**E9: Learning leadership from female role models with international academic leader Dr Erica Hinckson.**

**Erica:** Tēnā koutou greetings from New Zealand. My name is Erica Hinkson. I'm a professor at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, and also currently the head of the school of sport and recreation. I have one child and I've been in academia for 25 years.

**Jacqueline:** Great. Thank you so much. I'm so excited to speak to you from New Zealand and in the US here, we've heard a lot about how new Zealand's handled the epidemic and the strength of your female leaders. And so I'm really excited to hear about things in New Zealand that are working. And this is part of me leveraging all these colleagues and friends from around the world, all these mums that I've worked with across the years who can tell me what's working there, and maybe things that can also work here. But Erica, your background is so extraordinary. So tell us a little bit about your background and your journey to where you are now.

**Erica:** Yes, certainly. I was born in London but I was raised in a small island called Cyprus, Greek Cypriot side. And after my high school years, I ventured over to the States where I got to meet my father. He's of Ghanian origin. And I also had the opportunity to study there. I completed my bachelor's at the university of California, San Diego, and then I went on to complete my Master's in exercise and movement science at the University of Oregon. There, I met my husband and who was Kiwi, and that's how I ended up in New Zealand. I completed my PhD here at the Auckland University of Technology where I'm currently employed. I do have one son, as I said earlier, he is born and bred in New Zealand.

**Jacqueline:** And how old is he now?

**Erica:** He is now 22 years old. So he's on his own path. Currently he does live with us, but he's more independent. As they get older, they get more and more independent, but not totally independent.

**Jacqueline:** And what stage of your career were you in when you had your son?

**Erica:** Very early on. Unfortunately that marriage didn't last long. So I ended up being in a situation where I was a single mother. I was working full time and I was studying for my PhD at the same time. Because you're trying to do it all. You try to do all as well as the others. At the time, my colleagues were younger than me without children and couldn't see the struggles that I was facing. And other male members of our team also could not see it. And I ended up going into this spiral where I couldn't keep up with all those different roles. So I did end up feeling burnt out. At the time, I didn't know it, but the symptoms or some signs of that is when you start to feel knots in your stomach, anxious and stressed all the time. Not always wanting to be at work even though, I love what I do, I really do. And at that point yeah, I ended up being in that state of burnout.

**Jacqueline:** So what helped you get through that? And is it something that you feel like you learned from and have continued to try and employ in your life? Cause that's one thing I'm conscious of is that I don't want to get burned out again. So I constantly trying to think, how can I prevent this.

**Erica:** Absolutely. I learned from that experience I learned to just stop and reassess my situation. At the time I was given just accidentally really, or maybe my head of school at that time saw something, I don't know, but he gave me a book called Leadership and the Whirlpool effect to read by Lester Levy and then, and I started reading and I realized that I put myself into that whirlpool effect dragging you down because you try to do so much to survive. And trying to not even compete just survive. And because it was so useful, I decided to start reading more books, try to understand why I ended up in this situation that I was in. I did read biographies of influential women our prime ministers in New Zealand who were female. Helen Clark, she was the first elected New Zealand, female prime minister. But also Hillary Clinton and Madeline Albright, Michelle Obama. And currently very recently Jacinda Ardern who's the current prime minister in New Zealand. I was interested to see how other people, how other women in leadership positions managed their situations and themselves. So I had to break that cycle and then to further development for myself particularly in personal leadership space. And so I started working on myself first.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. And I think that's often what people say, I'm glad you say first, because I think that there is this assumption that we can't change other people's behaviors, but yet we're behavior change scientists. So we know people's behaviors can change, but I totally agree. We've got to focus on ourselves and I'm really intrigued by your journey because my journey was the same. The first thing I did was start to read when I was in this situation of just complete overwhelm and I took a leave of absence my friend said, Hey, why don't you read this book? It helps you learn how to prioritize. And that was really the start of my journey, but a lot of me was looking for answers. And I think it is helpful. Like you say, there are good examples from books, but at the same time, I think I was trying to fix myself. I agree that the things we can do and I've learned so much, but at the same time, there are also things in the environment, particularly in the academic environment that are not supportive of women. So at some stage we have to look at both.

**Erica:** Absolutely. But I suppose I did have control over myself and so I could start with myself and then once I got myself in the right place to then look outward to see what else I can do in my environment.

**Jacqueline:** And how did that journey affect your leadership going forward, your mentoring of women and faculty. Cause you ended up as in the Dean position. Your previous head of department had obviously seen potential in you and wanted you to go in the right direction. So what did you learn from that time and how did you apply it to those you ended up serving?

**Erica:** I can talk about some personal things that I've done first, for me. One of the things that I've learned and as a mother, that we need to be organized, to be able to do all the things that we need to do as we're raising the child or children. And so I, it was imperative that I learn how to do that and how to get my days organized so I can do certain things. And so from that, I learned to have my days and weeks structured on a schedule that works for me but not to put unrealistic expectations on me. So my daily, schedule incorporates exercise and incorporates walks and work and ensuring that the weekends are free to enjoy the outdoors.

Once I became head of school, I said, this is very important for me to be able to make the right decisions for my school. I need to have that time to recharge. And so having that in my head that this is needed for me to do my job better. I do make sure that I do have the weekends free and I'm out and about. I don't stay indoors. And I think it's very important to show others that, Hey, you need to rest, you need to take a break. And of course they don't see it all the time. And that's something that I made more visible because I exercise in the mornings before work. I do my walks with the dog morning and evening, so they don't see me. And on the weekends I'm out hiking, but anyway, Instagram is good. So I'll put some stuff on the Instagram there so people can see that. The other thing that I've learned especially, as I mentioned earlier from the books that I've read, especially Helen Clark's a way of operating. She talked a lot about the importance of investing time in people and relationships. And she said, sometimes that's more important that the actual work that you do. And and so I've taken that on board and I always let my colleagues and students know that they matter and focusing on people's strengths and appreciating and acknowledging colleagues, always looking for a win-win situation.

And here in New Zealand, we talk about lots of cups of tea which could be the equivalent of lots of cups of coffee. That's something that I continue to incorporate and learn and making that time. I think that's very important making time and having those conversations. But another thing that I've learned was about not sweating, the small stuff, I would spend hours wasted energy on worrying about things. And again, Helen Clark said sometimes people may disappoint you. That's it, you move on. Don't spend time in that environment. And very recently, a colleague of mine shared another strategy with me that I find very useful. She said that you're in control of your next thought. And I use it often to help myself going to a positive space. Don't continue thinking this way. You can actually change that. So that's definitely something that I have incorporated. And another thing, and i mentioned this, but it's about caring for oneself. That's just so important. When I was in that kind of burnout stage and I need to get out of bed, I read someone to do this exercise where you think about the things that make you happy. And I had to go through this exercise and I had to be brutally honest with myself and going to a deep reflection to figure it out.

And it's actually a bit scary because I couldn't differentiate between what makes me happy versus my child's happiness or somebody else's happiness. What are the things that really make me happy? And so it took a long time. It wasn't as easy as I thought, but then I did get to that point and I did identify what makes me happy. And so some of the things that I do again to recharge and look after myself, walking along the beach and long hikes out in nature of several days, trial running, working at home in my own gym. Looking after my dog, those are the kind of basic things, but let me tell you that they shift my energy and that's what kind of renews me.

**Jacqueline:** And I think it's right, that the people might have to experiment with that. Because again, if you go for a run because you're trying to lose weight, that run might not make you happy. It might be you beating yourself up.

**Erica:** Yes. Mental health and wellbeing, because I just love that feeling, being outdoors in nature. And as in New Zealand, we have a lot of places to go where there is a lush, natural environment. And it's for wellbeing purposes. I stopped worrying about weight.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah, I think it's an important shift as well. And as you say, it takes you awhile to find it. I was chatting with another guest who's a coach. And she said most women that she works with who are experiencing burnout and exhaustion, they don't know what they want. So if you ask them, what do you want, what would you make you happy? There is no answer.

**Erica:** It was a difficult exercise. Really just pulling apart the things that make you happy, and it's just being patient with it and being brutally honest and just having the time. It might take a few weeks.

**Jacqueline:** Or longer. But checking in with yourself. Cause again I feel like that I definitely have tried things that didn't work and then I'm beating myself up about I tried that it didn't look it just, it takes time to reset. So those would be all things that you would recommend others do.

**Erica:** Yeah. And again I guess from my role as a head of school the things that I've put in place I suppose or try to encourage was to create a place where people feel accepted. And so I have been able to encourage diversity in my team. That's very important where people feel that they are part of a team and that they belong. And I think that's very important. The first thing that I've done as a head of school was to have a school-wide activity early in the year to co-create together our strategic plan with agreed values, mission, visions, goals, and principles. And a you're probably thinking well, so what do you know everybody else does it, but it wasn't about that. It was about ensuring that all voices were heard and people were given equal opportunities, multiple and different opportunities to provide their input. So we can build something that we can all share together. So I think having something like that where, you're being heard, this is a shared mission, vision and values.

I think that makes a big difference to people, but women in particular, because you're given alternative ways to input into something that brings a team together. And so that you're part of the team you're listened to and then just feel that you have a strong sense of belonging and identity. And the feedback that I have received from my staff they do say that they do feel that. And to the extent that we call ourselves a family or a “whanau” that's the Mari word “whanau”, which is it's about the extended family being together. I think that's very important having that sense of identity and belonging and being connected to group, knowing that your voice has been heard and providing avenues that are suitable for women to provide that input.

**Jacqueline:** And that's something I'm very conscious of when I'm facilitating like a meeting, that's a large brainstorming type meeting. I'm always really thinking about what are the different ways that I can break people apart, get into different types of activity so that everybody can be heard because often in these groups people either uncomfortable speaking up or, just certain voices are heard. So I always think about different tools to allow people to have their input, because I think that's so important. And I know that Kim Scott in her book Just Work talks about that. How do you write, particularly operational procedural documents around how you want to handle bias harassment, bullying in the workplace and that these things do they need input from all parties.

**Erica:** Absolutely. I didn't want to rush it, but we were on a timeline, and so I didn't let it go either. And also I wanted conversations to be taking place informally as well. Not just in those formal settings with people talking informally with each other and reflecting on what the document entailed. It was quite an intense process. I would say that most of my time in the first year went into putting together that strategy for our school and the values and principles, goals, all of that. It was the main thing that I did that whole year.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. And it does take time and effort. And again, I think that is one thing as a leader too. That is our role is to put aside what is the work you need to get done to serve the work that needs to be done to serve your employees and staff. And I feel like that was something I read about as well in terms of the issues that women have when they move into leadership is sometimes they are uncomfortable letting go of the expertise to then let others be experts. And they're serving their growth and development instead of being the expert themselves. But also that as a manager, that is your role is to let go of your goals and then support everybody else's goals. But in academia, that was very difficult because you manage projects and a staff of people, but you also have your own promotion track that is not related in any way, really to how you manage those people, you're judged on your productivity, the scientific impact. And of course, I couldn't have done any of my work without my team. But how I manage them, wasn't part of my evaluation process.

**Erica:** Very true. So academia sets us on a path of almost selfishness to focus on ourselves in terms of our promotion. And unfortunately, that is the way to get through, even though it feels very uncomfortable. But once I became the head of school or had leadership positions, I didn't want to follow that path. I wanted to focus on leadership rather than being a leader. And so with leadership, as you mentioned earlier, it's about pulling everybody together to work together. As one, instead of me being in the front and say, Hey, come this way. It's about working together as a team and serving my team. That's what I say to my team.

I said I am humbled and privileged to be, the head of school, but we're doing this together and I'm here to serve. And so I want it to take a different way of doing things, not the typical or a way that academia is used to, and it's not easy because others operate in a different way. And so my voice is not always heard, so I have to find different strategies for my voice to be heard. And I I have an example I can share when I was the associate Dean for our faculty. I was not the loudest voice. I couldn't be the loudest voice and often not given that opportunity to speak at first, but, I created my own method that was effective.

And later on, I discovered that's what Jacinda Ardern, our current prime minister is doing as well. I was able to listen to the conversation. I would find maybe a hole or a gap in what the proposal the argument made. And then once people said what they had to say, I would come in at the end and I did have people's attention then because the Dean would say, was there any other comments? And I would say actually, yes, I do have a comment. And so that was the last word too. I often spoke last and that was effective. And if there were no holes in the proposition or argument, I would actually acknowledge the people who put the argument together or the work together, to bring to the table, whatever was being discussed.

So again, I was having the last word, acknowledging people's efforts. And so that's how I did it. I, again, it wasn't about me. It was about, what we have in front of us. And another method that I used again was to socialize if I had some sort of argument to do or proposition to socialize that before the meeting. And to be honest, I have seen other women try to come into that environment and they have not lasted. Because they haven't utilized other ways, other strategists to come in, they felt that they had to replicate what's happening in that environment. And it was a real shame because they could have contributed so much.

And so I feel very strongly of supporting women and sharing my strategies and sharing what I have been doing. And then to encourage more women to take those leadership positions. And be heard in meetings or situations where there is discussions of propositions.

**Jacqueline:** That's interesting. And maybe that's something we can think about because I definitely have been reading a lot about becoming an upstander so that instead of just allowing women to not be heard that you might say to a colleague okay, can we let Erica have the final word and giving a woman that opportunity.

**Erica:** Definitely. Definitely I do that, but again, I don't want to put people on the spot either. But if I see that they tried to say something, but they didn't have the opportunity. When I'm leading a team or leading a meeting I see where people are at the way they're sitting, what they try to say something, but they couldn't have the opportunity. And then I will go back and say, actually, you had something to say about this and then they will share.

**Jacqueline:** So as a mentor as well, what advice are you giving to your both male and female mentees? With your vision to build a culture that is more inclusive. How do you actually mentor students to be part of that inclusivity and what are the expectations that you voice or the techniques that you help your mentors. Cause again, we're helping them with the topic matter, but there's also, how can we see that they need different opportunities? Because I think mentoring is something that is very strong in academia and lots of companies are now talking about find a mentor. So I think we could potentially learn from academia, some of the strengths of mentoring.

**Erica:** Absolutely. I mentioned it earlier, but just understanding the difference between being a leader and leadership. I think you can achieve a lot more by focusing on leadership than trying to be a leader. And so that's something that I would like to role model within my role. And I think it does come down to personal leadership as well. How you conduct oneself and role modeling that behavior. Another thing here at the university, we are on a path of appreciating diversity in Auckland, in particular, this is a very multicultural multiethnic city. And we have people from all around the world, living here in Auckland, New Zealand. We also have our indigenous people here Pacific Māori and others. And so when we are on a path or on appreciating that diversity. We have also a committee at the highest level of the university. I am a member of that, that focusing on diversity and putting events on appreciating and understanding diversity. So accepting people, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, color accents, habits, ranks. And so that I think that's very important and also role modeling that behavior showing the acceptance and paying attention to what people are saying from diverse background backgrounds and encouraging that.

**Jacqueline:** What are some of the policies then that your university is putting into place? Cause again I feel like that we can talk about role models and personal responsibility, but what are the programs and policies that then actually change the culture and frame the expectations and reward diversity.

**Erica:** Certainly within the student body we are encouraging diversity by having specific scholarships for specific cultural groups or ethnic groups. So for example, we have specific scholarships for our Māori and Pacific students. We also have the early career academic pathway, where staff again from a Pacific or Māori origin can come into the academic pathway. And there is a lot of mentoring and support to provide some sort of balance in our staff, in terms of that ethnic diversity as well, and representation of indigenous people. We have a lot of students of Māori Pacific origin in my university. So we need to reflect that in our staff as well. There are awards diversity awards for staff who have pursued that and made in routes in helping others encouraged diversity and yeah, bringing into the fold that way of thinking. And so every year there are a series of awards that are being awarded to individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, whether within their teaching, their research or general service to the university. So that's some examples.

**Jacqueline:** And anything you think that might seem the norm for life and New Zealand, but that is actually something that we could try here in the US?

**Erica:** So one of the things that we have here that I not think there is in the US is the ministry for women. It's a standalone dedicated for women, and it is the government's principal advisor on attributing their results for women and girls in New Zealand. They have from their website there, they have three strategic outcomes to ensure the contribution of women and girls is value and show that all women and girls are financially secure and can fully participate and thrive and ensure women and girls are free from all forms of violence and harassment. So they do that through policy and advice to the government on improving outcomes. Making sure they manage the international reporting about the status of women. And they provide suitable women nominees for appointments to state in sector reports of committees. And they are the catalyst for change and action.

So I think ministry just focused on that is very important and it makes a statement there. The way they do it. They're very solutions focused and they bring voices of women, the experiences to make a case to government. So currently I suppose, in terms of the equity or equality of men and women. Current statistics show that in education women continue to outperform men, but the gap between men and women holding tertiary qualifications decreased, which is great. Then New Zealand pay gap is getting smaller and smaller.

Currently it's at 9.3%. And I've been living in the states is 17.7%. So there's a big difference there. And that health outcomes continue to improve for New Zealand women. So they are focused on all those things to ensure that the government, the policies, the mechanisms are right for women. And I think that's part of the success.

**Jacqueline:** Great. I think that's really important is to have models. I know in any time we've done research on policy language we've written model language for legislation or for school policies or whatever it is cause that helps. That helps cause you, you not having to reinvent the wheel. I really feel like it has made a difference to you to have these female premiers as leaders. Can you say a little bit more about that? Our lack of that opportunity in the US.

**Erica:** Yes. For me as a woman and a younger woman, an older woman, seeing someone like Helen Clark, which was the first elected prime minister of New Zealand, taking that role and doing it so well and not be bothered by the criticism around whether it's national and internationally, and just forging ahead with what she believed was right to do. I just absolutely loved it. And she was a role model for me, everything that she said, I just, just hang up on her, every word. And again, that, that is one of the things that she talked about. It was about investing time in building relationships. And that's, I've learned that from her, I've also learned from her about being comfortable in leading a group.

You may have the leadership positions, but then you got to be comfortable in it. And that's, that is just so true. Sometimes you're there, but you're all, can start worrying about things, my accent and what I'm wearing and my hair, and you just need to be comfortable. Just be who you are and lead that group. She talked about being able to deflect personal attacks from people and having a thick skin. And I remember she said, words can never hurt you only if you let them. And I think that's very significant

**Jacqueline:** and I think that's important because again, sometimes that is when women see how other women in leadership are attacked. It's a reason to dissuade you to step into that every day.

**Erica:** But seeing how well she had done it, if I'm sure she would have times of, reflection, but the way she did it was just so incredible. And currently we have of course prime minister Jacinda Ardern. And she's amazing. I admire her leadership, her strength, her kindness. She always talks about kindness and when we were going through COVID 19 and the lockdown. That's the word that she used a lot about being kind to one another. And she has achieved so much already for the country, especially with how she handled COVID19. I think she's ended up being an international phenomenon. There is a quote. Let me just see here. She said that she's one of the criticisms that I have faced over the years is that I'm not aggressive enough and not assertive in our own may be somehow because I'm empathetic of weak.

I totally rebel against that. I refuse to believe that you cannot be both compassionate and strong. So that's something that I think has made the social media. She also talked about that you can carve your own path, be your own kind of leader, and we do need to create a new generation of leadership.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that compassion is so important. And one of the reasons it stands out to me is because I heard an another podcast interview and the person interviewed just said, we just have to be compassionate managers. People have to be compassionate managers. And whenever I hear that word, just, it reminds me of the Nike just do it. And as we know, as exercise researchers is it is so hard to do. So again, that just to me, it was like what does that mean? What are the elements of being a compassionate manager? What can people do? What goals can they set themselves to actually bring compassion to the workplace? How did you bring that?

**Erica:** It's about making the time to have conversations with people, seeing things from their perspective and looking at the environment. Sometimes it's not the person that there is, an issue with it's the environment. And I always, when someone comes in and, let's say they haven't necessarily performed in their role, I asked this questions because I want to know what's happening in their lives and their environments, because it might not necessarily be something that they're at fault. . And so I think focusing on the environment first, and then the person is just very important, but you cannot figure it out without having those conversations with people. And it does take time and we need to be listening and we need to be hearing. And if it's within our powers to be able to change that environment and shift mindsets and the way people want to criticize sometimes, or blame or point fingers, we just need to leave that all behind and look at, have we created the right environment for people to flourish?

**Jacqueline:** And I like that idea about you saying time, because certainly we've heard from other guests is about creating creative time and that's really, in some ways what you're doing at the weekends is creating time for your brain to be able to come up with the solutions that you wanted for your school, you needed that mental break. And the same way we need time blocked in our calendar that is, recovery time is creative time. But maybe what we need is compassion time in there. Literally every manager should have, blocked if it's not every day, it's at least, once a week time that they dedicate to this issue. We're also busy all the time. You can't just find time out of thin air. You can't just expect it to happen because you want to be more compassionate. I think you really have to work at it.

**Erica:** Oh, absolutely. And make the time. I normally say we're always busy but doing what? We need to stop and prioritize what we're doing. Why are we so busy? And can we work differently? Instead of trying to put all this things in our calendars to do, and then this and this busy-ness can have consequences on relationships, and instead of building relationships, you breaking them down because you're so busy. And so I remember one time, one of my staff came in, I said, oh, I didn't want to bother you. I know you're so busy. And I'm like, you know what? I'm not busy for you. I am not. And so I have to also be careful in terms of my business. I don't want to give the impression that I don't have time for my staff to come to me and have a conversation about stuff.

**Jacqueline:** I agree. And I would say that I was guilty of that always running from meetings to other things. So I think when we wear this badge of, I'm exhausted, I'm busy,, that doesn't open us to be able to be available to hear. But again, I think it's that I was running to try and keep up with everything I had to do. I didn't have enough time for people and that's where I felt I was failing. I wasn't comfortable with how I was being a leader and being a manager. So again, I think it is it's that shifting your priorities because you can't have it all.

**Erica:** And going back to my original statement when I felt that burnout I just had to stop and reassess, and that's what I do now as well. If I start feeling overwhelmed with stuff, I follow my own advice and I just stop. And I'm like, you know what? This is not working. Let's reassess the situation. Why is this happening right here right now? Who else can help, to make these more manageable? So you just need to, when things get really overwhelming and tough, the best thing is to stop and step back and have a look at that bigger picture. Yeah.

**Jacqueline:** And I suppose one of my thoughts here though is. If we go forward and start to say, this is what management and leadership looks at, and we have to dedicate time to compassion. But like you say, if I had dedicated more time to my staff, then I would have had less productivity upon which I was being judged. It's really that we need to make sure that we are evaluating people on the team wellbeing as well. How much time in your day are you dedicating to the wellbeing of your team and have accountability for that? Cause again, I can see that would be a role that would fall to women and would again, not help us with our promotions.

**Erica:** I agree having that time is as an indicator of how you support your team, mentoring the team their wellbeing. I think it's a great idea. And, it's about building those relationships that potentially, could help in the future. I think it's important to document as well and be part of those indicators of success.

**Jacqueline:** Have you got any more recent insights from your work you were writing to me saying that you've been moving a little bit more into citizen science work and that's really where our communities are collecting data and are driving the solutions we provide.

**Erica:** I still think that the systems that we are operating within have been built for men that's the reality. And so just going back to, when we talked about raising a child. It's something you do on top of everything else. And while in New Zealand, at least we have moms taking maternity leave, fathers who are partners can also take leave. So that's a policy. And again, I don't know if that's the same in the United States.

**Jacqueline:** And I think even if it is a policy, many fathers feel that they can't take it, that they're penalized if they do. My reading is make it a default for everyone and you have to opt out of it. And that helps change the norm.

**Erica:** For sure. But from my experience here is within in our faculty, the partners do take the time as well, either together or sequentially, to provide a more extended care, for their child, especially when it's first born. But it's still a patriarchal system. And I see that all the time with my younger staff now, when they're trying to balance the children and their career. And I still see that there is a lot of gaps there. And especially with childcare and especially with our students as well. I don't think there is enough support there and it needs to be better and the universities need to be doing it better as well.

I encourage a flexible environment, but of course now with COVID that's now more accepted where you can work from home if you need to. But even before COVID I encourage flexibility. If you needed to go and pick up and drop off kids, a school, I would be open to that, knowing that the work will be done outside those hours. I was comfortable with that. So I would have those conversations with my staff without necessarily needing them to be on campus behind the desk, doing stuff. So I allowed for that flexibility. Not everybody agreed with me at the time, but that's something that I liked to do.

I do encourage again for women who are going through maybe a burnout. I think that the most important message that I would like to give it's about taking the time to care for oneself. We say we're busy, let's just assess that. Do we have to be doing all those things really? Let's just have like an honest look and also find what makes us happy. I think it's so important to have that honest conversation with ourselves and identify the things that make us happy. And then, do those and look after ourselves. I think that's the number one thing. If we look after ourselves, then we'll be able to look after others better. So that is my advice.

**Jacqueline:** And I do want to say we do have to prioritize yourself and self-care is important, but if you're in a situation of burnout where your workload is exhausting, you where you have conflict in the work environment where your values are not respected, where there is no sense of belonging, it's the work environment that has to change.

Yes, you still have to, you have to look out for yourself so that you can manage what you're going through, but managing what you're going through and learning to cope with the stress and anxiety is not going to solve the cause of the burnout, which is so often external. Again it can be that within you have unreasonable expectations. But again, I even think that's something that managers can be aware of because we certainly see it with physicians, for example that they're working long hours. And they went into these jobs because they were altruistic. They wanted to give of themselves, they went into these jobs because they were perfectionist because they wanted to do things well, you want a perfectionist doing your surgery. But then those things, they work against us as well. So I think if managers are going to benefit from our attention to detail and our high expectations and our service to deliver the best, they also have to take responsibility to look out for us and let us know when, here you're going beyond expectations. Here's the limit of what you need to do. Cause again, I think sometimes we set minimums and then there's no maximum.

**Erica:** That's very hard because people have different thresholds. And so it's very hard to set the maximums, but I think acknowledging people's work, in a conversation or, mentioning, Hey, I saw your article here, amazing work there. Just having those conversations sometimes is enough because people want to see that they are doing great work is not just from a promotion application to promotion application but on a day to day basis. And so I do take the time to do that and acknowledge and share across the school. So I do periodically these school emails where I would actually talk about people's achievements. So it's about highlights small wins, big, wins, whatever it is, share it and acknowledge the work that people do. And I think that helps because people, especially the perfectionist, when they just want to keep doing things better and better and better. And acknowledging that I think it's very empowering.

**Jacqueline:** And I agree with that. And I think that was something that, that I learned myself. My husband and I did our love languages. And I discovered that mine was positive affirmations. And it seems so bizarre to me because, and maybe this is partly just English. Don't compliment me. Don't point me out. I'm supposed to pull myself down before someone else does it, that self-effacing. I hate receiving compliments. And I remember friends said, could you just say, thank you, instead of all this excuse making you, you do okay. Yes, I can. I can be so much more gracious with compliments. But what I discovered when I learned that my love language is positive affirmations. Here's the person that hates compliment, but my love language is positive affirmation and that's when I shifted in my head. Really realizing no, I need to be acknowledged for what I do. I didn't want you to say that I looked nice or that my meal tasted great. I just want you to say, thanks for putting the time into doing this. I really need the effort and the time I've put into something to be acknowledged, not the result. That's what to me is the thing that I need is recognition for the time and effort. I feel like I've got to do some compassion time and I've got to do some acknowledgement in time and cause if it's not on our to do list then it doesn't happen. I remember after listening to Radical Candor, trying to instrument an email like I think I said weekly where I wanted the managers to recognize their staff to me so that then I could recognize their staff as well. But we did it for a few weeks and then we didn't keep it up. So again, I understand how hard behavior change is.

**Erica:** Yeah, and your right and I think we do, at first, we to become a habit. We have to remind ourselves, put it in and our diaries to whatever we can to adopt that behavior. And at first it's going to be like that until then it becomes natural. And then you do it. One of the things that Helen Clark said, when you talk to people, create a genuine smile and you do that by thinking about what you like the best about that person, focus on their strengths. And that is just so important when you have that conversation to acknowledge and listen, and converse with people by having that genuine smile, showing that you care and that you want to hear what they have to say.

**Jacqueline:** I'm so grateful for your perspective. And to be honest I didn't know that you had gone through that phase of being a single mom and having burnout. Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for yeah, sharing that story with us because I think it's so important.

**Erica:** Yes, you're very welcome. And I really enjoyed the interview today.