Kris Plachy: How do you fire someone nicely? I mean, is that even possible? Let's talk about it today on the Leadership is Feminine podcast. Here we go! Hello, hello, how are you? Welcome to season four of Leadership is Feminine. I introduced to you last week that we're going to be talking about mastery and leadership. And this podcast is really for women business owners who want to learn not just the tactics of how to lead and manage and build and fix and all the things of a team, but also tap into what you need to learn for yourself to become the woman who can lead and manage and build and fix a team with so much more ease than maybe you do today.

I know that ultimately what I talk about, and I've said this so many times, y'all, is not really profound, or rocket science or something you probably can't find if you Google it. But I do like to think that what we do here and in the work that I do with my clients, is we wrap common sense tactics, approaches, foundational, fundamental management and leadership approach and tactics with wisdom, that I believe when you tap wisdom into tactics, you create a sustainable practice, you create something that isn't just something you can get done, but something that you then know how to do. And once you know how to do something, the tactic can change. That's actually true. And there's so much more ease that comes from the confidence of understanding and knowing how, rather than just having the steps, am I right?

And so mastery is that, right? Mastery is not just knowing: here are the steps to follow, and I follow them. Mastery is truly knowing the steps. And then also learning how it at such an intrinsic, visceral level that it can't ever leave you. And from mastery, we can elevate something, we can make it different, we can turn it into ours, which is different than when we're just learning what someone else teaches us. So that's why if you're a podcast listener, I'm always suggesting if you listen and listen and listen, which I know a lot of you do. But you haven't worked with us yet, I just would really invite you to start thinking about why like, why? Why aren't you here yet? We could just so, so amplify and quicken how much of this you're doing for yourself and your team. But okay, I'm not going to get into that.

Today, we're going to talk about firing people, and how to fire someone, how to fire someone nicely, how to fire someone so that it causes the least amount of injury and pain to you and them. So let's start by first just talking about general things about firing. Firing people is awful. I'm going to tell you that right now. I have fired a lot of people. I hate it. I do not skip into firing meetings. I do not get excited to fire people. I am not numb to firing people. I don't tune out. I'm not able to do it on autopilot like I am other things in my business. I really do feel deeply that conversation and that experience with another human.

And years ago, when I was a brand new manager, I had to fire someone who was on my team. And if you've been a podcast listener for a while, you've heard me sort of reference some of these experiences in the past. I worked for someone at the time who was pretty heartless; I'm not going to lie. I learned a lot from her, but not in the way that I probably would have preferred to learn, but nonetheless. So I had to fire a woman on my team who was probably at least 13 years my senior, had a young child, was a single mom, but she wasn't doing her job and she was not meeting her goals, and I had hired her and now I had to fire her.

And so she was one of my first people I hired that didn't work out. And we all know also, there's something about that that's even more debilitating because, like, what did I do wrong? Did I hire the wrong person? Did I not train her enough? Did I not give her enough of my time? All the things that I know we do when someone that we've hired doesn't end up working out, especially for performance. She was lovely. She was a wonderful human.

And so in the conversation of firing her, I started crying. I just started crying. I was so upset. I just thought it was awful. I thought, why do I have to do this? This woman is single, she has a son, she's so provider. This is terrible, right? Even though I knew it was the right thing for the organization that I worked for, because that's my job as the manager of a business, is to release people if they're not delivering. We don't hire people to come into work and just show up, we hire people to deliver results, so I cried. Even when I was done with the conversation with her, I kept crying.

Now this boss I had was there in my office at the time. And so she came into my office and kind of just scolded me and told me, you know, get over yourself, stop crying, you can't cry. You need to be tough. All these things, right, which I agreed with her. I said, "You know what, I do agree that I shouldn't cry when I fire people, I appreciate that. It's probably not appropriate, unprofessional," other things—not helping. So I said, "So I'll work on that. But I told her, but if I ever get to a point that I don't feel affected by having to let someone go, I need to quit."

So, when I work with my clients on firing people, I want to make sure that we honor that there's an exchange happening between human beings that is not great, but it doesn't mean it's not part of our role and our job as women who lead businesses. So I just want to honor that in all of you. You know, I said before, the majority of my clients resonate as empaths, you really feel things differently and more intensely, feel other people's emotions.

So, having said that, how do we fire people with grace? How do we fire people nicely? And the easiest way to do that, of course, is to have decided how someone will get fired or not work in your company anymore well ahead of time. So the nicest thing to do when you fire people is to make sure it's never a surprise. So how do we do that? Well, we do that by investing in and having very clear team operations systems. We're really good in most companies about having systems for our marketing and for our product revenue, and for distribution and all the other things.

But we're kind of terrible at our team operations, like what does it look like when you get hired into a role and you accept a position and you are on boarded and you're given goals and you're followed up with and you're given feedback, what does all that look like? And is it consistent? If I walked into your business today and asked people who worked for you if they knew what their goals were, if they knew what the result was that they're responsible for, would they know? If your answer is, maybe, or probably not, then we already know we have a cocktail for confusion when it gets to potentially firing someone because they don't even know the agreement.

Now, in your mind, you might think, well, isn't that obvious? No. I just want to emphasize no. Anytime in your brain, you say, well, shouldn't they know? I mean, they're 45 years old,

shouldn't they…? No, your role as the founder, owner, leader of this business, is to establish clarity over what someone's role is, what their results required of them are in the role, what their responsibilities are to deliver on that result, and the way that you will measure and assess their results.

And it does not have to be super complicated. If you own a small bakery, let's use that, and you have four people that work there. And one or two are responsible for sort of checking out and checking in customers, running the register, filling the bags, doing the things. And then you have two other people who are the bakers and they're in the back. There is a reason why you have bakers and you have front of store people, why? Front of the store people, you probably have to provide exceptional, probably efficient or expedited service. If you have bakers, their key result is probably to make amazing products, bakery products, baked goods.

Now, how does the baker do that? They follow your recipe. They make as many muffins as they're supposed to by 10am. They make sure the cupcakes are iced by 2pm. I don't know I'm making it up. But you tell them what their roles are and what their responsibilities are. And the same is true for the front person. You say hello to everybody who walks in, you make sure that nobody waits in line for more than five minutes, you make sure that all of their baked goods are wrapped separately. I don't know. Again, you know this, I don't. But do you tell them? Or do you just expect them to know?

And then if they don't do it, so if they're not getting the muffins baked by 10, if they're not icing the cupcakes by 2, do you address that? Or do you, oh, founder, just swoop in there and take care of it? Or do you just get annoyed and say, "Why didn't anybody makes the muffins yet?" We know who was in charge of making the muffins and they did make them. Address that person, "Hey, where's the muffins?" And we're going to do mastery and feedback on this podcast this season, so it's coming. But it's pretty simple. We just don't want to do it because it's uncomfortable.

So, the truth is this, you've made all that really clear, and you've been consistent, and someone is just consistently not meeting the agreement of their role. It's not a far-fetched conversation then. And it might doesn't mean it's less comfortable or less uncomfortable. It just means that I could say, "Hey, you know what, I've had this conversation with you now several times. And when you are not making the baked goods on time, it's really causing a delay in our ability to sell daily. And I appreciate that you've tried, but we're not getting there, so I think I think we're going to have to let you go today. Today's your last day."

Now, people get upset, but that doesn't mean that you're being mean. And I think you can do this quite kindly. Your emotional attachment as a founder to how people do their job is usually if I'm going to generalize with most of my clients, we're way over invested in it personally with our emotions. We take what people do in our business or don't do so personally. But somehow, it's an affront to us. It is not. People don't wake up in the morning and think, "Oh, I can't wait to make her mad today and not make them muffins on time." People don't do that. People get distracted, and people look at their phone, people are slow. People don't know what to do people get overwhelmed. People don't feel like it.

But when you make it a personal issue, it makes it harder for you to address. When you make it a personal issue, it makes it harder to let people go, because you're coming from an unclean place and you know it, so then you feel badly. Then you feel bad because you know that you're angry or annoyed or irritated or resentful or fed up, and you will fire them. But you know that that is icky.

So instead, I think if we just start off by saying hey, here's the agreements that you're making, I'm making these agreements to provide you with this rate, this pay, these benefits, if that's relevant, these hours, this training, this feedback, this support. And then in turn, employee/team member, you're making these agreements to deliver on this result, to do these key responsibilities, to meet the terms of when you show up, etc. And as long as it's a dialogue about agreements and not an internal argument and tantrum you have in your head about their intentions, it's so much cleaner. So, we can let people go, we can fire people very nicely.

Now, there's a really simple script that I teach my clients on how to fire someone, but the script isn't going to do you any good. If you haven't done anything I just told you, because a script will be vacant without the authentic work done ahead of it, right, just like I said at the very beginning of this, mastery comes from really understanding how to do something. A tactic will not produce the results that you want, unless you have put the effort into gaining mastery. And I know you can apply that to so many other parts of your life, when you look at things that you've tried to do just by following steps and things that you've worked at, and developed understanding and knowing and competence, and ultimately competence in and then implemented steps. So, we have to design a team, operating system that supports the idea and the actual actions of firing people nicely.

Okay, as a reminder, I'm going to do some coaching for a few of the podcast listeners. So, if you are interested in participating in a 10 to 15 minute call with me, understanding that it will be recorded and used on this podcast, we are keeping people anonymous, if you want to be anonymous, although your voice will be on the podcasts, just want to make sure everybody knows that. But we're looking for a couple more volunteers. We got quite a few after last week. So just email hello@krisPlachy.com and let us know that you're interested. And then we will send you a quick, not very long, application just so we can know a little bit more about you and the question that you want to ask, and we'll get those set up.

And lastly, if you are looking for immediate support, you really need help and you want to get kind of your hands in there, we are now offering the How to CEO program as a digital course with one advisory Q&A c all available to you per week for 12 weeks. So it's at a reduced investment than it has been in the past. But we still are offering a weekly Q&A call, which I'm really happy about because I know you will have questions. But it's a great way for you to get your hands on absolutely everything really you need to be building your team infrastructure.

So, whether you're at 200k and your business, or 2 million or 20 million, it's a great first step. And it'll give you a real peek into the world that we offer here. And it'll give you immediate tools, job descriptions, job templates, difficult conversations, firing people, hiring

people, how to really go about all of the fundamental practices that you have to master to grow your business. I know we all think it's making money and having great funnels and generating a ton of revenue. But the women I've worked side by side with, who've doubled their revenue, who have gone anywhere from 500,000 to 1.5, or 8 million to 16 or 1 million to 40 million. It's been their investment in their team systems that have really been the fuel and the gasoline to scaling.

So if that's what you want, and you're ready, go to www.krisplachy.com/howtoCEO. Registration is open. It's available, it is an immediately available downloadable product that you can start and your Q&A calls would start the following Friday. So, you're ready. Get it. All right, gorgeous. Talk to you next week.

We have a lot of exciting changes coming up here at Kris Plachy Coaching Group. And I don't want you to miss out. From leaving social media, to offering live interactions only to people on our email list, I want to make sure you don't miss out. Head on over to www.krisplachy.com and drop your name and email in our little box there. And that way you'll get all the updates well before everybody else and even updates that nobody else will know about. See you there!