

Ep #81: Leadership is Feminine
Episode Transcript



LEAD
YOUR
TEAM

*for Female
Entrepreneurs*

with
KRIS PLACHY

The image is a podcast cover with a teal background. On the right is a portrait of a smiling woman with blonde hair, wearing a white patterned halter top. On the left, a white box contains the title 'LEAD YOUR TEAM' in large, bold, black serif font, followed by 'for Female Entrepreneurs' in a smaller, italicized serif font. Below the portrait, a white box contains the text 'with KRIS PLACHY' in a serif font, with 'with' in italics.

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Hey, I'm Kris Plachy, host of the Lead Your Team podcast. Running a million-dollar business is not easy. And whether you're just getting started with building your team or you've been at this for a while, I'm going to bring you honest, specific, and clear practices you can use right now today and to improve how well you lead your team. Let's go ahead and get started.

Hello, hello and welcome. Welcome, welcome. I'm so glad you're here. Thank you for tuning in this week. It is, I hope for this to be really interesting conversation. So a couple things just as reminders. We are gearing up here for the rollout of the How to CEO program. It's going to be a live 12-week course with me. I'm incredibly excited and we've also started lining up guest experts to spend time with you live also. And these experts will be other female entrepreneurs who are really preeminent in their field. These are women who other women want to learn from. And so I'm giddy with excitement about what we're putting together here for you. So I can't wait for the whole thing to happen. So if you're not on the wait list yet, please go to howtoceolive.com, get your name on there.

We will be releasing it, the registration process, early for people on the wait list. So you want to be there if you want to not be square. Such a dork, okay. More to come about what's involved in that program. So once you're on the wait list, you'll also get more updates as we have them.

The other thing that I wanted to do was just give a shout out to people who post reviews for my podcast. Thank you for doing that. It really does make a difference. And it certainly makes me happy to hear about how what we talk about here helps you. So I just want to thank those of you who've taken the time to do that. I know it's hard to remember. I always want to write them myself and then I forget. So I usually will batch a couple. So I do them when they're on my mind. But anyway, I just wanted to let you know that I see you and I appreciate you. And if you are so inclined, I would be very grateful for your review on the podcast.

Okay. So this week we're going to talk about the topic which I call Leadership is Feminine. I wrote an article about this and posted it on LinkedIn a few weeks ago. This is something that's been on my mind a lot. I think a lot of... I turned 50 last year. I would like to think I have probably about 10 more years of active work. I always anticipate staying very engaged in my world because I love what I do and I want to continue to be a coach and consult and help people. But I am a little bit in that kind of pulling it all together mode in my life when I think about all my experiences and how they kind of have congealed and really culminated into the work that I do in the world. And we all have that, right? Our special kind of secret saucy thing.

And I know that when I was a young woman, I had I think a really great experience, which fostered me and my interest and my success in what I do. I was raised by a single mom. I probably haven't talked about this a whole lot, but my mom and dad divorced when I was about seven and my mom was a homemaker. She had a very wonderful education. She got her bachelor's degree from Cornell. She's a very smart woman. And so found herself in the mid-70s

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needing to figure out how to take care of not just me, but have a house. And that was back in the day, you all, when women couldn't get credit cards. Things were very different for her than they are for you and me.

And she figured it out. We got an apartment and she got a really good job and she hired a woman to live with us. It was a lovely woman and to help take care of me so my mom could work. And so even at that age, I started to have my own thoughts about women and leadership. And I had a mom who was the boss of what she did. It's passive, it's like a passive learning, but it's something I picked up. So fast forward, my mom then pursued that and just continued to be the boss of what she did. And then I went out into the world and started getting jobs and the first real job I had outside of college, so once I graduated, most of the leadership in the business I worked in were men. And most of the people who taught you how to lead were men. And that isn't to be disparaging against men, but that's, now for me, when I started realizing this is different than my life experience. All of these people are men. Where in my life experience, leadership was very feminine. It wasn't masculine.

And so then starts the whole trajectory of watching women behave like men in order to get ahead in leadership roles, to adopt that what we would call sort of aggressive, assertive, edged behavior that isn't wrong. It's just, in many ways, negating what I believe are intrinsically feminine qualities that make you really good at leading, which is nurturing and collaborating and communicating and listening. And so I kind of just watched that.

And so then when I started coaching, I was coaching men and women equally. And I definitely ran into moments where my approach to helping people learn how to lead and manage was met with a complete obtuse rigidity. And that was when I really sort of stepped on that masculine space. No. Power, leadership, direct command and control, that's how you get what you need to get from people.

And I have this very vivid memory of when I was a younger manager, I worked for a woman who really wanted to be very masculine. So that was her approach to leading. And so she and I struggled to work... I struggled to work for her. I don't think she minded me working for her, but I struggled. And I had to write up a woman who wasn't performing who was a single mom with a seven-year-old. So there was this real connection I felt for this woman. She wasn't doing her job, but that still didn't mean I didn't have a lot of empathy for her circumstance. And I had the tough conversation with her and then I was really upset. I was really emotional. And my boss at the time said, "You need to get over that. You need to stop being so affected." And I said to her, "Yeah, I agree. I don't want to fall apart and cry in front of employees." I do agree with that. I don't think that's effective, but I don't ever want to lose it. I don't ever want to get over it.

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That, to me, is part of my superpower, is my empathy, is my ability to connect. I see that as a strength, not a weakness. And so I'll never forget it. I mean, I was, what, maybe 27 years old. And I realized, "Oh, I think differently about this than a lot of people do." By the way, I have both of my dogs in my office today and they're both noisy. So I just want to apologize because my poor podcast producer, Sharon, is going to do her best, but I got the big dog snoring, and I have the little one scruffing around with her little collar. So I apologize if you hear that in the background.

So fast forward to when I really started to teach leadership and I just kept running into these moments of, "Oh, you are going to treat people very differently than I am." And I had lots of moments in my life where I had to decide actively if I was going to choose to continue to believe that the way I think about leading people works or not, because I had a lot of press pushback primarily from men who had learned leadership from very traditional leadership methodologies.

Okay. And there's a lot in that that I like and that I keep. I just have tweaked it for my own personality strengths and what I see as the constant qualities in the women I coach. And I don't want women who want to be the CEO of their business to feel like they have to be someone they're not to be successful, because that is a lie. If you want to be the CEO of your business and have a high performing team, there are formulaic processes and practices you have to put in place. But you can be you. And I think that's a huge distinction.

So the reason I called this podcast Leadership is Feminine is I want women to take that word and own it. Women are leaders. Now, we are seeing this over and over and over again right now in the world. And some would argue, and there appears to be even evidence when it comes to the pandemic, that the countries that are doing better are all led by women. There is a cocktail of assets that women have that nobody else does. And I believe we should claim them instead of diminish them. I believe we should stand in the power of our grace and nurturing and collaboration and empathy and own it as a superpower, not as something you need to tuck in while you go play with the boys. What if, what if leadership really was a feminine quality and we just didn't know it?

We've just been tricked. Putting more and more women at that senior level within businesses and teams will prove it. And that's why, I talked about this in my previous podcast, I want women to start calling themselves the CEO of their business because I want there to be a title wave tsunami of female CEOs in the world, because we are the fastest growing entrepreneurial group on the planet. Actually, the most fast is black female entrepreneurs. And man, would that be amazing to have millions of black female CEOs. I mean, let's go, you all. So this podcast isn't as much a how to, as it's more a think about challenging your mind to really own leadership as an asset that you already have. You just have to learn some processes and some practices to create that formulaic result. And that's what people like me can teach you.

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I promise you, you can learn. If I could learn, you can learn. I know that without a doubt. So thank you for tuning in. As always, I love to hear your thoughts. You can share them on Instagram, krisplachycoach. You can share them with us in our inbox, hello@krisplachy.com. But either way and let us know what you're thinking, and I'll talk to you again next time.

One more thing before you go, in a world of digital courses and online content, I like to work with my clients live because I know that when you have someone you can work with, ask questions of, and meet with, you're so much more likely to get the success that you want. So head on over to howtoceolive.com to learn more about our very exciting, very exclusive program just for female entrepreneurs. We'll see you there.