

**#188: The True Work of Leadership
with Tara Gronhovd**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Melissa Shanahan

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

I'm Melissa Shanahan, and this is *The Law Firm Owner Podcast*, Episode #188.

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Hey, everyone. Welcome to this week's episode. I am thrilled to share the conversation today that I had with Tara Gronhovd. She is magic. But really, she is an expert with team dynamics communication. Her company is called Align; she's CEO of Align. And, that is AlignTransform.com

I have been on the hunt this year, for resources that help me be a better leader. This has become glaringly apparent to me, that this is what I need to focus on. And, you know, I watch clients go through this, and they kind of hit that phase where this is the time, they've got to be better leaders and work on that.

Even, if they're good, they know that they have to up their game and increase their skill set. And, I am there. I actually struggled to find resources that were really helpful. I, as you all know, I facilitate Quarterly Strategic Planning. And, that's very nuts and bolts. But there's Rocks, where you identify your quarterly priorities. And for me, this quarter, what became very apparent is that I need to increase my skill set.

And so, I wanted a Rock around that. Now, I have found Tara, thanks to Claudia Revermann; shout out, she referred me to Tara. And, it has been the best thing. It's like drinking a tall glass of water. It's exactly what I needed. And I'm hoping, by having her on the podcast today, it'll reveal and shed some light, and make you maybe not feel so alone about managing people.

That whole topic of dealing with people in the organization and leading them. You know, I used to work for a company that used to say, "You

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

manage processes, and you lead people.” And, I couldn't agree more. But somehow, that's actually a lot harder than I ever thought it would be.

I've seen people, like I said before, I've worked with so many business owners at different stages of growth, and I've seen the real uphill climb it can be to develop yourself in a way that you need to, so that you can lead a team in the ways that you need to lead the team. So that the business is healthy and thriving internally.

Because everybody wins when that happens; clients, you as the owner, the employees, and the business stays healthy. So, I wanted to share this woman that I found with you all. And my plan is to have her on in the future as well, not just this one time. So that she can address topics that are really common. Topics that are people focused, and leadership focused, team dynamic focused.

So, today, you will hear us talk through some concepts that were really helpful to me, as I implemented them into my team and my sphere. You'll also hear... There's some, you know, I've got no shame, I'm going to be really vulnerable. Anytime you hear me talking with her, I'll be transparent about using me as an example, with some of the things that I've struggled with, and how she helped me overcome them. So, you'll hear a bit of that today.

You know, this is work that's never done. I'm realizing that, and I have a long way to go. I have a long learning curve, and I'm ready for it. I feel like I have a partner with Tara. And I hope that you find insights from this podcast that helps you feel like you have a partner, too.

And of course, I encourage you to reach out to her, if it feels like someone that you really want to have a conversation with, about what it looks like to work with her. She's just lovely and smart and sharp, and always says the right thing that helps you really grasp what she's trying to convey.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

So, I'm excited to share her with you. In the future, we'll dig into topic specific episodes with her, so I'm looking forward to that. If you have anything you'd like to see covered, a specific topic within leading and managing people, then please email Hi@velocitywork.com and we will make sure to capture those, so that we can have her dig into some of that in the future.

A couple housekeeping things. When we did this interview, I was really under the weather. I tried to mute myself and make sure that you didn't have to hear anything, but may hear some coughs and some congestion, as you can probably still hear in this.

And also, we were having some work done outside of our house, and I was trying to not let that affect the sound quality. I'm not sure if that came through or not. But if it did, please forgive that this week.

All right, everybody. Without further ado, please enjoy this initial conversation with Tara Gronhovd.

Melissa Shanahan: All right. Welcome, everyone, to this week's episode. We have Tara Gronhovd with us today, and I am thrilled to bring her expertise, knowledge, magic, to you all. So, welcome, Tara.

Tara Gronhovd: Thank you so much, Melissa. I'm really excited to be here.

Melissa: Will you please tell everyone what your business is and what you do? And then, we'll dive into some topics.

Tara: Yes, so my company is called Align. I work with teams, and leaders of teams. We provide leadership coaching and development for leaders. And then, I use Strengths, in the Gallup Certified Strengths Coach. I use Strengths to help people to build self-awareness, and then team awareness. So, working on team dynamics and how we can work better together.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

Melissa: Well, you've certainly helped us. I was referred to you by a client who loves you. Uses you for the Strength Finders stuff. She kept talking to me about it, and I am familiar with it, but I'm not an expert in it, by any stretch.

To give some context to the listeners, basically, my team is hitting a point that we have to pay attention to how we communicate, and we really need to be tight as a team. And, that is not my strength. I know how to get a business to do what it needs to do, like from a behind-the-scenes... Like, the strategy and planning, and that all has to be there.

But there is this side that I'm not an expert in, and I've never pretended to be one. I am on this journey and I'm gonna share it with people as I go. But the leadership side of things, management side of things, when you have humans working in an organization, it's just a totally different game.

Tara: Well, I would say that, because all humans are different and come with their own stuff. Like we were talking about before, we bring our whole selves no matter where we go. So, everyone's bringing the whole of themselves and their history, in to your team, whether you know about what they're bringing in or not.

And so, I would say very few people really would say that it's their expertise in figuring out how to get their team to work really well together. It's something we don't pay a lot of attention to. I think we kind of usually leave it to chance, or hope that people will be mature enough to figure it out themselves. But even mature, skilled people can struggle with different, you know, different team members.

Melissa: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I've always been someone who's practiced a lot of frameworks and self-development, and just applying it to myself. And it's only when you're in relationship with other people that you realize how not, not together you thought you were. So, that's true for marriage and having a kid, and then it's no different with the team.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

It's like a different set of relationships to manage and make sure that everybody is working well together. And everybody is, I guess, you know, being seen. And yes, it's a whole job, in and of itself, to manage a team.

Tara: Well, I say, you know, parenting is humbling. But I actually believe leadership is more humbling. Because it's a variety of mirrors that you are holding up. Yes, you know these things, but then the reality of your own instincts come into play. The reality of your own strengthening instincts come into play. And different people are going to, you know, bring out different aspects of our personality that we've never had to deal with before, potentially.

Certainly, not as owners or as leaders, you know, trying to move an entire vision and company forward. It's personal, and we're going to take it personal. And emotional regulation, understanding how we show up, and how other people's interactions with us can trigger certain behaviors or emotions in ourselves.

Like, that's the work of leadership, honestly. I believe, truly believe, it's not necessarily why people come to work with me or with my team, but it is, 100%, what we end up spending a lot of time on. Because how you are reacting to others is going to impact how they show up, as well.

Melissa: I mean, I don't think I realized... Because I've been having a hard time the last, you know, several months. Actually, this year; it started in February. I know exactly when I noticed how bad it felt for me. I didn't feel like I was doing a good job navigating it, but I couldn't tell; am I not doing a good job?

Or, is my team not competent? Is something happening there that I just keep trying, I'm not trying, it's not ever gonna work? Or, am I just not doing it right? And, you know, you go on this journey, and it's nothing major where the company was going to crumble. But it's just like repeat stuff that keeps happening, and you just wonder what is happening here?

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

I don't understand. And, I don't understand if it's me. I don't understand if it's them. I want to be fair. I also don't have any more patience. Like, I just felt trapped by the fact that I have a team. And that sounds crazy, because the team is the thing that will...,

Tara: It should be the opposite, right? This is the thing that's going to set you free. That you can now move things off your plate that don't make sense. And, empower other people to rise up and to run with you. And then, when we are all tripping over each other, it's confusing.

Melissa: Oh, my gosh, your language is really good. That's exactly what it is; it's tripping over each other. I've talked about in the podcast, at times, and I still stand by that stuff... There are tactical things that can help improve or gel, that I've learned over the years that I may share. You know, things like huddles, and about stuff that you can do that's meaningful.

We do our own version of the things that I share in the podcast, but the conversation that I've had with you in the last couple months has been the missing piece for me. Because you can have all the tactical stuff in the world, but if you do not understand how to... Which, you would never say this as a business owner, probably. How to regulate, emotionally regulate yourself. And how to, on a day-to-day basis, be able to help everyone and bring out the best in them. Then, the tactical stuff goes so much further.

But if you don't have that piece, which is not the piece I'm an expert in... So, that's why I'm really interested to have this conversation with you. Empowering people, my listeners, to round out this experience of management, and not just go for things tactically, because there is a missing piece. And, I think some people don't even know what that is. And, I think our conversations could shed some light on it.

Tara: I understand personally, how frustrating it is that emotions have to be a part of the game, have to be a part of what we're dealing with. Like, I think that a lot of times, because emotions are so frustrating... Our own

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

emotions can be frustrating to ourselves, as business owners, as leaders; they're really inconvenient.

And then, to have to acknowledge and figure out how to manage our own. Not only our own, but make space for other people's emotions, and how those are going to impact us. It was overwhelming and difficult and challenging. And yet, it is the work of leadership. It truly is. And so, you know, yes, we need vision. Yes, we need strategy. I am all about those tactical practices, because that consistency can really help build what you need, in terms of structure and framework for the team. Clarity, people need clarity.

But if you're not aware of what's going on, for yourself and your team, emotionally, you're going to continue to have those miscommunications. Those kinds of unspoken tensions. The things that are under the surface that you're never quite getting to. The elephants in the corner, that you end up building shrines around, because you don't know how to deal with it.

Melissa: Oh, my gosh, yes. Okay, before we dig into the few bullets that you and I had talked about, that we would go into. You mentioned, before we hit record, and you touched on it here, most of the time people come to you and you end up working on emotional regulation. Can you say more about that?

Tara: That's not why they're coming. But we usually get there, because I know that that's the thing that's holding people back.

Melissa: I am trying to think of my own example, but can you give an example of what that... If someone's like, "Well, do I have that problem or not?" Can you give an example of what it might look like that?

Tara: I mean, a lot of times I'm brought in to help with team dynamics, or even just team building, because I use Strengths. Strengths is one of those assessments, where a lot of times, people are using it as what I call a

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

“party trick”. Or, kind of a one-and-done. Like, we'll come in and do Strengths for a team building, and it's interesting, it's fascinating.

Everyone loves it because it's our favorite subject; it's ourselves. And, it's empowering. And, there can be some good insights that come from that one-and-done. But if you really want to make progress over time, there's a lot of depth to that assessment, to really understanding the psychology that goes underneath those Strengths, the motivators. How that impacts us as a team and how we show up.

Usually, we start going deeper into Strengths, while I'm also coaching the leaders, or different leaders, on the team. And inevitably, there's things that you're stuck around. There are things that you're stuck on.

So, you know, if you don't mind me using, you know, something from your work, as an example. You are someone who really wants to understand the root cause, so that it doesn't happen again. And it feels really important to you, because you lead with Futuristic and Significance, so an Achiever. You want to hit a goal. That goal is absolutely going to tie-in to a longer-term vision. And if we don't manage our reputation along the way, we might not get there.

Melissa: That sentence feels like a fact. It doesn't feel like it's up for debate.

Tara: It doesn't feel like your preference, it feels like a fact.

Melissa: Right. Right. Yeah, exactly.

Tara: You have Achiever and Futuristic and Significance in your top 10, so that's part of that dynamic. So, when something happens for you, Melissa, that on the team, where there's a miscommunication or a misstep, especially if it's client facing, that feels urgent. And then, Activator comes in and pours fuel on the urgency. Because Activator wants it done now. So, that feels urgent, and you are going to bring a lot of energy into that dynamic.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

You have team members who don't lead with the same strengths that you do, and that energy is going to sometimes shut people down and get the opposite reaction that you want. Because what you would really like, is for the team to come together, figure out a 'how to fix it right now'.

But more, almost more importantly for you, be 'how do we make sure this doesn't keep happening?' Like, how do we know that we're not going to end up with the same problem next month, right? But for you, understanding how you are showing up emotionally in the moment, when that happens, and how to help your team show up in the way that will lead to the actual result, that's where you end up tripping on each other.

Because you come in with energy around; we've gotta to figure this out. And you might have a team member who says, "I gotta hide." Not because they're ashamed. But just like; I'm gonna wait for this energy to go away. And then, I'll come back when this feels like something I can help with or manage.

Just understanding that those team dynamics are happening. Bringing awareness to the fact of that team dynamic, first of all, changes the conversation. Now, we can talk about this dynamic that will continue to happen in multiple ways, in multiple situations.

And instead of hoping it never happens again, which is unrealistic; you're going to show up as you. Your team member is going to show up as them. And so, instead of bracing for impact, like; ooh, is this going to happen again? Let's have a plan for it. Let's talk about the fact that it's there, and have a plan for the fact that it's going to happen. And then, what do we do once it does?

Melissa: That's perfect. I'm so glad you shared that example, because that is it. I remember the first time... so, for listeners, I brought Tara in at our team retreat, that we had in October. She did a Strength workshop with us, and it was really helpful. After that, I decided to have coaching sessions

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

with Tara, to just continue to develop on this. And then, she's going to lead some workshops for us, in the future.

I knew prior, reaching out to you felt like a drink of water. But really, after working with you, I understood that this is my work. This is my work. Everything else, I'm dialed. I have numbers up the wazoo. I'm tight in my house, you know, my house is in order. But this is the part that I have to develop. And, I forgot what it feels like to be a beginner, for real, at something.

I understand what learning curve I'm about to go on, and I think it's gonna be really hard. I think having you to be a guide, is really useful, and thank you. But it's almost like a decision that I had to say, "No, no, I'm taking this seriously. Because nothing is going to ever be the way I want it to be, or feel in my business, unless I get this right. And so, this is a journey I have to go on."

So, that's how we ended up here.

Tara: I love that. And, you are so right. I'm not for everybody, so I tell people, "I can come in and do teamwork," and I'll do that. But if they want to continue, I'm eventually going to shed light on things that are going to feel uncomfortable. That is who I am, it's part of how I'm wired.

And because I know, unless we deal with that, we can't actually make progress. And so, then I'm not interested. Because growth and development, those are my core values. And, I really believe the journey of leadership never ends. We are always in the state of becoming.

I have so much respect for you, Melissa, and for leaders who say, "This is going to be hard, and I'm going to do it because it matters. It matters for my business. It matters for my people." And honestly, unaware leaders cause a lot of damage. It matters for our business, and you should do it for that reason, if nothing else, right?

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhvd

But it matters for the people you lead. Us showing up as maybe not our best selves, unaware, kind of blind to our impact. Workplace drama is real and we can unintentionally be the villain in other people's stories. And it's not our goal, it's not our intention. We wish people would give us more grace. And when we put on the role of leadership, we are taking on responsibility for how we impact others.

Melissa: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. It's just deep work, I guess. I told you before, and I don't know if I've mentioned it on the podcast or not, I probably have. But certainly, it's come up when I talk to clients and members around certain topics. I started therapy about a year and a half ago, and it changed my life.

Because it's just a space to dig into the things I couldn't really understand. Or, I couldn't hack. I couldn't self-develop my way to it. It wasn't within my access. And after having a kid, it feels like it all became very apparent. So, I have a great therapist, who I love. And that's really been helpful with a lot of the same things that you and I talk about, but for my personal life.

You and I talked about the same things, but in different contexts. Which is really useful, because I don't talk about that stuff with her. I mean, she would, but it's not the same as talking to someone like you, who's focus is team dynamics and leadership. But it's fascinating to me, that it's the same shit.

Tara: It is. So, there's a coach on my team, her name is Pamela Nelson, she's phenomenal. She is a counselor and focuses on mental well-being. And so, we bring her in when someone has really deep work, in terms of mental well-being in the workplace, and needing more... Like I said, workplace trauma is real. We experience hardship at work. And then, we expect everyone to get over it. Right? And just move on, because it's work; because we should, right?

So, I really understand. We take the approach that mental well-being is for everybody. And it's this important kind of overlay with leadership. I, too,

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

went to back to therapy a couple years ago, because my kids were at an age that were kind of triggering some things in me, and I needed to go back.

I've been on this journey to learn how to feel my feelings; and it's terrible, and it's awful, and it's wonderful. All, at the same time. But I think that therapy and leadership coaching go really well together. They are a great combination. You can do one or the other and still make progress, but together, especially for in leadership, it makes a big difference.

Melissa: Yeah. Well, I appreciate you saying that. I did not know that, until right before the recording. You said most people, they come for, you know, a specific issue. But we end up working on emotional regulation. And I don't know why that made me feel better. I think I thought I was like the one, of your clients, that has to work on emotional regulation.

And when you said that, I was like, "Oh, that makes me feel so much better, now."

Tara: You're not alone. It's not just you. Every single person, including myself.

Melissa: Okay, there's a few things I definitely wanted to talk about on this episode. One, that was really useful to me, and I think it's based on the strength of my team, but you can tell me if this is universal. It's asking "what" instead of "why", when you are kind of digging in to figure out what happened. Can you say more about that? Because I can see where I have done this opposite, and where it makes people feel cornered. I was not intending to do that.

Tara: No, I mean, we're taught to ask "why", especially in business. Like, root cause analysis; we need to understand "why", right? So, this concept actually comes from Dr. Tasha Eurich, the book *Insight*. You can see I've got a million... I use it often. I'm building some content around it, right now. So, that book is about self-awareness.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

But one little tool that's in there, she talks about what happens to us psychologically, when we're asked... Even when we ask ourselves the reason “why”, if we focus too much on “why”, it can almost create an existential crisis. Because it puts us on the defense, immediately. And, we feel like we have to justify.

This is universal. This isn't... I could go into how different Strengths might interpret the “why” question differently. But this is universal for humanity. “Why” questions cause us to feel immediately like we have to explain ourselves.

And sometimes, we don't know why, and it kind of can lead to what Dr. Eurich talks about as “rumination”. Where we're just spinning on something because we can't figure it out.

Whereas, if we ask “what”, it is more empowering, and then allows us to be really specific, and it actually takes us out of our emotions. “Why” triggers an emotional response, and “what” triggers more of a logical response. So, it helps us to be more solution-based, and it helps us move out of getting stuck, easier.

So, from a coaching perspective, it's helpful. But even just when we're trying to figure out what happened.

Melissa: So, if, for instance, something goes wrong behind the scenes, and instead of saying, “Why did that happen?” You say, “What happened?” Just as simple as that?

Tara: Yeah. So, it could be, “Help me understand what happened.” Or, like, “What led to this? What are we going to do about it, moving forward? What other situations could lead to something similar?” So, there's a lot of different ways to ask “what” questions, that could help you. That can help you find the answers, as opposed to digging into something that people may never be able to identify. Because you could always ask another “why” question.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

Melissa: Yeah. Okay. So, this is fascinating. I wasn't even getting creative with it, and it already helped me. Like, the other questions you were just saying. It's more about, I really do want to understand why something went wrong. I like processes. I still understand why. And so, that is my natural question to ask. "Why did X-Y-Z get missed?"

But it is a "why" question, and taking a pause long enough to just not ask my initial gut question, but instead shift it to, "Can you tell me what happened?" Or even, honestly, I think that I haven't been that creative, and I think I've just said, "What happened?" That is easier for them to answer, I'm noticing. Than it is to ask them "why"; they do lock up.

Tara: "Why" feels like an identity question. I feel like it triggers having to justify not just my actions, but myself, who I am as a person. Whereas, "what" questions allow me to disassociate a little bit from... It's not about removing ownership; it's about helping people move into the thinking part of their brain and out of the 'I must defend myself'.

So, for another time, we could talk about defensive reactions, and what happens in our brain.

Melissa: Oh, yeah, that sounds fun. I don't want to forget that; we will definitely have to do that.

Tara: Fight-flight, freeze, or fawn.

Melissa: Okay, another thing, that also really helps, that we've talked through that we wanted to share on the podcast today, was the power of the pause. And so, I would love for you to speak to that, and how to apply that.

Tara: Yeah, so the power of the pause, which maybe people have heard of before. When something happens, especially when we are busy and we have a lot going on, then we have an opportunity to deal with it in the

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

moment. We feel an urge to say the thing, or do what we have to do, in the moment.

When we recognize though, that or, when you or I, recognize that we're a little hot, or a little frustrated, it might not be the right time. And it doesn't have to be a long pause. You might be in a meeting, and you can't get like a day, right, you might need to take a pause for just a few minutes. Excuse yourself to go to the bathroom, or take a phone call, or do something, to just give yourself a minute to calm your heart rate down.

There's a guy who wrote a book called *ScreamFree Parenting*, Hal Runkel. He associates parenting and leadership as being very synonymous. And I believe that, as well. Because it really is all about our emotional regulation. But he says our work as leaders, is to have the lowest heart rate in the room. And so, if you know you're coming in hot, if you know that you are not feeling calm, you might need a few minutes to breathe.

My colleague, Pamela, talks about just drinking eight ounces of water can slow your heart rate and reoxygenate your body. And so, you just need a few seconds sometimes, or a minute, to remember that you are leader in this situation. And your job, is to help your people solve this problem, not for them to feel bad about it.

I have to remember this in parenting, all the time. And in leadership, the job is not to make them feel bad. The job is to help them solve the problem. And so, our emotions can, like I said, we were talking about before, really get in the way of that.

You and I were talking about a situation. Sometimes just having a few talking points for yourself. Like I know, under these circumstances, I'm gonna get amped up. And instead of diving in and feeling a sense of urgency to figure out why or what we're going to do right now, I'm going to have a few talking points for myself to empower that person to go fix it.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

And then, give us the time to come circle back and talk about it. You know, so, “Okay, that's disappointing. And I trust you're fixing it. What are you doing to fix it?” Maybe, you need to ask a few questions. Maybe, you're giving some guidance.

And then, for you, you were talking about having an answer meeting. We were calling it an “answer meeting” or “falling in love with a problem meeting”, right? So, then just being able to say, “Let's schedule an answer. We're meeting next week to talk about what happened. And, what we're going to do to make sure that doesn't happen again.”

You don't have to dive in right then, because even if that person is looking cool as a cucumber, probably, they already are beating themselves up about the mistake. So, let them go fix what's happening, in the moment. But that doesn't mean that we never come back to it.

Whether it's later in the day, or the next day, or a week from now, then you can dive in, and try to figure out what happened, and how you're going to fix it. And, that gives you space and time.

Melissa: Yeah, I think I told you... So, I know what you're referring to. There was, not a mistake, it was just like our process or plan wasn't followed. My friend, Molly McGrath calls that process violation, which sounds so extreme, but like, basically, we haven't processed, it wasn't really followed. And, it got crunchy. We weren't sure we were gonna be able to overcome that, and deliver what we were supposed to deliver.

And as it was all unfolding, my husband said, “It's almost like your team is skiing down the slope. It may be the wrong slope. Or, it may be too late, whatever. But they are trying to ski down the slope, and you wanting to understand why this is happening in the moment, is not helpful.”

Because, yes, it needs to be figured out. And then, I talked to you afterwards, and you helped me think through it even more. Yes, it needs to be figured out. But it's just like, you're yelling at somebody which... Yelling

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhøvd

is a strong word, but I did. I did raise my voice, for sure; I was really worked up.

And, it was happening as they're trying to ski the slope and fix the problem. And it's almost like dissonance for me, where it is hard to, in the moment, to emotionally regulate. When you get the news that something is... It always is client facing stuff. That's the thing for me. We say we're gonna have a deliverable, and then, if it feels threatened in any way, it is very difficult for me to keep my heart rate down.

But talking to you afterwards, and just doing my best to stay neutral and help fix the problem, to the best of the ability. Like, if I need to be involved to help. And then, schedule time for that. Instead of allowing it to just flow into the moment, is actually freeing to know you have a plan, like you said.

Because I do believe if you have a plan, everything just goes more smoothly. It is more freeing, but it's still challenging. It's still challenging to hold your tongue,...

Tara: Because you're overcoming instincts in the moment. I mentioned Activator before; activator is, "No, now. Now's the time. Now's the time to figure this out." So, you are having to overcome instincts, which is hard. I mean, that is challenging. But practice makes progress there. You know, eventually it becomes it becomes easier.

This is why team dynamics are so important, too. Because it's important for your team to understand what's happening for you, when you do get worked up there. What are your motivations? It's not because you are trying to be challenging or difficult. It's because you are motivated, highly motivated, to deliver in a specific kind of way, for your clients.

And for them to understand that what's happening for you internally, can be helpful. So, that they can respond differently to you, as well. So, yes, as a leader, you bear more responsibility. But I really believe that any team, even if it's just two people, is a partnership. And, we both have to

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

understand the dynamics. It doesn't have to be just one. That is how it's different than parenting. There is a responsibility for everyone to understand each other.

Melissa: Yeah, absolutely. It's been eye opening. And I will say, we're going to talk about, on the next episode, no judgment and self-judgment. And that has also been challenging, because I see how I am not being effective, not being the best version of me.

I know the people I work with have the same thing in them. Maybe, this is true for most people. Where you can see what you did wrong, and it feels like you're letting yourself down, almost, and maybe other people, too. And you are in the way, essentially, of being able to experience inside of the business, what everyone wants to experience inside of the business.

I know I'm not the only part of the problem, but it starts and stops with me. I do know that, and so it's easy to have a lot of judgment around... When you realize you messed up, like you didn't handle that with... The word "integrity" is coming to mind, not integrity.

Like, I think I have integrity, but in the moment, I am not lining myself up with who I really want to be, and so it feels outside of integrity and there can be shame around that. It's not worth it. I think that's a useless path to go down, but it can be really natural. So, I'm excited that you're gonna talk about that.

We've talked about having you back, and talk about that topic, specifically.

Tara: Yeah, I think it's really natural. Every person judges themselves harshly around their own weaknesses or instincts or roadblocks. The things that continually trip us up, they're patterns that happen in multiple areas of our lives, usually. Sometimes specific work things will bring it out, uniquely.

But a lot of times, you can look and see, this is an issue that I struggle with in multiple areas. And it's similar to the team dynamics we were talking

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

before. That's what I call "at a point of natural tension". But we have those internally, as well. So again, rather than bracing for, am I going to show up that way, again?

Having a plan for what you're going to do when those emotions are triggered, is key. And the goal is not perfection, the goal is progress. So, can I show up 1% better today than I did yesterday. James Clear talks about "atomic habits". And you know, can I show up 1% better today, than I did yesterday? What would that look like?

And so, that's how we make progress. I think sometimes, like in coaching or these team dynamics sessions, we come, we have amazing insights. And then, we expect everyone to just show up different the next day. "Oh, now that we know this..." Awareness does not lead to improvement, unless there is practice and intention that happens.

Melissa: Yeah, very true. Okay, I'm also wondering if you, on a future episode, if you will talk about helping people identify when it isn't a fit. Like, truly, it's not the right fit for the role. And it makes sense to let someone go, get someone else new in. Because you could keep working on yourself till the cows come home, and if it's just not gelling for some reason. It's like, where's the line with continuing to work? Versus, okay, let's just call this and then start again.

I don't know if you have thoughts about that. But I would love to hear your thoughts.

Tara: Yeah, we can talk about that in a future episode. I think a lot of it does come down to what are your cultural expectations. That are probably unwritten, and usually, you know, values work. Not the kind of values work that you're going to use for branding, but real values work around how we expect people to show up.

A lot of times, fit has more to do with those unspoken rules and norms. But really getting clear about what those are, is really powerful. And then,

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

assessing and being really clear with people around your expectations around that. And then, letting people kind of choose; either choose because they literally choose.

Like oh, that isn't going to be a good fit for me. Which, not everyone's great at that kind of self-awareness. Or, they choose with their consistent behavior, right? And so, really helping people you know...

I work with a team where growth mindset is a core value. And that means that people own their mistakes. And it looks a certain way, and they've got processes for it. And they're getting better in onboarding it, helping people understand that, and just getting comfortable with, you know, mistakes and failures.

Over time, if someone really just either has that perfectionistic tendency, and they can't handle that, or they just don't want to, it's too uncomfortable; then, they're probably not a good fit from a performance standpoint. So, that's more of a cultural fit.

From a performance standpoint and role fit, that's, you know..., then looking at, if you have a role that's expecting someone to be high detail, and they are just wired differently. Unless you've got some stock gaps that they want to follow, those processes they want to follow, they're probably never going to excel or feel good in that role. Can you move them into a role where that better suits their strengths? Or truly, is that not a good fit?

Melissa: It'd be fun to dig into that. Okay. I feel like people have gotten a few good nuggets here, and gotten to know you. I feel like you're gonna be our resident leadership team expert, if you're down.

Tara: I'm down.

Melissa: Okay. Okay, cool. And, I'll be transparent along the way, as I was a bit today. Just about how I'm learning some of the real application, of some of the things that you are talking through.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

Tara: Just like what you've done, Melissa, with therapy. I think talking about this normalizes it, and helps people feel not alone in it. Because I guarantee here are clients and listeners who are like, "Yeah, I'm really frustrated with how this is going on the team. I'm really frustrated that we can't figure this out."

People is usually the issue. That's really the root, and we are ill-equipped, just in general. We are ill-equipped to deal with those issues, because people are messy.

Melissa: Yeah, absolutely. I totally agree. And, again, you're right. People probably do feel alone in this. Because I thought I was alone. I thought the stuff that we talked about, it's like; oh, jeez, that emotional child over there can't get it together. But we're gonna work on this. You know?

I know that you don't think that, but in my mind, it feels frustrating that this is the stuff we're working on. It does not feel like; I do see the connection, but that's not what you think you need to work on, when it comes to leadership. And, I can clearly see it, now.

But I really did feel like, "Gosh, I'm at the stage where this is what we have to work on. Like, we're not working on tactics. We're not working on the sexy stuff, like the easy stuff that you like. We're going to work on the stuff that is going to be really hard for you."

And I think the thing that makes me feel a little bit less alone, is that I know in life that this is a thing for people. But knowing in business, when you're dealing, managing, people that this is something nearly everyone deals with, is very freeing. It's like okay, well it kind of allows you to get in there and play like, let's learn.

Tara: Well, it is freeing. So, you know, you and I both have experience with a certain business model that has all of these elements to it. That's, you know, this business model. And we've we both had that experience where the people aspect of the model, is what's not strong. And then, people are

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovi

frustrated, and they think there's something wrong with them when they can't get the model to work.

The model is brilliant, it's really great. And this people aspect really does need to be figured out, because people will disappoint you. They will not show up perfect. They will bring their own stuff. And, you will have to deal with that. And that is frustrating, but it's real.

Melissa: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Another thing that strikes me, when I think about my clients, is that not everybody is like me. Like you've mentioned, some of my strengths are Activator. And like, it just seems like they're intense. I don't know if that's true or not, if that's fair to say, but there's some things that are more intense than some other people's, maybe top 10 Strengths.

I have those clients, that they seem so calm all the time. And I don't know what their Strengths are, but I would imagine when this plays out, it looks different externally. The same thing where someone who's really calm and passive doesn't address, where I address things head on. I'm not afraid of confrontation. Not meaning in a mean way, but just like hitting it head on, let's like figure this out. And other people, probably avoid that.

It's the same issue, root issue, which is emotional regulation, but there's dysfunction happening. Because that's their instincts. And that's how it's playing out their world. And so, I thought I would just share that I don't know always, how it could look, but if you're listening, and you're like, "Well, I'm not that. I don't raise my voice. I don't do... None of that." But how might you be enabling dysfunction by the way that you lead? And, it may look opposite of me, I don't know.

Tara: Yeah, I mean, the same scenario we were talking about before with a very different set of strengths. Because I said, don't worry about it, it's fine. Inside, they're boiling because they're frustrated. So, there's still a conversation to be had.

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovi

And there's still a discussion that needs to be had to figure out what's going on, so that it doesn't continue. For the good of the business. For the good of the development, of your people. For the good of your own mental health, and frustration.

You know, people who are just stuffing it without dealing with it, build resentment over time. And that's where you end up just firing someone out of the blue, because you can't handle it anymore. But that person you've hurt, you've never taken the time to maybe really understand what the expectations were. So, yeah, it can look very different.

Melissa: Well, thank you for your time, today. And, I can't wait to have you back.

Tara: Well, thank you so much. It was a pleasure, and I'm excited to continue the conversation.

Melissa: Yeah. I mean, listeners, if you have anything that you would love us to touch on in a future episode, like something really specific, send an email to hi@velocitywork.com And we'll capture that, and make sure to bring it up in a future episode with Tara. Because I think she's a great resource. If people want to reach out to you, or learn more about you and what you do. Where should they go?

Tara: You can go to AlignTransform.com. We're in the middle of remodeling the website, but it's there. Or, you can email me at Tara@aligntransform.com

Melissa: Awesome. Okay, well, thanks. And, until next time.

Tara: Thank you, Melissa. Alright, sounds great. Thank you.

Melissa: Bye.

Hey, you may not know this, but there's a free guide for a process I teach called, Monday Map/ Friday Wrap. If you go to velocitywork.com it's all

#188: The True Work of Leadership with Tara Gronhovd

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