chances are they're not giving their team feedback. And they rely on appraisals, which which isn't right. You know, I've had a lot of clients that resisted coaching, even seven or eight years ago, they looked at it as remedial, and it shouldn't be. The people I coach extremely successful. It's just about maintaining and growing that and there's a client that comes to mind that resisted it. We ran a leader as coach program, they loved it, they were motivated, nothing happened with it. 18 months down the track. I said to them, what's happening and they said no one's no one's coaching. And I said and my bug bear is, people not getting learnings to stick and embedding them. And I said, How are you measuring it? And they said: "What do you mean?" I said, "How do you know that your leaders are coaching?" Yeah. And they said all they tell us if they are and I said you know, it comes back to the old adage, people do what's expected, not expected.

So I said, "Get some schedules done, measure them, you know, best practices an hour, once a month. So on average, 10 to 12 sessions with each person a year, check in at six months, if they've done five out of six, not too bad, but be measuring it and get the buy in, which is really, really important."

Coaching for me, it's all about asking, not telling I've assigned coaching is delegating, thinking, that's a good way to look at it. The more you coach, the more you ask people to come up with their own answers, the less they will come to you because they know you're going to question them. And guess what that gives you back - time. So you can focus on what really matters.

Companies not coaching, you know, theres a million studies out there that confirm - people leave. And especially with the new generations coming through, they want to be developed.

So some key tips there - three really key tips: Ask, Don't Tell, you can start that today. Someone comes up and says What should I do? Yes, it's easier to give the answer but simply say, What would you do if this was your business? Or what three options if you come up with if I wasn't here, which one would you do? As a leader jealously protect your time to coach if you bought coaching in with your team, and then you pull out – you're sending a message that it doesn't matter. And the best leaders I believe, should be seen as a coaching resource.

And of course be across what I call the four leadership postures, which is coaching, which is all about asking, mentoring, which is all about advising, demonstrating and training, which in a lot of the technical companies I work in, there's a lot of that they're all important, you want to do all for that coaching is the one that I see they missed. And there's really not a program I run that doesn't have an element of coaching in it.

[Annemarie]

Yeah.

As you were giving that example about how a leader can coach their team. It sounded as if it was from a stance of empowering, buy in and commitment, because you're asking and getting feedback and allowing your team member to give their thoughts.

[Renée]

Oh, it's totally empowering, and you're being selfish if you're not growing people.

You know, a lot of people say I don't have time for the people side. It's not an or, it's an and. Yes, there's less people in companies now doing more I do understand that I'm a realist. But it can simply be a chat in the hallway, you know, what should I do? Ask some questions. So we call that coaching on the fly doesn't have to always be formal. It can be on an email, hey, what should I do with this? Instead of responding - You might say, Well, what would you do? And who in the team could you leverage and therefore you're building a strength based team?

Yeah. And ask them a couple of times that in that framework, you're going to be thinking about that all, as you said, you'll get your time back, because they're not going to let every time they have an issue. So that's number two, lack of coaching, what's the third?

[Renée]

And the probably the third out of the six, and there's no real order with those, but the third out of the six is a biggie and it's a communication breakdown. So you know, how does that look good, it looks like conversations that aren't cutting through messages that are unclear people becoming too reliant on email, and people not sharing their value and being too operational as a leader.

Obviously, listening skills. One of the rarest skills in the world is to be a profound listener. And obviously, communication and listening go hand in hand. Rapport not being built, because people think rapport and building connections time consuming, which it isn't. And I guess people just aren't adapting their message to the people that they're dealing with. And the impact of this, Annemarie is blurred direction, lack of strategy, and team morale, people feel misguided. There's what I call a limited culture. And performance at the end of the day is lagging. So some key

tips here, face to face, where possible, I have a bit of a saying face to face, then phone, then email.

Email, I get the email trial, I get having to keep a record, but I think it's a cop out. It's being overused. I've been in offices where I hear ping, ping, and they're sitting next to each other. So speak to people, make sure they interpret your message, the best way that they can and that you've checked that they've interpreted correctly, and you've got the response that you want, then back it up with an email.

Another tip is to shape and shift your message. So if you're not getting the response back that you want, and you believe you've communicated clearly, maybe you have in your own mind, but if you're not getting that response, back, shape, and shift your message.

So a little tip here is if someone's big picture, and speaks in bullet points, so I'm that person, speak to me with big chunks of info. If somebody is detailed, give them a bit more detail. So don't change who you are, but amplify by about 20% to match. The more way like someone else, the easier it is to connect and the more buying you'll get. And a key one is ask more questions. And one question at a time. So people always - I see it. Hi, how are you? How is your weekend? Did you go the football? That's all about me wanting to talk about the football? Which I actually don't.

But it's one question at a time listen to the answer and shape your response from whatever you get. Know people's strengths, understand everyone is different, you know, I have a saying people are colors be a rainbow. We have to chop and change. And again, coaching latest studies is that there is 72% improvement in communication skills with people having regular coaching, and a 70% overall work improvement. So can you communication is key. And like I said before, in our leadership pathways, probably half of the programs are on communication. Because if you don't have that, and you're not cutting through internal stakeholders and external stakeholders and customer, and really everyday life, you're not stepping into your real power as a leader or a person.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, all of those are so important. I remember being on a committee once and I think all of those points that you mentioned of what not to do, sadly, was very evident. And I remember, no questions were asked; people's perceptions and assumptions were there, and the communication went via email and someone was offended by how they received it. And the sender said: I didn't mean to be offensive. It was all about communication/

[Renée]

It is and you know, we all know when you're face to face with someone 93% of your message is not your words. So you know, 7% of your message is your actual words, which makes it so important to still, you know, focus on what's not being said. But the words as well.

When we send an email, I could be tired, I could be foggy, I could read it the wrong way. So I always say to leaders, especially when you're expressing and communicating a key message, a structural change, whatever it may be, do it face to face, talk it through, sell on the benefits very, very important - the Why, then back it out within a mile way you can and you know, with today's technology, there's no excuses, you know, there's zoom, there's Skype, there's a plethora of resources we will have at our fingertips.

[Annemarie]

And let's face it communicating face to face, the conversation goes quite quickly. There's no misunderstanding, no assumptions. And what's the fourth barrier?

[Renée]

The fourth one is self development, when people make it not a priority. So they're not allocating time headspace or resource, they're too busy. And they have what I sometimes not always, but sometimes call a bubble mindset. So that's sort of, you know, I know what I need to know, why would I study? Why would I read like a fixed mindset. They don't want to grow. And I think one of the sort of unspoken problems here that they don't admit, a lot of the time is they don't want to admit they could develop more. I've done a recent survey - our limitless leadership™ diagnostic tool that everyone can get access to. And the survey responses we had 30% were only open to growing, but 87% of the respondents said it was possible to grow. So it just shows how powerful those blockers are.

[Annemarie]

Yes, as long as they they're not the ones doing the growth, but yes, it's growth is good for other people, just not for them.

[Renée]

Yes, that's not limitless leadership™. And how can you grow others if you're not growing? To me, it's like a doctor who's unhealthy. Yes, you know, same thing. So not growing as an individual in any their own leadership, they're not going to be informed maybe aren't going to be strategically agile and networked, their team miss out on being grown and exposed to new things in value. And I think all leaders, your job is to add value. And many with a bubble mindset, if you're a person out there who really doesn't believe in growth, I can almost guarantee you're not coaching and giving feedback because you don't value them. And therefore progression and organizational succession is stifled.

So just some really key key tips to get a coach or mentor, I have a coach and I have a mentor. And I change coaches and mentors every year. Sometimes it's a business focus, sometimes it's more of a personal focus. It doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. I don't know many people in my network that don't have a coach or a mentor. Strategically networked is another one. So many people in networked, but not outside of the industry. Go to hangouts go to meet ups go to industry associations. And even if you don't get anything out of it, don't assume that your

team won't. So always share back what you get. And you know, grow, learn and share with like minded individuals. Podcasts, read meetups technology, there's so much we can do now. And I think a big one, as I mentioned is to network outside of your industry. Don't become what I call a career learner, where there are some people I know that just learn and learn and learn. Knowing is one thing doing is another. So just choose what you want to focus on ask yourself, what is it that I need now, that will add value to my leadership, and that of my team?

[Annemarie]

People who don't put emphasis and commitment to this really stifling their own learning and growth. And as we know, the marketplace, the industry that many of these leaders are in probably seeing rapid change, how can we ride through that change and encourage our teams to do that, if we're not learning the latest right and understanding the latest studies, too.

[Renée]

That's such an important and it's important too if you're going into a leadership role, or you're getting a bigger team, or you've changed teams, because your identity changes. And I've been writing a lot about this slightly, you know, people get their new role and email comes out and the team that they've been promoted from within, you know, there's no identity change. So get your team, sit down, ask them what they love that's been happening, what they want to let go of, and what they want more from you. And it's usually adding the value that's been missed.

[Annemarie]

Great. So that was, of course, the variant number four, what is number five,

[Renée]

Number five is untapped motivation, which is, you know, part of emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence, you know, it's, it's a bit of a buzz word, it simply means - understanding your emotional triggers, and those of others around you, and managing your emotional triggers. And those around you.

A lot of leaders have little awareness of their triggers and emotions and they fall can't have a deeper understanding of others. And I put it in the term of they don't know what lights them up. So many people do what they're good at. And they bloody good at it. But they're not happy. And it's because if you understand what motivates you, you'll do more of what you're good at that you actually enjoy. I call it motivational intelligence. And we do a lot of mapping and a lot of team workshops around this. 65% of your predictability of success in any role comes down to being motivated. And especially going into a new role - if you're not getting that motivation within six months, you'll be all excited at the start all committed, all energized, then you dip. When you're unmotivated, you don't know what lights you up, so you don't know you'll feel off, you'll feel off track. Strengths are leveraged as a team. There's no safe space. You know, Google has recently identified, the number

one key trait of a high performing team is having what we call a safe space, emotional security as a team being able to voice your opinion. And if you understand each other more, you're going to be able to feel more open to do that. And that therefore leads on if that's not happening, lack of connection and commitment as a team.

So my key points here are, understand what energizes you? And the way, I if I'm not profiling someone, I will simply say to them, what gets you out of bed in the morning to go to work? What is it if you could do one thing in your job for a whole week - what is that? Now I know, that's not realistic. So for me, my whole business is broken into three areas, thinking, selling and delivering. Delivering is my passion, being out with my clients, seeing them growing, growing it through that process, is what lights me up? I'm good at thinking, I'm good at writing. But I make sure I don't spend a whole week in the office doing that. I actually satisfy that motivated by breaking up chunks of time so that I'm getting that preference.

Find out what energizes others - don't overcomplicate this, it can be as simple as saying, What are you good at that you enjoy? And you know, I did this in a team workshop last week, and people were saying, I love being out with customers. And I said, well are you out enough? No, I'm not because I'm getting bogged down with this. So what could you let go off to free you up to be out doing what really lights you up? Frame up tasks to leverage strengths. So if you've got someone in your team that loves detail and loves reporting, guess what, give them - delegate that to them, get someone who may not like that, to work with them. And it creates a peer group pressure, where you giving them the what, not the how. they get to work together, the person who's showing the other person is lit up because people love to share what they know. And that's one way. Play to people's motivations and your own and develop some team norms. You know, it's as simple as getting your team together and going, what's your favorite thing - flip chart that so when when you We need someone to do X, let's get Mary to do that. And I believe this leads to what I call energetic leadership. If you're doing what lights you up, you know, you're no different than a firework, you're ignited to your full potential, it won't feel like work. And only ourselves can drive this. You know, obviously, there's people that sometimes say, Renée, guess what, I cannot get the things that like me up in the job I'm in, and you know, that's reality. They're in the wrong job. But most of the time, I believe, if you can do what lights you up 70% of the time, you're going to have a pep in your step.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, I love the way that you said that because obviously when you're working on a task that does motivate you that does like you are you're going to perform at a higher level go much quicker through that because it's not going to drag on as often boredom and just that aspect of your work can really drag you down. But then as you said, chunk it up. If you weigh on something where you know your eyes roll, then if you know that after this half an hour or whatever time you're going to be working on tasks you love, you'll be motivated to get it come as quick as possible.

[Renée]

Totally and what's interesting you've just reminded me is if I ever work with people and they say are you know John he's he's really lazy, and I work with John John's not lazy he's bored so people you've got a reframe that so my key there is find out what lights you up do that as much as you can find out what lights others up and leverage a strength based team.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, I love that because someone on your team may love what you don't love that out and tap into their motivated task. What's number six?

[Renée]

Okay, number six, sorry, lacking strategic agility, so, they're not agile. They're not informed or networked, they're not exposing themselves to all levels of the business. And you know, usually this happens because people become time poor, sometimes skill stretched, or could be lacking knowledge.

So the downfall of this is they lack growth in themselves and their leadership, they're going to be managing more than leading if they've got people in their team that want to go to marketing, and they don't understand marketing, and they're in sales how can you grow that person to be future ready for that role? So you need that. Direct reports - a lot of the time people in your team only know what they know if that makes sense. So I've got a few key tips here. So we've got cross training, which is a bit of a term here around so that's where you might have an hour in another department with someone you might job share, you might have half a day out in the field. If you're in sales, in senior roles, you might involve each other in you know, different meetings, not just the normal SLT meeting.

I have a concept called cross leadership. So if you picture a cross you're in the middle leading self, to the sides, you're leading your peers, indirectly or not. Below, you're leading the direct reports. And above you, you're leading - you ready for this, your manager. So I think you're the hub. And if you can be influencing decisions, being involved upwards across way and really involved with your team, you know, you're you're really going to be increasing your strategic agility.

And as I mentioned before, you know, a no brainer – is to network. And I actually don't love the word networking, I call it connecting. And it's networking and connecting with lots of different types of people, different industries, and having people you know that cheer you on, people that challenge you - a bit like our friends in real life, they all give us something different. And I think the time it takes to do that is nothing compared to the payoff and advantage that will give you.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, well, once we identify some of these aspects in our in that it may be impacting our ability to become that limitless leader, it's work on one thing, get that going. And you'll find that often one of them just a slight change can impact across the board – can't it.

And also too and we're going to talk about this a little bit more in Episode Two about limitless leaders™ how to develop that highly motivated top performing team, your team starts noticing, it's a huge win.

[Renée]

It actually makes me smile, because I've seen it happen with clients and it clicks. And you saw, right I mean, if you're, if you're developing yourself, even if you're reading something or watching one TED talk or 99, new talk or whatever, once a week, and you share that at the start of a meeting opposed to sitting down and going Hey guys, here we are, let's do an update. You know, you're going to engage people differently. And I think it's about mixing it up, having some fun. You know, I read a statistic recently that if you do a typical 40-hour week, we spend 75% of our time at work. So hello, let's have some fun and I know some clients of mine fun is in their values and their culture, which I just love.

[Annemarie]

Yeah, so so important. Well, Renée, I'm so glad that we turned the microphone around and had you speak because it's just so wonderful will make such a significant difference in the lives of leaders - if they are on their own in a solo printer if they are overseeing a team and of course if they are aspiring leaders who want to oversee a team now we did promise I did promise at the beginning of the show to share a link on how everyone can access all of these podcast episodes. Also the transcripts if you want to read the episodes as well as the limitless leadership™ diagnostic tool.

The link is www.RenéeGiarrusso.com/PodcastSeries I can't wait to catch up in Episode Two you're going to be speaking about limitless leaders™ how to develop a highly motivated top performing team.

[Renée]

Thanks AnneMarie.

[Outro]

You've been listening to Limitless Leaders™ Podcast, leading from the inside out to develop limitless self-leadership, leaders, teams and organizations. To find out how you can accelerate your mindset your communication, collaboration and connection to become a limit let's leader sign up for our Limitless Leaders™ Podcast series at WWW.RenéeGiarrusso.com/PodcastSeries. That's WWW.RenéeGiarrusso.com/PodcastSeries.