WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
PODCAST

Episode 13

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Host: Annemarie Cross

Annemarie Cross: You're listening to Women and Leadership Podcast, episode 13.

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Hi I'm your host Annemarie Cross, welcome to another episode of Women in Leadership podcast. The podcast that empowers you to reach your full potential whether you're already in a leadership role or maybe you are an aspiring leader now joining me today is Natalie Goldman.

Natalie has 20 years' experience working in learning and development, organizational development, coaching, mentoring, organizational psychology across most industries, government and non- profit. She's also received awards in recent years from Learn X reflecting her quality of work. She has worked with countless non-profits over the past 25 years she's sat on boards, organized events and fund raising events, currently she's on the board of the Women Indigenous Network in Global Sisters. Her passion for working for women and making a difference has driven her career into a new direction, with her starting her own business and bringing together her own capabilities, her purpose and passion 'Launch Pod' was born. Natalie now works with female entrepreneurs to reach their full potential through their business, mind skills for business, and on today's show Natalie is going to share why you need to keep asking for what you would like? How to stay human and what it is like to stay human? And network,

network, network, your network is your net worth. So welcome to the show Natalie.

Natalie: Thank you for having me.

Annemarie Cross: Natalie you're a believer of challenging the norm, being curious and innovating, finding better and different ways of doing things and of connecting and collaborating, I'd love for you to speak just a little bit more before we dive into the key areas you want to share today, about challenging the norm and why I ask this is because so many woman that I speak to, they keep silent, they remain silent, they don't stand up for something that they may see as unfair or unjust because of the fear of what others will say and not being liked, and share a little bit more around your thinking and how you approach this.

Natalie: It's a great question. I think there is a layer there underneath all of that, that most women feel and it's a tone that's used quite a lot but I'll explain what it is, just in case some of your listeners aren't aware of it and it's called the 'imposters syndrome' and it's not something that's relegated to new and younger women into the workforce or running their own business, but it is incredible prevalent even amongst the most senior of women globally, including Sharon Sadburg has attested to having imposter syndrome. So what is the imposter syndrome? Imposter syndrome is that feeling or that thought process that goes through our head which is when we say to ourselves when are they going to find out that I'm not as good as they think I am, or that I'm not as capable? And so there is this real fear that they are impostering their role and sometimes even in their own lives and so often women are held back because they don't want to stand up we're kind of taught that from a young age for girls not to necessarily put your hand up,

speak out, take risks all of that. But when we talk about it from a work perspective it can translate. So there's often an internal fear within us where we often say to ourselves "oh I just don't want to make a wave, I don't want to rock the boat, I don't want to be seen as someone who is pushing the boundaries" strong women are often perceived as aggressive not assertive, and so it's a double edged sword for many women out there. So what I would suggest is yes choose your battles it's important not just to say something just for the sake of it, but if you really feel very passionately about something, you really see that let's say you're in a meeting and you see that the numbers aren't right or that you don't agree with what somebody is saying, then you know what this is your time, you really need to step up and have your voice heard, because most of the time, everybody sitting round the table is thinking something like what you are.

Annemarie Cross: Yeah such great words of advice and one of the things that through the women that I have spoken to, and I'd love for you to share some insights around this too, because I think as women we often take our strengths for granted, sometimes they are quite natural for us and we don't recognise that they are strengths, so our level of self-awareness, in fact you know the more self-awareness I have about myself and strength from different assessments and speaking to people who can mirror these back, the more confidence, this inner self confidence, so that when that is aligned with a message or a purpose or a passion that you have to, wanting to speak to something then I think that just allows us to step forward with a little bit more sense of you know that security. What do you think about that self-awareness and being clear and sure about the strengths and what we bring to the table?

Natalie: Yeah look strength is a really interesting one. I think when were at school or even in the work force you know we're focussing more on, you know what's wrong with us, where are our gaps and what do we need to build on? So from very early on we are taught whether you look at 360 degrees surveys or even school reports you know, I remember going to mine and they said you know Natalie is really good at this but we really need to focus on that with her and it continues on to 360 degrees with leaders as well not just school children, and I think there has been a great shift away from what's wrong with you and what do we need to fix to a strength based approach, and I think it's a really important approach for two reasons.

1. Because we're not really here to point out what's wrong with you, when you look at the great leaders around the world. Not one single leader is rated everything, each leader brings very special unique talents and attributes to their leadership role, and I think a great leader can't be good at everything, but what they are good at is knowing their strengths, having great self-awareness and building a great team around them to be able to complement them on the areas that they are not so strong at. So that is a really important thing.

2. By focussing on what you're not good at is a really self-deprecating type of an approach. It really doesn't go well with trying to I guess create a confident approach with going forward. So having self-awareness is absolutely essential when it comes to understanding what your strengths are and that self-awareness needs to extend into tools like a 360 for example and hearing back and mirroring from others well how do you see me, what are the strengths that I bring to my team, what are the strengths that I bring to the organization, not just what do I see and so having a mirrored approach really helps broaden our self-awareness

and our understanding of who we are, and the valuable contributions we make as a leader.

Annemarie Cross: Yeah a great reminder and I like those 360 degree feedback tools and I think also too you know focussing too much on our weaknesses can keep us from focussing on what we do really well, but one of the things and I'm sure you say this too to people, that if you find that some of the weaknesses are going to inhibit you from shining in your strengths and using them leveraging in the workplace, then maybe look at okay what can I do differently so that that weakness does not continue to be a barrier for me. So let's dive in, you believe it's important to keep asking for what we want, what we like and I think Natalie, this again can be a bit scary for women, we don't like to bother people, so I'd love for you to share some insights here so that we really can stand in our power and ask for what we want?

Natalie: Absolutely, look it really comes back to the whole concept of self-awareness and being clear on our own personal goals and objectives as a leader are really, really important, because if we get all airy, fairy and vague about the direction of our career, about our organization and if you're a business owner then your company. You need to be incredibly clear about what it is that you need or want so that when you're engaging with people there's almost a clear agenda. I know that kind of comes off a little bit let's say great in a way to have an agenda going in and saying this is what I need, but in actual fact it's really helpful because if you've go into a conversation with somebody without clarity around what it is that you'd like to achieve out of that conversation, then the conversation will just be endless and go nowhere.

Annemarie Cross: And I think that's intentional isn't it you are going in there with mindfulness of the goal and yeah absolutely agree.

Natalie: So to have as clear a goal in your own mind what it is that you'd like to achieve from that conversation and importantly so what you would like to get of that person as well being open to the fact that they might want something back from you as well, but having that clarity really helps engage as a leader in particular. It gives off an air of, you really know what's going on, you have clarity, you have purpose, you have focus and these are things and these are leadership attributes that a lot of people look to.

Annemarie Cross: I absolutely agree and in fact one of the things I would love for you to share as well, one of the conversations I was having with one of my clients, she is a GP and she is a great leader of her business and wants to expand and that requires her to go out and build her network, and I know you're going to speak about this in a moment too, and as we were talking about and doing some role play about how she would approach the mand what she might say, she said I don't want to be a bother and I don't want to continue, and it's this mindset thing. I said to her hang on a second you are presupposing that you are going to be bothering them, what about the great results that through collaborating with you they're going to achieve and be able to offer their clients. So I think as women we really need to do a double check what are we telling ourselves what's our mindset. Speak a bit more about that if you would?

Natalie: look it's a fascinating area and it's quite a broad one on which I could probably talk for hours but I won't. For me it really comes down to the concept of valuing self-worth. When as women in general and I did a presentation very recently at

the conference about the global pay equity gap and we talked about you know the value of women in the workforce versus men and it's clear that women are not valued as much as men I mean if you look at the pay gap in Australia it's 17.9%, globally the average is 22.9%. It's huge, absolutely massive. So what does this say to our young women, and our girls and also women in the workforce that we're not as valued so when you have clients especially business owners or anyone for that matter women wanting to get into a conversation to negotiate they are already starting on the back foot. So women need to understand and be aware the self-awareness comes back in and actually truly recognize their own true value and their true worth and not let external factors dictate that, and I'm very, very passionate about this because I see time and time again amazing women putting themselves down, devaluing their true worth and the value that they contribute and as you mentioned with your client you know they don't want to be seen as a bother. You know if I have a really great GP who is going to be able to provide me with a fantastic advice or guidance that to me is not a bother that's a true value. But we don't see it that way. So women have to as you mentioned about mindset, shift their mindsets, not be so influenced by external factors that influence on our levels of self-worth and self-value and really start getting into the habit of building that up themselves.

Annemarie Cross: Obviously person after my own heart and passion too, because it really does and I mean if we have a look at in the work place sometimes women will before they even get to state what they wanted to share will say "you may not be interested in this" or " I don't want to be a bother" we almost excuse ourselves for having an opinion and the moment you say that everything that follows is being discredited because people are thinking well hurry up and say what you have to say. So we

really do need to be mindful of how we are having the conversations, what we are saying to ourselves and what we are allowing to come out of our mouths before we have to share what we want to share with people so.

Natalie: Great point.

Annemarie Cross: Do you have any examples of that?

Natalie: Yeah absolutely one of my other key focus is powered language. There is a great You Tube clip which I can share with you and then you can share with your audience later on, which really focuses on that power of language, and how women so often belittle themselves and disempower themselves in their conversations and you mentioned a great example there, but just to get another one in a meeting for example a woman might just say " I just have a suggestion" a woman might just go intoa room where they want to talkto talk to somebody who is at their desk and go do you have a second I just have a quick question I want to ask, or a little question. So words like just, little, these kind of words belittle us. So I actually banned certain words out of my vocabulary, around my colleague's vocabulary, client's vocabulary, even my children's vocabulary, particularly my daughter. Words like 'just', "do you have a second, I just wanted to ask you a question?" it seems completely benign and nothing but in actual fact just belittles and disempowers us. Words like 'should' which we often tell ourselves, "we should so something." No, if you want to or need to do something absolutely, but should is another word. So words and language is incredibly powerful and women in particular are really good at putting themselves down. So I think we need to change the way we see ourselves, consider being incredibly

self-aware of the words that we use, and it's not about being more like a man, it's more about using words that don't take away our power.

Annemarie Cross: Yeah, Amen. [Laughs]

Natalie: [Laughs]

Annemarie Cross: Alright let's talk about staying human and why this is so important when it comes to leadership?

Natalie: Look there is that term that's come out of the last used around 'authentic leadership' and I'm a huge, I have a massive I don't like saying girl crush because I don't believe in calling a woman a girl, I have a huge woman crushon Brene Brown and she's going to be coming to Australia soon I'm very excited to be seeing her live. Her whole piece around vulnerability being the birth place of innovation, of change, of true authentic leadership is so true and so real. I think the more we realise who we are as an individual that we have strengths, but we also have weaknesses and very importantly that the people around us are just the same. That we are dealing with people here, those are human experiences, and work that we do does not encapsulate hours or work tasks, it encapsulates emotions, things that might be happening outside of the workforce and so by recognizing the true humanity of the world we live in, showing the vulnerability as a leader enables us to be I believe a stronger leader and so one of the fascinating things that Brene Brown talks about is true vulnerability requires courage and to me courage requires strength, which then links back to true strength and true authentic leadership alone hand in hand, so to me being a human authentic leader is not a weakness it's quite the opposite in order to be a truly authentic leader you actually need to be brave courageous and very strong because you are

showing that you are human , that you have faults, that you have emotion, yes keep it professional, yes it's not about walking in every day having a moment and exploding and all the rest, I don't know what I'm proposing, what I do suggest is that we remember the humanity in our lives, in our leadership style that we remember that we're human and that the person we're talking to across that table whether we're hiring them or we're retrenching them, or whether we're giving them a performance appraisal, whether it'll be good or bad, both of you are human beings in that interaction, and what element does that contribute to that interaction.

Annemarie Cross: There was quite some debate and I remember reading an article on Linkedin published, that were saying the authentic leadership and the vulnerability that leaders you know for leaders is what you've just explained, good leaders and strong leaders are not like that and there was quite a debate going on there. I totally agree with what you're saying and that the more confidence a leader has, the more they will surround themselves with strong people who can contribute to the team maybe in ways and areas that they are not as strong and uniting that team and empowering them to do that rather than coming from a place where "I need to know everything, everybody needs to do what I tell them to do", because that does not empower and allow the team to collaborate and reach outcomes that they really would not be able to achieve if it were not for creating this incredible environment where everybody is contributing. Yes?

Natalie: Absolutely, and I'd add to that, I think where the debate comes in really is the fact that what happens is true leadership you know it's not gender specific, but let's live in the real world for a moment. When you look at the Harvard unconscious bias testing for leadership it does this really great; it's a free test if anybody is

interested and it talks about what is a male trait and a female trait and often, very often leadership is a male trait or perceived as one, so then you have all the traits that are very male about strong and all those kinds of things as opposed to women which is nurturing and collaborative, well let me rephrase this is the perceptions and perceived roles, this is not the reality, so I can understand why there would be that debate because what it is saying is that it is confronting the very roles that define us by gender as to what's a leader. What does a man do what does a woman do? And it really crosses across all those lines and confronts many people.

Annemarie Cross: Now Natalie, networking, building a strong network of key people, this is another area where research shows that women continue to struggle. We're not doing it, so share some words of advice around this area please.

Natalie: Look I think there are a lot of different reasons why women don't like networking and sometimes it's not that they don't like networking, sometimes it's just a physical impossibility. So I'll start with the fact that networking you know really comes from the concept of the boys club of really being able to get deals done, make connections, get new roles, job, offers, those kinds of things and just having that good old connections thing going on. And you know women do collaborate well, they connect well and all the rest, but what happens when we get to the workforce. Well a big chunck of us will often have children and there's a whole motherhood penalty that the International Labour Organization, The World Economic Forum, The U.N, a number of organizations have recognized is a real thing, it's not just something that a woman or two feel, and what tends to happen is when you go out of the workforce to have children and then come back and then go off and so on and so forth, sometimes you come back to a part time role,

or a flexible role, or even if you do come back to a full time role there are a lot of stop start gaps that happen, so networking becomes really quite challenging, because you can't necessarily go to so many networking events after hours because you have other responsibilities as well, there is also the fact that by putting yourself out there your very first comments about leaning in and having your voice heard you know that's one thing within a small group, now multiply that by a lot and have a whole group of people in a room, it can be even that much more daunting, so I'm a huge believer and I've coached countless women around the importance of networking because I truly believe that your network as you mentioned is your net worth. The more people that know of you, the more people that you can connect with each other, the more people that see you as a thought leader in your area, the better your career opportunities will be. But networking really is not an optional thing in my opinion and now that we have Linkedin you can do it from the comfort of where ever you are, the amount of networking I do online far surpasses the networking I do face to face. So I'll give you a really good example, I recently connected with somebody who sounded quite interesting, she even responded to me saying "look I've just read what you do and I'm just starting my business up in Newcastle, but I'm also wanting to put together a networking group for entrepreneurs, would you be able to come and speak to us about the power of networking and why it's so important and all the rest?" and so now I've connected her with a number of other women in that area that I know who live in Newcastle, who run their own businesses and she's already got 20 people in her networking group within two days. And I have never met her, I will eventually meet her, but introductions can be done online, you can really target who you want to really connect with via places like Linkedin, Facebook groups, Twitter, Instagram, you name it, there are so many social

platforms where we can connect with very target specific audiences, whether that be for your own personal development, whether it be for professional connections, whatever the purpose is you know there are so many different ways to go about doing it. Networking face to face is still an important part of it, but it's not the be all and end all, so if you're feeling a little bit shy and unsure start online, you can have Skype chats with people, move on to coffee's and then move on to the big time networking events as well.

Annemarie Cross: Yeah absolutely, and you know speaking of Linked in and networking online that's how you and I connected.

Natalie: Absolutely

Annemarie Cross: I think I clicked, I was reading an article on Linked in and I think you were one of the commenter's and I thought that was a really insightful comment that this Natalie woman has made, who is she? So I checked you out and I thought she would make a fantastic guest, so yes absolutely use the tools that we have.

Natalie: And we still haven't met properly

Annemarie Cross: Exactly and I love what you're saying and I'm thinking that this woman she's of the same as I said mindset and thought so definitely yeah I'm so glad that we have connected.

Natalie: Me too

Annemarie Cross: Very important yes, network, network, network and I think what you said earlier can also be aligned with this to have that outcome, have that intention, because I know that as women we are naturally really good at building relationships, make

sure that there is also a purpose or an intention, not that you always have to go with a goal in mind, but what can you collaborate together, what's the bigger purpose and I think doing that really allows us then to build the kind of network that we know, the men our counterparts are building and that certainly went for all the women too.

Natalie: Definitely

Annemarie: Now what last words of encouragement would you like to leave with people today, I know that you've shared amazing insights already but what would be the one last thing you'd like to remind us of?

Natalie: Look I think this is a bit of a personal favour and I think it's something that I've carried with myself and I impart onto many people around me because I feel we live in a world where there are so many and becoming so many great role models in business and in personal lives, but the reality is our true authentic nature and who we really are is really important because we're so unique, each and every one of us. The values that we bring, our life experience and our thoughts, so I would think it's really important that we believe in ourselves, that we believe that we're good enough, that we are of worth because if we don't believe in ourselves who will?

Annemarie: Yeah love it, love it, Thank you so much for coming on the show today Natalie it's been a pleasure speaking with you, how can people get in contact with you?

Natalie: There are a number of ways, you can find me on Linkedin and on numerous social media, but you can come and have a look at my website thelaunchpod.com and you can reach out and find me that way as well.

Annemarie Cross: Terrific and of course we will put all of the details on the show notes, so now it's over to you Natalie and I want you to join the conversation, what is one insight and I know you've had many, but choose the greatest insight that you've had today share it in the conversation, I'll show you how you can do that on the show notes and of course knowledge and information is wonderful and taking it to the next level is putting it into action. What's the key step that you're going to take in the next 24 hours to get into action with that, we want to know that as well, all you need to do is go to annemariecross.com/podcast13 leave your comment below the show notes and we certainly look forward to reading them, again that link annemariecross.com/podcast13.

This interview tip is brought to you by our sponsor acethatinterview.com.au research the role; research the company, and research the industry, doing this will help prepare relevant examples that'll showcase how you can add value to the company and why they should hire you. Now if this is something that you are struggling with or maybe you'd like support in enhancing your interview skills so you can negotiate a salary that pays you what you are worth, then check out acethatinterview.com.au.

Now that brings us to the end of another episode and I do hope that you'll join me again next week. Remember subscribe to the iTunes channel the link is annemariecross.com/podcastiTunes, because by subscribing to our channel it means that you are going to be the very first person to learn about our new

episodes and be inspired and empowered every week just like I know you were this week hearing from Natalie. The link again annemariecross.com/podcastiTunes and while you're over there if you've got a couple of seconds leave a comment below the show too. That helps us get a feed out into the hands of so many other amazing women and I thank you for that, so see you next week, make it a great one, bye Natalie.

Natalie: Bye-Bye