Video Transcript Laurie Maddalena professional pause

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By Laurie Maddalena

Laurie Maddalena 00:15
I recently took a one-month sabbatical with my family and spent that time in Italy so that my children could experience where their grandparents grew up. This was the longest vacation I've ever taken and I learned that there are many benefits to completely disconnecting and really being present in the moment. Like most leaders, most of my vacations are one week, and there's barely time for me to relax and reduce that anxiety before it's time to go back to work. There are many ways that pausing in life, whether it's for a vacation or short break in the day, or even in each of our interactions can benefit our leadership. Here are three ways that pausing can make you a better leader.

Laurie Maddalena 00:59
No. 1 is creating boundaries can increase well-being and fulfillment both personally and professionally. Ending by a specific time each day will give you the mental break to recharge and be fully present at work. When we don't have a specific end time for our day and we're constantly checking emails and going beyond a typical schedule of a day. It creates anxiety when we're constantly connected. And Parkinson's Law tells us that work tends to fill up the time that we allot it. And so we get into this cycle of never finishing work and always trying to catch up. Research shows that knowledge workers, professionals who are using their brains all day, can only be creative and focus for about four hours every day. Studies also show that working more than 50 hours a week dramatically diminishes our productivity. So compressing your work day as much as possible encourages you to be more focused with your time and increases your productivity.

Laurie Maddalena 02:03
You also want to encourage your employees to take their vacation. More than half of American workers don't use all of their allotted vacation each year. And many sites they don't take a vacation for fear of not being able to keep up or putting more of a burden on their coworkers.

Laurie Maddalena 02:20
No. 2 is to take breaks during the day. Studies show that 70% of employees report eating lunch at their desk at least one time a week. Taking short breaks, especially in nature, even for five to 10 minutes, increases our creativity, boosts our productivity and decreases stress. Modeling boundaries and taking breaks is not only good for our own well-being, but it also demonstrates to our employees that we care about their health and their well-being.

Laurie Maddalena 02:50

No. 3 is pausing allows you to be more intentional as a leader. Pause and reflect on the energy or intention you want to bring to each interaction and each meeting. For example, if you're going to meet with an employee for a coaching session, pausing and removing distractions and making an intention to listen and be present in that moment will make the interaction much more meaningful. Pause before responding, whether it's an email or during a difficult interaction. Pausing allows us to be reflective and intentional as leaders so that we can bring our best focus and energy to work each day and in each of our interactions with our team members.