

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Gerry:

Hi, and welcome to another episode of GLINC Outside the Box. I'm Gerry Lewis. I was really hoping to jumpstart the new year with an upbeat and forward looking topic. Something about, okay, here we go. But heading into our third year of the pandemic, I think there's a greater need to talk about how the new normal isn't actually new anymore, or for that matter, feeling anything like normal. Now don't take me as a pessimist. I'm anything but. I actually consider myself the glass is almost full type of person, but I'm also realistic. And like many of you, I continue to plug away at work, bring what I can to my team, to keep morale progress and spirits up.

Gerry:

The title of this podcast is Teamwork Has Changed Forever. And while there are many positives we hear from both employees and employers about the virtues of remote or hybrid work, it doesn't change the fact it's not the same. So today I want to talk about the way forward with areas of teamwork that has, well, at least for me, prove to be the most challenging. Here are three areas we want to talk about today. Managing and coaching when I cannot be with my team. Team conflicts and the risk of workplace toxicity. And the ever elusive work life balance. I am thrilled to be joined by Liane Davey, team advisor and author of The Good Fight. Liane, it's fantastic to have you here with us.

Liane:

Oh, I'm so excited to be here, Gerry. So many on topics on plate for today.

Gerry:

I can't wait. So let's begin. Let's just talk a little bit about the title. Teamwork Has Changed Forever. Agree, disagree, thoughts.

Liane:

Yeah, I think so. I think that this version of working and collaborating with people from a distance is not going away. And I think particularly the rise of hybrid workforces, where some people are going to be together physically and other people aren't. I think this is different for most of us and it's going to make it, in the short term, much harder. I think ultimately we'll learn how to do it well.

Gerry:

At the start of the pandemic, for teams, including mine, it was all about how are we working? Meaning how will we get things done without any hitches that is seamless to our clients? And while that's still part of the journey, there's another question we're beginning to ask, which is how is my team doing? How do I know my team is actually managing well in this environment when I can only see their faces? And sometimes I don't even see their faces when they've turned their camera off. How do I do that?

Liane:

Yeah. The interesting thing is now you have to ask. So it used to be that body language did most of the heavy lifting for us in management and engaging where people were at. You would walk by. If they had three clumps less hair than they had before they started working on the project, you knew this was something they were struggling with. And I better just pop by. Simply the look on someone's face as they walked in the morning told you, was it a rough day of having to get a toddler into a snowsuit? Which is like a toothpaste back in a tube. So you could tell, and you knew I better not go over or email

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

for at least half an hour to give them some space. So now we don't have those body language and visual cues as to how people are.

Liane:

The other thing is when we physically come into an office together, we have a lot of shared context. We know if it's an icy, sleety horrible February day, and that's why people are grumpy. And yet when we're now often physically distant, we don't even have the same context. So now you have to find out by actually making the space to ask. And it's more than just asking. It's creating a relationship where it's safe for the person to be candid with you about what the actual answer is. It's even thinking about things like, have I made enough space in the priority list and in the workload that people feel like they can be honest and transparent with me and that it doesn't feel like, you know what, I'm so busy. I'm so overwhelmed. I'm not going to tell you how I'm feeling because I don't have time to get upset. I have to just keep moving.

Liane:

So there's a lot of complexity to it. It used to be we got all that real time information from how people physically carried themselves. Now we have to not only ask, but we have to build a relationship and a rapport over time that encourages them to actually answer honestly, and we have to make the space for it. And if they feel like either they can't slow down enough to experience what they're feeling or they don't want to slow us down, or we give some sort of signal that we're just waiting for the quick answer, then we're just not going to know. So it is very different.

Gerry:

I love the part about, we have to ask. And your last point, Liane, was so true because very often we ask out of politeness.

Liane:

Yes.

Gerry:

How was your weekend? And really, after we ask that question, we sort of tune out because we were expecting to hear things like, fine. It was great. It was blah, blah, blah. Or maybe it was very busy. Is there a different way of asking? Are there different questions I should say, more than just how's your weekend or how's it going?

Liane:

Yeah, I would try a few different things. I try something fairly generic like, where are you at? How's it going is just such a common question that we know the answer's going to be one of two things. Fine or busy. both of those, and actually let's pause on that for a moment, because if somebody answers you with that, that is a signal that they don't to engage with you right now. Those are our two code terms, safe words in our language, that say, please don't make me go there right now. I would do one round of saying, if someone says that to you, if you ask how's it going? And they say fine, you can do one round of saying, "Sometimes there's a lot underneath fine. If you feel like sharing that with me at some point, I'd really like to hear it." And then zip it.

Liane:

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

And it has to be okay for people to set their boundaries and say, "Not now, I can't go there. I can't." So fine and busy are those code words. So that's just something to know. But so I like where are you at? Sometimes I'll use a metaphor and I'll just say, "Look, hey, through this entire pandemic, through this whole returning to office, all this, I have days where I feel like I am on top of the wave. And I am just surfing along there. And days where I feel I am face down on the beach with a mouthful of sand, getting pummeled. On a scale from riding the crest of the wave to face down in the sand, where you at?" You can have fun with it. I love code words, safe language, things that become the way on your team that you talk to one another. The other thing, and I'm happy to share this with your audience in the show notes is I have a set of exercises, nine different meeting starter exercises to help kind of figure out where people are at. So I'm happy to share those with everybody.

Gerry:

That would be...

Liane:

Yeah. Yeah. So one of the ones in there, just to give you a sense, is called the hat rack. And what I do is I start a meeting by saying, "Okay, I want everyone to share with me hat other than your job that you're wearing this week and what impact it's having on you." And people share all sorts of things. So people will say things like, "I'm wearing a nurse's hat this week because my elderly parent is here recovering from surgery. And that means that I'm worn out that I'm stressed," whatever. It could just be, "Today I'm wearing the orientation buddy hat because our new employee has joined. So I'm going to be showing them around." And so, whatever it is, it just gives people a little bit more context about who you are as a whole person.

Liane:

And they can, if they want to be a little safer, they can talk about an extra hat they're wearing at work, but they also have the chance to share something that they're carrying with them you might not have known. I've heard people answer that question with, "Today I'm wearing the real estate agent hat, because we're showing our house. What a ridiculous thing to do." So finding either just open language, like where are you at? Or using these kinds of more structured exercises to just give people the space. But remember, if they don't tell you, it doesn't mean they don't like you, it doesn't mean they don't trust you. It just is right now we are so precariously hanging on to any boundaries that we have, that it might just be not the moment that they want to let you in the gate.

Gerry:

That is great. First of all, thank you for sharing the nine meeting starters. I think that's going to be incredible.

Liane:

Absolutely.

Gerry:

So that one there, really good, I think I wear their hard hats, the construction hard hat all the time.

Liane:

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Yeah.

Gerry:

Because I'm getting all sorts of crap thrown at me. So maybe that's why I have to...

Liane:

That's a good hat to wear.

Gerry:

That's the hat I wear a lot. Okay. So let's move on to asking the questions. The other part I want to talk about in terms of managing a team is the ability to observe. So beyond even just the camera, observation allows managers to coach. So I can see certain habits, behaviours, patterns. So it's another big change in coaching that we need to do beyond just communicating how my team is doing, looking and listening for nuances, work styles, habits, behaviours. But now we can't see that. I don't know what any one really is working on. So how do I coach to what I cannot observe?

Liane:

Okay. Can I be provocative for a moment?

Gerry:

Please. I just shared with you in my hard hat and crap being thrown at me. Sure.

Liane:

This may be the best thing that ever happened to micromanaging managers, because a leader's role is to answer the why questions and to answer the what questions and to get the heck out of the way on the how questions, because we impose our own styles on people, and our styles, you and I are not 30 anymore. Our styles might be dated. They might be inefficient, ineffective. They might be idiosyncratic to our personality and our way, it's so painful to say, I can't believe I'm saying this on a recording, might not be the best way.

Gerry:

Oh no.

Liane:

And so here's a thought, what if we didn't watch how they're doing it? We're very, very engaged with them about why it matters and what matters and what we're looking for, but got the heck out of the road and let them figure out the how in a way that might be different than what we would've liked. It might be that this is good for us. So to make that work, we need to invest a lot more time in making sure we have answered the why and the what questions effectively.

Liane:

So the biggest thing I notice is that managers are kind of in the mode of explaining what they want done, do this and do this and do this. And then they throw out some awesome, not awesome, closed ended question like, so we good? And then everybody just nods their heads because they don't want to say that they're not good or they think they're good. And there is no test of how deeply the people

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

processed what you told them. There's no check that it landed and landed the way you wanted. So I think the biggest thing we want to do when we're not able to observe, when we're not kind of with them, is to spend more time upfront.

Liane:

So instead of saying, "We good?" Move to some open ended questions and say things like, "So now that I've shared that with you, what do you see as the most critical component of that? Where do you expect to struggle the most? What's a risk I haven't mentioned?" Get them through these open-ended questions to engage with the instructions and the task. You'll get a much better sense that they understand it. Of everything I've described, which do you think is the stakeholder we're going to have the most difficulty responding to? Or whatever it is. And just any good open ended question will help you see, did it land? Did they interpret it the same way that I interpreted it? So that's the first thing. Engage more upfront.

Liane:

Then I would say, you want more checkpoints. And I use a silly metaphor of imagine that you told your team, "We're putting on a bake sale for charity," and said no more than, "Will you bake?" And they say yes. And we walk away. And what happens is they decide, "Okay, so I'm going to bake my favorite carrot zucchini muffins. Everybody loves those muffins. They're amazing." So they bake their muffin. They come in and you take one look and you're a fun guy, Gerry. You're like, "Muffins for a bake sale? Ew." So you're like, "I can fix this." And you grab a bag of M&Ms and you start shoving M&Ms into their carrot zucchini muffins. And that's one of the most discouraging, especially at times like this, when people are languishing. If you work on something, work hard on something and it missed the mark, but it missed the mark because your boss didn't make sure you understood what the spec was in the first place, it's so bad for a team.

Liane:

So let's go back and say, if they had done the why questions, it would've come out that, "Oh, this is a bake sale for kids. So we don't want any carrot zucchini muffins." There would've been questions to help you make sure that you've got the right recipe. And I wouldn't even leave the room until you've got a sense that they have a sense of what's the right recipe. Then the next thing you want to do is, where is the touch base to taste the batter? So when you're remote, "Hey, let's get a milestone a little sooner than we might have otherwise." And in that milestone, I'm going to taste the batter and say, "Oh, I didn't realize that this was going to have vegetables in it." Well, you would've had the right recipe, but even when you taste it, you're like, "Oh, okay, this could use a little something, something, can you sprinkle in a few chocolate chips?"

Liane:

So what we want to do is we want to avoid those situations where we're unclear about what good looks like. And we don't find out that we were unclear until the muffins are baked, proverbially. Instead, we want, okay, right at the very beginning, we're going to stay together until you have a sense of what recipe you're going to pick. Then we're going to schedule in advance a check-in where I could taste the batter and make any changes before anything is baked. That's going to wildly change the outcome. So when I'm working virtually, I'm using this metaphor all the time to say upfront, have enough of a dialogue to pick the right recipe and then do not go very long without tasting the batter.

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Gerry:

I love that metaphor. And just to correct you, I love carrot and zucchini muffins.

Liane:

Oh, okay. So you would be happy.

Gerry:

I would not have ruined them by sticking in M&Ms, just as a FYI.

Liane:

I bet you know a few leaders who do that though, right? They are here.

Gerry:

Absolutely.

Liane:

And then, somebody brings them their work with this big, big grin on their face, giving the side eye to Bob who brought store bought powdered donuts, and it's horrible. It creates a lot of conflict. It's very deflating for the person. So yeah, it certainly does happen.

Gerry:

You validated a lot of things of what we try to do here as well, which is really important. I think the why is really important.

Liane:

Yeah.

Gerry:

So having people all understand the why and what it is we're trying to create is important. To your point about the batter, we do a lot of things called we want to have certain sneak peeks along the way. We do a lot of graphics. So we want a sneak peek just to kind of get a sense of, "Okay, this is exactly what I was envisioning." Or, "No, I need a little bit more of this." So I think that is beautiful. I'm going to move to one of the things that is very much in the social media realm, which is about toxic workplaces. I can see that you're very excited talking about it. In my workplace, how do you know when you have a toxic workplace? Because a lot of times you're just think, "Oh, that's just them. That's just who they are. That's just the way they are." How do you know?

Liane:

Yeah. Well, first of all, let's take the word toxic. So toxic means to me that it is meaningfully harmful to my physical or psychological health. This is harming me, harming me in a way that I'm not going to get over. That's something toxic. So it's got to reach a certain threshold. So it's not, "Oh, Gerry was stressed today and really impatient with me." That's not toxic. So I look at five categories. So first, are there any policy or procedures that are unsafe, discriminatory, unfair, biased, any of those things, in the actual rules of the organization? We've seen a lot lately about Amazon drivers being expected to make quotas

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

that mean they don't have time to go and find a washroom. Well, that's pretty toxic. So anything that's written into the rules. The way things are scheduled, the way compensation is paid, the way people are looked at for promotion, all those things. If it's unsafe, if it's discriminatory, if it's unfair, that's toxic.

Liane:

Second category, culture. And culture is where it's not written in the rules of the organization, but you'd swear that it was because it's just how people behave and toxic cultures can range from places where there's in groups and out groups. And if you're in the out groups, you'll just never have any influence. It can be aggressive, nasty. I see a lot of that either on Wall Street or in Silicon Valley where it's just people belittle each other and cut each other down. Passive aggressive cultures. And the interesting new one that I'm learning about from GE and Thernos and places like this is a toxically positive culture where the Wall Street Journal referred to this as "success theater," that we all have to pretend that there's nothing wrong here when absolutely there is very urgent problems. So those are cultures that are toxic.

Liane:

Toxic bosses, everything from the aggressive abrasive boss to an insecure boss, to again, a toxically positive boss. Toxic colleagues. And then the one that I'm really interested in lately is in some cases, workplaces, the organization is great. The boss is great. The teammates are great. And it's the customers who are toxic. And I think this is happening more and more these days, that people are just having to work for people are physically abusive. Their expectations are unreasonable, they're threatening, and this can be certainly service employees, but it can be, I worked in consulting for many years. Clients can set an expectation. You work for hours on something and they change the brief and then they still hold you to the original timeline. So those are the five categories. And what I'm looking for is in any one of those five categories, is the behavior or the environment you are in causing you significant, not just short term, but significant threats to your physical or your psychological health?

Gerry:

I love the, first of all, the very sort of foundational definition of toxic. If you think about it, you went to buy Clorox bleach, you know the toxic symbol.

Liane:

Yeah. Right, exactly.

Gerry:

So I think that's a really good sort of like, is it going to harm me? I think that's a really good one, because it can be very gray. There are many shades of [crosstalk 00:20:35]

Liane:

And I think what makes that even harder, Gerry, is there is the Clorox bleach version where anybody who's ever not quite diluted their bleach enough when they're cleaning the bathroom, all of a sudden is a bit woozy. It's very obvious. The other toxic scenario is if you think about Flint, Michigan, and lead in the pipes. So some organizations, it's not full on bleach or ammonia poisoning you, but it is like lead in the pipes. And working there for a long period of time, you don't even know the harm that it's doing to you, but that harm is building up. So I think we need to think about toxic workplaces on a continuum from acutely toxic, but all the way to places where over time, it's causing you to be in stress mode all the time. And that's hurting both your mental health and your physical health.

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Gerry:

Well, that leads beautifully to my next question, which is, in terms of hybrid workplace environments, is it impacting toxicity? Is it making it worse or is it really, it doesn't really matter the environment, it's going to be the same. What do you think?

Liane:

I think that it's making vulnerable people more susceptible. So I think hybrid isn't making things worse for people who are strong self advocates. In many ways, it might be making things better for them. You have a little bit of distance from that angry coworker or grumpy boss. But for people who are vulnerable, who feel powerless, who don't feel they have options or the chance to stand up for themselves, I think it's make things a lot harder. So I'm worried about that for sure. The one dimension I would say that worries me about hybrid workplaces is, in terms of psychological damage, I think hybrid workplaces are very prone to building resentment. And resentment is so such a toxic thing. And it doesn't mean that your team is doing it to you. It's often, as Nelson Mandela referred to it, swallowing poison hoping the other person will die.

Liane:

That is happening, I think, more and more. I'm starting to hear these sort of rumblings of, "They have it better than me." The people in the office, looking at the people still at home saying, "They have it so easy. They get to work from home." And the people working from home feeling like they're working two hours a day more than the people who are working in the office. And there's what I call unseen work. There's so much physical, emotional, and cognitive labor we're putting into things that nobody sees anymore. And we just get more and more and more frustrated and feel less validated, less acknowledged. And that resentment is the toxin I'm most worried about pervasively destroying, eroding teams. So I think that's a real problem.

Gerry:

I totally agree with you. And I wish I could spend the next hour talking about that, but I just want to just maybe get a high level response on, so what do we do? Like as a manager, recognizing that this does happen, it might even happen to managers themselves who report to other people. What is like first thing to do? What's the first thing we should think about?

Liane:

So what I ask, also I have this on my website, all the instructions for doing this exercise, but it's simply, first ask for the next couple of weeks. I know this is happening. I feel like we're all working our butts off, and I know that often you're working on your own and nobody sees it. First thing for the next two weeks, please make a list of the things that feel incredibly arduous for you, that you feel like aren't getting the recognition they deserve. So for a couple weeks, make note. Then let's bring those lists together and let's share them. Then what we're going to do with that list is triage it. There are probably things on that list where as a manager, your response is going to be, "You're doing what?" Like, either you can stop that. Or I didn't realize when I asked you for that report, it was taking that many hours to go into all these different databases. You know what? Don't even do that report anymore. Or let's say you only give it to me quarter, not monthly.

Liane:



## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

So triage the list is the next step and try and diminish things, delete them, distribute them more evenly. Somebody, as you're talking, saying, I have to do this. Somebody else may be, I wish I could do that. Oh, perfect. And then the final step is just when there are things that you said, you know what, that report's really important. And I know it takes you four hours on Thursdays to do it. The final step is just start to acknowledge that. So, "Hey, it's Thursday. I want to send you this funny cat video to cheer you up, because I know you're in the midst of the report and I'm really grateful." So A, make sure you're documenting those arduous unseen things that are triggering resentment; B, triage the list in search of anything that you can remove or shrink; and C, add acknowledgement and gratitude and thanks for those kinds of efforts. So if we could just do that, it would really help so much with this feeling that I'm doing all this unseen work.

Gerry:

I love it. And I would love to have that funny cat video as well, if you can send it.

Liane:

Okay. Absolutely.

Gerry:

One of the things that we try to do here, and it's so interesting because sometimes, you can't help when you're doing this type of interview and learning about these topics but to reflect on your own organizations, to reflect about your teams. And one of the things I'm thinking about is one of the things we've done is something called the process lab every week. And the reason why we did it was because we were really relooking at some of our processes, the way we do things, and we have a lot of new people. So it's actually in those process labs that we kind of talk about, "Hey, how are we doing this? Is it working? It's not working. This is really clogging things up." And we say, "Oh my God, I had no idea it took that long to do it. Let's figure out how to short circuit it." So it does work. It takes effort. I think everything you mentioned makes so much sense, but it's the effort that you put in to do it.

Liane:

Yep.

Gerry:

Yep. I want to jump to part three of this because you laugh, I mentioned this is one of the topics, which was work life balance. And I know why you probably chuckled, because it's probably no such thing as a work life balance or I'm sure you have an incredible point of view.

Liane:

I at least having opinion

Gerry:

Opinion. Yeah. So has hybrid helped or hindered work life balance?

Liane:

So there are two basic forms of boundary management behaviours. So some people create walls and they like to have very thick walls, impenetrable walls, between their part of their life and their family

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

part of their life. And there are other people who like work life integration. They'll work until four. Then they leave and they have some quality hours with young children and then the kids go to bed at eight and they start working again or whatever else. I would say it has been great for people who are with work life integration, because you've got even more flexibility to integrate now and very, very challenging, and I'm sure at this point, just hair pulling for the people who like very clear boundaries. It has not been a good two years for people who like clear boundaries. So it depends. I think it to be a very, very personal experience.

Gerry:

So I will not speak for you, I'll hazard to guess that you're an integrator as well as I am.

Liane:

Yes, yes.

Gerry:

I do check my emails. Literally. I don't bring the phone to the bedroom or anything like that, but you check my emails throughout the day, after dinner, after doing dishes. I'm constantly just making sure, but I agree with you. I think it's easier on us because we can kind of manage when we want to check it. But on the boundary side, for those who are looking at real clear structure, it's very difficult. So I guess, how do we deal with that in a hybrid mode, knowing that it is a struggle for some people? But at the same time, things need to get done. What is the best approach?

Gerry:

For the integrator, it's probably much easier. They're going to figure out how to get it done. If you need a 10 o'clock at night. Sure. I can make it work. But if you say that to someone and it's a rush client request, now you're making me think of toxic clients. Real emergency. We need to get it out by 10. There's a deadline for first thing tomorrow morning. So 10 o'clock is it. How do I help the team who are trying to be structured in a way to make this happen without wrecking their lives?

Liane:

Yeah, I actually don't think it's that big of a problem. The people that I meet, if it's an emergency, they know it's an emergency. And they also know if there's an emergency and their kid's school has a COVID case and they have to leave in the middle of the day to go deal with an emergency at home, that of course there's no question. But the problem is, we abuse it so terribly and it's not an emergency. There's no such thing in our line of work, Gerry, as a code magenta. Like there's code blue in hospitals, there's code orange train wreck, but there's no code magenta. And the problem is we pretend that there is a code magenta and we do it too often. We do it on things that are not emergencies. We allow our clients to be toxic and pass that to our employees.

Liane:

That's when I think they have a justification for saying, "Hang on, if I had a family emergency five days a week, you would be looking for a new employee. So it's not cool that you expect me to accept you." So I think talk it through. So here are my guiding principles for what's a code magenta. And so I'm only going to let a client get to you in emergency hours if it's this, this or this. Let's talk this through. How does that work for you? Let's have multi-skilling so that there's backup. So when that call comes in, you've got a buddy and between you and the buddy, one of you is going to handle it and know that if you take it this

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

time that the buddy's going to get it next time. So it's really about those guiding principle conversations. It's really about advocacy with clients, and truly establishing the thresholds for what is okay, what counts. How frequently is it okay to do this? Those sorts of things.

Liane:

And also the conversations about your own staffing, because I know what it's like. You're running a small business, you can't get ahead of demand. You can't add a lot of cost. So having conversations with the staff about, "I'm expecting that the next three months are better than we've had for a while. And if that lasts beyond X date, I'm going to add a 50 percent FTE or whatever else. I know that for the next two months, that means there's probably going to be times where we're working longer than what we want to work. How do we make that workable? Please count on me. I will take some of that overflow." Talk to them about it. Talk about how you're making these decisions. The vast majority of people understand the give and take.

Liane:

And then give it back. So I just noticed on LinkedIn that I know the folks at KPMG have been working incredibly hard. They've been doing very well and there's lots of work for clients. And so they've come right out and said that every Friday in the summer is going to be a paid day off. And they know that sometimes that those Fridays are going to be needed by clients. And if that's the case, then they can have the Monday off. And they're just saying, "We get it. We get that the demand right now is unrelenting and we're grateful. And we hear you. And we know there will be a time where it's less chaotic, less frenetic, and we're going to give back at the same time."

Liane:

So that's worth so much, when you just share your thought process, show them and ask, "What would be most workable for you? How should we handle this?" But the biggest thing is getting over this code magenta BS, and getting over this thought that if a client wants it and they want it tonight, that therefore it shall be. Well, is it needed tonight? And there's nothing worse than they want it tonight and then they don't open the email until tomorrow at 5:00 PM.

Gerry:

Isn't that called the hurry, hurry, hurry, wait syndrome?

Liane:

Yes. And it's toxic. It's terrible. So, yeah. That's my take.

Gerry:

Just to say, I cannot let anyone on my team listen to this podcast because now they're going to want a paid Friday off of the summers. So I'm going to have to hide this podcast from everyone on my team, just so you know. So thanks a lot, Liane.

Liane:

Well, I think if they saw the hours that the good folks at KPMG have been working, they might be okay with going without that.

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Gerry:

I think I totally agree with you. And as you were sharing with me the importance of talking it out, it brought me back to really the first course I ever went on for supervising people, is keep the lines of communication open.

Liane:

Yes.

Gerry:

It's the fundamental rule we can easily drop. And I put it to my team as well. The communication goes both ways.

Liane:

Yes.

Gerry:

It has to go both ways. So I will do my best to acknowledge, "Hey, we are in a uphill climb period. We need to kind of work on this. What can I do? How can I help?" But on the other side, you want the team to take ownership. You want them to say, "Hey, this is what I see happening. This is what I think we can do." Pitch in in that way. Then it really does become open communication, because sometimes as a boss, you kind of feel like, I feel like I have to think through all this stuff by myself.

Liane:

Yeah.

Gerry:

And you shouldn't have to. So I thought that was really, really good.

Liane:

My favorite, favorite topic for that is fairness, because you will, as a manager, so many times hear, "Well, that's a not fair." Well, there's no such thing as fair. There's no objective definition of fair. There's equitable. There's equal. There's no such thing as fair. A really important situation as a manager to say, "I'm trying to come up with the policy here. I know there's no one way of defining fair. So here's how I'm thinking about it. What am I missing?" Those sorts of things. So if you ever bump into something in this work life balance space or things like that, where what you're expecting to get back is that's not fair. It's a great place to say, "I could have thought of fair as treating everyone exactly the same, or I could have thought of treating fair as treating people based on their inputs or their, this or their that. So here's how I'm thinking about it. How does that land with you?" So that's a really important place for that.

Gerry:

It, it's a great reminder that that is how we communicate better.

Liane:

Yeah.

## Let's GLINC Differently About Teams

Gerry:

By keeping that open. Liane, as you know, you and I can probably talk forever. And that is one of the reasons, in fact, that when I named this Teamwork Has Changed Forever. I was very quick to realize as I kind of put my questions down that this was not a podcast, this was a serious, that because there are so many, even just on the three things we talked about, we can dive deep into it. I think we've been just snorkeling on a lot of this stuff and let's go scuba.

Liane:

I love it.

Gerry:

You caught me all over the analogies.

Liane:

I love a good metaphor, Gerry.

Gerry:

Ever since the carrot and zucchini muffins, I'm all over this analogy thing now. So we talked about today, managing and coaching, toxic workplace, work life balance. Liane, amazing not just insight, but amazing tips. I thank you for sharing the nine meeting starters with us on a show notes, which is great. Any final thoughts before we close off?

Liane:

Yeah. Just, this is hard. Keep talking. Struggle through it together. That will be the best way. Every time you're struggling as a manager, just be candid about that, but never give up accountability. So if you show vulnerability, but with it, take accountability for figuring it out, you will be the most beloved manager around

Gerry:

Liane Davey. Thank you so much for honouring us by doing this podcast with us. I look forward to sharing this with all of our listeners and continued success in your authorships and all the work that you do, all the great work that you do, I might add.

Liane:

Thank you so much, Gerry. It was a blast.

Gerry:

Thank you very much. You've listened to another GLINC Outside the Box episode. Thanks for joining us. I'm Gerry Lewis.