



OLGA GELAUFF

BELIEVING IN THE TALENTS AND CAPABILITIES OF
YOUR PEOPLE TO CREATE A WINNING TEAM

LEADERSHIP MOMENTS PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



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EPISODE 7



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MURRAY: Welcome to my podcast. I'm Murray Wright and this is Leadership Moments, real people stories about the people and the moments that have influenced and shaped their leadership.

Today we are in Europe and I'm talking to Olga Gelauff. Olga is a manager in Woerden, which is a small town in the southwest of the Netherlands. Olga manages three teams in the local government overseeing areas on the social services side of things.

So Olga, welcome to the podcast.

OLGA: Thank you.

MURRAY: Thank you for your time. Olga, by the way, is my sister-in-law. So that's the connection. It's great to be in Holland to see, just see how things are run here and how things work. It's great to get a view on leadership and just how things work here, particularly in the local government side. So for you Olga, who is the person who has influenced you the most in terms of your leadership development?

OLGA: Yeah. For me, the role model is Jamie Oliver. He inspires me because he didn't have much with education, so he learned himself a great deal. He works with good products and he also has a restaurant in Amsterdam where people work who needs help and so he also uses a bit of his business to help other people for work and I like this very much.

MURRAY: He's actually great with all these causes because he has these restaurants in Australia as well. I think also he's taken on the cause in Britain of trying to change the school food. He's worked on that.

So Jamie Oliver inspires you. How do you apply that inspiration in your leadership?

OLGA: Every time I think, "What can I improve and what can I do better?" Especially I like to do is ask myself the question, "What kind of talent has an employee of my team and how can I help to develop that talent." That gives me a lot of energy.

MURRAY: Yeah, as opposed to, what's their problem, but what's their talent and how you can use it?

OLGA: What's their talent? Yeah.



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MURRAY: Fantastic. And because we're very quick to find fault and we sometimes forget, people are good at stuff. Great.

So through your career, what would you say is your aha moment? So this is the moment when you suddenly realize what leading a team, working with people was all about.

OLGA: It was my first department I worked for... actually two moments. One employee who I sent to a coach and the coach has said to Marike, the employee from... "Olga let you do work that you are very good in." That inspires me a lot that I can facilitate people to let them do work that they are very good at and it's because... and then I thought that's why I liked his talk very much. So that was an aha moment and also a moment when the team... I had a team moment and they all said, "We are a winning team," and every team I have afterwards... well now I have three teams... I try to put the inspiration in the teams that they all have the feeling, "We are a winning team."

MURRAY: Winning team.

OLGA: Yeah.

MURRAY: Great. So in that team that said, "We are a winning team," what was it you had done that made them feel they were a winning team?

OLGA: I try to let people do what they are good at. So give them a lot of trust and confidence and let them think of ideas themselves.

MURRAY: So this is... this is coming through strongly. It's about really seeing people's talent and letting them use that talent, let them apply it and you used the word "trust" there.

OLGA: Yeah.

MURRAY: How do you manage it, because not everyone responds to that? So how do you manage it when... you have to have that conversation when you have to bring someone back into one?

OLGA: Yeah. Well I believe everybody has talents and I have a strong belief that we need everybody. So everybody has talent and if someone has a talent, but not the talent I need in my department, I go away with that employee that we both come to the conclusion, "Well this is your talent that makes you happy, but it's not in my



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department," for example or someone has a talent and there is other work in my department that can be done. So I have a strong belief that everybody has talent and you have to make time to discover that talent when someone doesn't see it, doesn't know it himself.

MURRAY: That's wonderful. I mean it's... I love it because even when something is not working, it's still a positive conversation.

OLGA: Yes.

MURRAY: It's still around talent and what people can do.

OLGA: Yeah. It's not always easy because sometimes an employee doesn't like the idea of not being in the department anymore, but after a while and also when I talk to someone later on in time, they say, "Well it's good. I'm happy now." They are doing all new things and from partners, "Oh, he's different now. He's different now."

MURRAY: And is that kind of approach common in the Netherlands or is this something you've developed as your personal philosophy, personal approach?

OLGA: I don't think I'm the only one, but it's something I... people say to me when they talk about me that that is what I do.

MURRAY: Yeah.

OLGA: Yeah.

MURRAY: Good. So now the mistake... the big mistake. We've all made mistakes. So is there one you can think of that really, if you like, informs your leadership today? It's the one that you took a lot of learning from and you use it as a positive in the end.

OLGA: Yeah. Well that's also about trust. Two months ago, I started with a group and with a completely new thing and we didn't know what it was leading to and then with the project leader I said, "Well, let's do some preparation." And then the group shared and I made some things on paper for the group and then someone in the group said, "Well, Olga it's nice that you did your preparation, but what do you think? We are here with the group and you said we are going to share with each other." I said, "Okay." And I put the paper away so it was blank again and I started all over again. I was so, "I'm all about trust and I..." So sometimes I'm... Yeah. So every time I have to think about it that there's a lot of talent in groups. You have to trust it and I'm a strong believer in it, but sometimes I think, "Oh now I am slipping away."



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MURRAY: You forget. I think what's wonderful in that is the team had the trust to tell you and say to you, "Sorry Olga, that doesn't work." So that shows that there is something in the feedback you built otherwise they would have said nothing and done nothing. Correct?

OLGA: Yeah.

MURRAY: Thank you.

OLGA: Okay.

MURRAY: Thank you for joining us.

OLGA: Okay.

MURRAY: Good luck.

OLGA: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

MURRAY: Thanks for listening. Great to reflect on how Olga's belief in the capabilities of her team really brings focus and energy even along those dreaded, difficult conversations to be viewed through a positive lens.

For more information, resources and past episodes, just head to murraywright.com. Until the next time.

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