



020: Revelation then Revolution with Belinda Clemmensen

[00:00:00] **Belinda:** I was listening to a podcast yesterday and they said, first comes the revelation and then comes the revolution. And I loved that language, and I think it's the revelation stuff. It's the new awareness. It's the. Oh my God. I never thought about it that way, or I didn't realize that was sitting in me all this time, or sitting in my family or my society or my company.

[00:00:22] I do think we're still in the revelation phase, although I do think the revolution is gearing up, which is great, and it will be disruptive and it will be painful and all the things that revolutions always are, but I think we're still in this revelation phase where we're starting to understand stuff.

[00:00:38] **Carolyn:** Belinda Clemmensen is the founder of the Women's Leadership Intensive and author of Women Leadership and Saving the World. Why Everything Gets Better When Women Lead. Belinda believes that women are not only capable of changing the world, but that. They will all be a driving force in making it happen. She built the women's leadership intensive on a mission to inspire, empower, support, and equip women to lead the change the world needs.

[00:01:13] With over 25 years of experience, she's helped leaders step into their potential and connect to a place of purpose where their unique strengths can serve to make organizations and communities better. In addition to founding the Women's Leadership Intensive, she's also the proud co-founder of The Leader, coach Intensive, a unique program that builds world-class coaches, tomorrow's leaders today.

[00:01:43] After reading Women Leadership and Saving the World by Belinda Clemmensen, I knew she would make a fabulous, fabulous podcast guest, and that certainly was the case. In this episode, you will hear us talk about the real impact of understanding the system. Within which we all work and live, the



power of leading from our values and some real life insights from both Belinda and I along the way.

[00:02:16] Let's dig in.

[00:02:17] **Intro:** Welcome to Evolve a new era of leadership, a podcast for real leaders to join real conversations with business experts, practitioners thought leaders, and change makers who integrate head, heart, and body in all they do, who commit to compassion and curiosity, who commit to radical self leadership in their quest to understand others better too.

[00:02:42] Because the only way to deliver real results is to understand. And what it takes to lead real human beings. This is a new era of leadership.

[00:02:57] **Carolyn:** I'm Carolyn Sora, and this is Evolve A new era of leadership. Welcome to Evolve, a new era of leadership. I'm your host, Carolyn Sora, and today I am joined by Belinda Clementson. Welcome to the show, Belinda. Thank

[00:03:14] **Belinda:** you. I am so excited to be here and for this conversation.

[00:03:18] **Carolyn:** Yeah. You came into my world, well, you came into my social media feed a few years ago, but when I had the chance to meet you a few months ago now, it was at a book club where we had the honor and privilege of having you speak to us and, and talk with us about your recent book, women Leadership and Saving the World, why Everything Gets Better When Women Lead.

[00:03:44] Yes, it was interesting and we could talk for hours. There's so many amazing points and perspectives in your book. But I wanna start off by sharing Belinda right out of the gate. There were two quotes early in your book that I have on my highlight. I've got 15 pages of highlights, by the way. So the first quote that stood out to me was, you are living in a world that wasn't built by or for you closely, followed by the gender binary that is so deeply ingrained in our society.



[00:04:18] Creates a box for men too. I mean, right from the beginning I was hooked into your book. So can you just share a little bit, you know, maybe well, those quotes in general, like why did you start out with that? Yeah.

[00:04:30] **Belinda:** Because I think it's so important for us to understand who built the systems that we live in, because we assume they're built by and for everyone.

[00:04:37] And the fact is that's not true. Yep. So if you're a woman living in those systems, whether they're workplace systems or social systems or domestic systems, Chances are you're feeling squeezed somewhere. You're feeling like, I have to work really hard to fit this system. There's probably some suffering there.

[00:04:55] Somewhere along the way, there's probably some exhaustion and some overwhelm because you're working so hard to survive in a system that was not built by or for you. And history, especially in the western world and many other places obviously have sort of a different history. But there are some themes there, which are the powerful, have written history.

[00:05:17] Right. And in the past, the powerful have always been men. And to this day that persists in the west, it's primarily white men and white men of a certain social class. Yeah. Right. And so they have set the culture. They have said, this is the way the world works. Because that's how the world works for them.

[00:05:35] Yeah, yeah. Right. And there are the rest of us trying to make our way or progress or gain a leadership position so that we can make an impact or feed our family. And we're, we're bumping up against this system all the time and it's, it's so everywhere that we don't even notice it.

[00:05:55] **Carolyn:** And that's what stuck out for me.

[00:05:57] I wish I had understood that. Earlier in my life, I know I have spent more time in my life trying to fit into a system that wasn't built for me, not realizing that I could be myself and just play in a different system or try to



create or influence a different system. It was such a powerful message. I hope more women, more young girls, more people start to understand that.

[00:06:29] I

[00:06:29] **Belinda:** think, you know, when we don't understand that social context or a little bit more about the history of how we got to this place, then it's easy to question it as an individual problem. Am I not succeeding because I'm not trying hard enough, I'm not working hard enough, I'm not smart enough, and the reality is there are lots of very hardworking.

[00:06:48] Smart people who cannot succeed in the systems as they are today because the odds are stacked against them. Definitely. That includes women in any other equity deserving group out there. But more and more we're seeing that the world isn't actually built for today's men either, right? Yeah. Built for a model that most men are not living.

[00:07:08] Most men do not have a housekeeper slash stay-at-home partner. Looking after everything anymore. That's not most households. Yeah. Most men want to actually do caregiving work with their own children. Yeah. Right. And feel boxed in by work and not able to do that, you know? So not only are the systems built, not for women and other groups, they're not serving men very well anymore either.

[00:07:32] They're serving a very small number of men who sit primarily at the top Right, who have the things. That make the system go round. Yep. And the rest of us are working really hard and

[00:07:45] **Carolyn:** so. I know that your organization, uh, the Women's Leadership Intensive has programming for women specifically, how do you bring this topic into that work?

[00:07:59] Like does it present itself early on in the work?

[00:08:02] **Belinda:** It's a constant backdrop. So first of all, we always disclose upfront we are unapologetically feminist organization. Hmm. So we are going



to approach things differently. We're gonna have a social lens, we're gonna have an intersectional lens. And we believe in equal opportunities and rights for all genders.

[00:08:20] Full stop. Yep. We talk about that upfront so that anyone who wants to work with us knows that's the backdrop. That's how you roll. That's how we roll. And we also always are going back and forth between the individual's experience, which of course matters, right? We all have this unique path that we're walking through our lives.

[00:08:40] And the bigger social organizational, cultural context that we're all living in. Hmm. So we're constantly doing this dance of going back and forth between those two things because I think that's what helps us understand our personal experiences better.

[00:08:58] **Carolyn:** Yeah, I agree. And so you understand your personal experience and then try and influence the system, the organization within.

[00:09:07] And I know you shared a stat with me when we had our first call together, which is 80% of women. Come into your programs trying to survive the game and then realize there's a different game. Did I get that right?

[00:09:23] **Belinda:** Yeah. That number's right. I think there's definitely some people who work with us who say, yeah, I'm gonna continue playing the game because I know how to do it and I can be successful here.

[00:09:32] And I think that's absolutely fine. Yeah. If you go back into the systems as they are, but you're pushing for more values-based leadership work, or you are pushing for more equity, That's great. I mean, I think we have to do the systems work from inside. Yes. However, it is really hard to do the work of change and not constantly be tripped up by the status quo that is so pervasive.

[00:09:57] Mm. So lemme just tell you a story that happened this past week. So there's a friend of mine that I work with a lot on D E I programming and she had a D E I organization. She's walked away from that for a couple of years cuz she



wants to work as a leader in a big corporation and see if she can in affect more change that way.

[00:10:15] Mm. She's trying to understand like, can I get more done as a consultant or can I get more done if I'm a leader within the company? Yeah. And so we were talking about the changes that she's already made. She's only been doing this for three months, but she's kind of like, You know, got nothing to lose.

[00:10:30] She's like, what are you gonna do fire me? Because Right. She could just go back to her consulting practice and continue to do the work. So she's good. Either way she can take some risks. Right. And she is. So we have this great conversation about all the things she's doing and she's changing culture and challenging leaders to create more equitable systems already, right.

[00:10:50] Within three months. And she's just like putting it all out there and using her voice. And then she messages me the next day and she says, you know, I woke up wondering, am I. Influencing the system, or is the system influencing

[00:11:06] **Carolyn:** me? Ooh, I just got tingles. She's

[00:11:11] **Belinda:** like, in trying to change the very systems, am I operating essentially in a patriarchal way that.

[00:11:19] All the other leaders before me operated, or am I truly coming at this in a different way?

[00:11:24] **Carolyn:** Okay. I just have to pause for a second. I think it's people like that who pause and ask that question. That's leadership. That is leadership because it's not binary, you know, F this or F that. It's, hmm. Like an intentional pause to think and reflect.

[00:11:44] And I am gonna guess she's still pondering that and hasn't made a decision.



[00:11:48] **Belinda:** Well, she's still pondering that and I think that's one of those questions you live with, right? Yeah. That's one of those questions you answer. I think it's a question that you live with. Yeah. And now I'm gonna be living with it.

[00:11:58] Yeah. Because she asked it and I was like, wow. And now you're gonna be living with it. And all the things of this podcast are now gonna be living with that question, which is such an important question. You

[00:12:08] **Carolyn:** know, we're not having this conversation today to shit all over the corporate world at all. We've both been there and it's very, very positive.

[00:12:17] I gained so much from it. Great friendships, great learning. However, the missing piece for me and why I was really, you know, excited to read your book and learn from your book was how much of a better leader I could have been while in the system if I had understood fully the full scope of what I was a part of, so that I didn't have to go into this binary, this sucks, or this is great.

[00:12:45] Yeah.

[00:12:46] **Belinda:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's starting to understand the true potential of a leadership role. What is the actual job of leadership? And most of us get really wrapped up in the job of management. Yes. And if your real job is leadership, that's a very different. Process. You're thinking about different things.

[00:13:04] You're challenging in different ways, you should be disrupting. I always say, if you're not leading change, what are you actually leading? I'm not sure you're a leader. If you're not leading some kind of positive

[00:13:13] **Carolyn:** change, well, you're managing in that case. Right? And how many people are just managing, trying to manage life right now?



[00:13:22] Yeah. So what are some of the things you do in your programs, Belinda, to help women grapple with this reality of managing life and trying to make a change and make a difference and lead in its fullest sense.

[00:13:40] **Belinda:** We, we really look at a holistic viewpoint. So again, it's a patriarchal construct to say, here's your work and your professional development over here, and here's your life and your personal development over here.

[00:13:55] So I don't have those lines in my own world. You know what I learned from my life, I applied to my work and vice versa. And I think that's true for a lot of people. So we really take that more holistic lens and say, how's your life going for you? Mm-hmm. Because we know that as women, this idea that we show up in the workplace and we have this hard line between that and what we do, everywhere else does not work because the truth is the demands on women to do all the other life things.

[00:14:25] Are huge, right? Yeah. And of course they're going to affect what happens when you walk in the door at work every day, right? What's happening with your caregiving responsibilities, what's happening in your household? All of those things are gonna have an impact on your day. Mm-hmm. So globally, if women are doing two and a half times more domestic and caregiving work than men are, Then their ability to dedicate themselves to work is going to look very different.

[00:14:52] Yeah. Than their male colleagues or spouses or whomever it might be. Right. And that's true in Canada. Yeah, that's true with women executives that I talk to. Right. They are still going home and doing the dishes. They're just doing the dishes at midnight instead of at 5:00 PM because they spent the evening.

[00:15:09] You know, maybe looking after their kids or doing emails or both, or whatever it is. So it's this idea that for women, we've been so good at doing everything. The superwoman myth, the do it all, have it all Myth, right? Which has done us no favors because we've worked ourselves into the ground Yeah. To do that.



[00:15:30] And so when we look at, you know, how do I have the energy to actually stop and think and ask the kind of questions that my friend was asking? It's like we need to free up some space in there somewhere. Yeah. If we are too busy and too tired and too overwhelmed. To actually think about these things, all we're going to do is get the things

[00:15:49] **Carolyn:** done.

[00:15:49] Yeah. And you're just on repeat. Repeat. And next thing you know, your kids are up and grown away. And that might be a good thing. And you might look at your partner and be like, where did the 20 years just go? Yeah, yeah.

[00:16:01] **Belinda:** And what did it mean? Like I believe that all of us start our lives wanting them to be meaningful, meaningful, exceptional.

[00:16:07] We wanna do something special with this one beautiful life we get. And I think somewhere along the line, the practicalities of keeping all the balls in the air make us forget that.

[00:16:19] **Carolyn:** Yeah. Now I know later on, you know, some later chapters in your book, Belinda, you really start to invite slash challenge the reader to really embrace reimagining how things can get done and trying things out, and kind of what you just said about your friend, like, what do you have to lose?

[00:16:38] So how can we. Help more leaders embrace that mentality cuz it's easier said than done. It is.

[00:16:48] **Belinda:** It is. We have to get in touch, I think, with our deeper motivators and drivers and so you know, that might be your values, that might be the world that you want for your children or the collective children.

[00:17:02] There's a higher calling piece in there that is unique to each one of us, right? What is it that motivates me? To be willing to speak up for change. Yeah, to be willing to do the work that it requires, because it does take a lot of



work, right? Yes. Consistent showing up every day, challenging the status quo every day.

[00:17:24] I think we need to tap into the why that we each might have underneath that and keep that really top of mind as critically important. I think we talk a lot about the why and organizations are talking about why and all this kind of stuff, but it's like, no, that's actually, that's the real reason. It is for all the things we do.

[00:17:45] So personally, I think we need to tap in for that sense of purpose.

[00:17:51] **Carolyn:** How did you tap into yours?

[00:17:53] **Belinda:** You lose it and you find it, I think, yeah, and that's how, certainly how, how it's been in my life. Like there have been times when I felt incredibly in a place of purpose. You know, and then there have been other times when I've just been getting the things done mm-hmm.

[00:18:07] That needed doing. And I think it's a cycle. And we actually sort of teach this in our courses that the idea of, of purpose isn't just a constant state. Yes. We're evolving all the time. So what felt like purpose to me in my twenties didn't feel like purpose to me in my forties. And what feels like purpose to me now in my fifties might not when I'm in my sixties.

[00:18:27] Yeah. Because the world changes, as do I. And so what the world needs is different. And also what matters more to me is different as we go. Yeah. And so we lose it and find it. And I think it's being attentive to that process and knowing that it's cyclical. Yeah. And that it is okay if we don't feel it right now.

[00:18:48] Maybe you feel like you're just grinding it out. Maybe you feel like you're lost and you have no freaking clue what's next. Yeah. Maybe you're just imagining all kinds of things, but you don't know what to do about them yet. It's all part of the cycle. It's all part of the process. It helps us get there.

[00:19:03] **Carolyn:** And that is such a concept. I mean, we'll call it feminine energy. We can call it flow intuition, like I'd say the yin to the yang that many of



us lose touch with. And so I really appreciate that you talk about it as a cycle. I, I know for me. I can really idealize and if I have to have a purpose. Then it became like, oh my gosh, you know, it needs to be a flashy neon sign everywhere I go, Belinda has just given us all permission to turn off that neon sign and let it flow through those different cycles of where you're really connected to it or transitioning into like a new era of life and maybe finding something that's a bit different, and that's okay too.

[00:19:45] **Belinda:** Yeah, we always talk about like capital P, purpose, like the neon sign purpose. Mm. That you're talking about here, but also like small p, lowercase p purpose, which is just the day-to-day applying what we have to offer to To meet some need. Yeah. Right. Just day-to-day stuff. We can do it with our kids in the morning at breakfast.

[00:20:05] We can do it with our team, we can do it in the grocery store. These are the moments every day where we can say, If we're in touch with our values, right? Of the things that matter, the kind of person I wanna be, the kind of world I wanna have, that then becomes a decision filter all day long.

[00:20:20] **Carolyn:** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:20:22] Big or small decisions. And then what do you see in leaders? So they take that, they have that sort of connected to the big P in little P. How does that translate into the office and into the workplace then, based on your experience with your.

[00:20:36] **Belinda:** Such a good question. I mean, in so many ways, but I think the one that's really standing out for me lately is that they already know.

[00:20:44] They already know the things that they think are right and the things that they think are not. Mm. When they see it happening, when they see it unfolding either at the big, like corporate level or in the little interactions that happen around them every day. I think it's developing the skill of acknowledging what you already know, trusting it.



[00:21:04] That it is valid. Yep. Finding ways to help you affirm that trust. Right. So that's like supportive communities and people who will nod their head and go, yeah, I see that too. Yep. I get what you're saying. And then developing the voice and the confidence and the skills then to do

[00:21:23] **Carolyn:** something. Hmm. With it and about it.

[00:21:26] That's sort of what I'm hearing and is the foundation to reimagining what can

[00:21:31] **Belinda:** happen at work. Yeah, and that's, I think where the social context piece comes back in, because if we understand the systems better, then we can start to say, okay, what would a different system look like? Hmm. Which is exciting to me, and that's a social experiment because we could, whatever it was, Milton Friedman came up with the idea about corporations only job is to deliver shareholder return, however long ago that was.

[00:21:58] Yeah. We've been sticking with that playbook ever since. That's just one idea. Yeah. Uh, from one person. Yeah. I mean, human creativity is vast. We can come up with something much better than that.

[00:22:09] Yeah.

[00:22:10] **Carolyn:** Well, and that was built on an economic system built by Adam Smith and friends that was very focused on a certain.

[00:22:18] Persona as well. It's an economic

[00:22:21] **Belinda:** system, which didn't count any of the work that women did ever.

[00:22:23] **Carolyn:** No, no. So plug in for a great book, uh, called Who Cooked Adam Smith's dinner by Katrina Marcal. Maybe she'll be on the podcast someday. But yeah, that book opened my eyes and when I was reading yours too, Belinda, I'm guess you've read that book too, I think you quoted her.



[00:22:39] Yeah. It really. Again, it helped me be knowledgeable and I really wanna make this clear for all of the listeners. This is not about this divisive, everyone against the white man, and I'm saying everyone, I'm just, that's probably a little bit too flippant, but like, you know, women against men or white women against men.

[00:23:01] Like, it's really about how can we have a deeper level of compassion and empathy to understand that not all experiences are the same. And if that's the case, then how can we reimagine how we can collectively get shit done together at work? I mean, that's kind of it, isn't it? It

[00:23:22] **Belinda:** is it, and to go, to take that metaphor even further, the idea that everyone against white men is still centering of white men in the systems that they built.

[00:23:33] Mm-hmm. I think there's a lot of that happening right now. There's like, well what about white men? What's gonna happen for them? It's like, well, have we asked that question about everyone else over the years? We haven't. Right. Because they haven't been the central figures in the history Yeah. Of our society.

[00:23:48] And so I think to even further dismantle the way that we look at the system is to say, what if we looked at every group, you know, if we look at across all the intersectionalities, what if we looked at every group as equally important? Even that is mind blowing. That's not how we see the world right now.

[00:24:07] **Carolyn:** It isn't. So this kind of leads into another theme. So what stops us from being able to see each other as equally important? I think, you know,

[00:24:19] **Belinda:** I was listening to a podcast yesterday and they said, first comes the revelation and then comes the revolution. And I loved that language, you know, and I think it's the revelation stuff.



[00:24:29] It's the new awareness. It's the. Oh my God. I never thought about it that way, or I didn't realize that was sitting in me all this time, or sitting in my family or my society or my company. Yes. And so I do think we're still in the revelation phase, although I do think the revolution is gearing up, winding up.

[00:24:48] Yeah. Which is great. And it will be disruptive and it will be painful in all the things that revolutions always are, but. I think we're still in this revelation phase where we're starting to understand stuff. So here's another story. I was talking to another colleague of mine and she is working on anti-fat discrimination.

[00:25:07] Hmm. And we in the past have referred to that as fat phobia. Right. Right. And she blew my mind by saying, actually phobias are real psychological conditions, and there are some people who are truly, genuinely phobic about fat. They're afraid of it. Yep. Made sense to me. Right. Afraid of it in ourselves.

[00:25:27] Absolutely. Most of us are afraid of fat in ourselves. Mm-hmm. Right. We've had this social fear built into us. Yes. Yep. We believed it. Yep. That's one thing. The other thing is, How do we hate people who are fat? How do we discriminate against people who are fat? Yep. How do we build systems that exclude people who are fat?

[00:25:47] Clothing, furniture. Yeah. Everything. Yep. Yeah. Right. And so revelation, it's like, no, it's not just fat phobia, which sounds a little bit neutral and not very active when we say anti-fat discrimination or anti-fat hate. There's an active role that's being played there. Yeah. Right. Somebody is doing something.

[00:26:10] Yeah. That is harmful. And I think it's important that we start to shift our minds to. Honest language about these things, like what is actually accurate

[00:26:18] **Carolyn:** here? Yeah. Well, and language is a big piece of this too. If we look at just common vernacular, common things, and of course I'm saying not so common, and I can't think of one off the top of my head.



[00:26:29] I think of like war gaming for example. I remember back in some of my old days, that's what we would do to like plan against the competition. Let's fight the enemy, or let's fight the competition. There is an embodied feel to some of these words. So, you know, the revelation that words make a difference was a big revelation for me.

[00:26:50] That is helping towards the revolution of creating different workplaces, for sure. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

[00:26:57] **Belinda:** Yeah, yeah, the language matters. And again, you know, you can start to be fatigued by always having to address language, but it's a hugely important role that we can play in

[00:27:08] **Carolyn:** creating change. And imagine the fatigue, like when we say that we're making the discomfort like, oh, how dare you?

[00:27:14] Discomfort me. But imagine the people on the other side of it. They're living in a world that is constantly fatiguing.

[00:27:22] **Belinda:** This is the real crux of it, I think, is that we have prioritized certain people's comfort. Yeah. Over other people's lived experience of discrimination, exclusion, hate, violence, on and

[00:27:34] **Carolyn:** on.

[00:27:35] Yeah, absolutely. There's one thing that I wanna point out here too. I think that it, what gets in the way for people, and again, I'll pull on my own experience, is this notion of perfectionism. And the thing was, is I didn't identify with that word. Cognitively, I know I'm not perfect. However, if we look to, you know, the emotional meaning behind that, it basically means I don't wanna be blamed or shamed or judged.

[00:28:03] Yeah. And that when I understood perfectionism to be that I was like, hot damn, that's me every day. I don't want people to think I'm not good at my job. I don't want people to think that I make big, huge mistakes that can cost the organization lots of money. So then you live in this buried fear of trying to



get things right all the time, and you're so worried about everything else out there.

[00:28:26] I e the system that you lose track of you and what you believe to be right and all that energy that can help change the status quo. And

[00:28:36] **Belinda:** this is why, you know, perfectionism is a tool of the patriarchal white supremacy. Mm-hmm. Absolutely. It's a brilliant tool. It keeps everybody really busy and really quiet cuz they're so busy working on their own perfection, unattainable goal and actually not that interesting.

[00:28:52] Really. Yeah. When you start to think about it, and thus we are foot soldiers of maintaining. Assistance and status quo. Again, if we go back to the anti-fat discrimination example, how much of women's energy, money, time, Mindshare has gone into avoiding fat? Oh, I hear you. Yep. Right. Socially, if we remobilize all of those resources, we would've solved climate change by now.

[00:29:22] We would've solved income disparity by now. We would've solved in everything by now. Lot.

[00:29:26] **Carolyn:** Yeah. Yeah. Not to mention what it's doing to the younger generations, and I celebrated my 50th last year, and I've said this to many people over the past several months. I'm like, I'm done. I am done with the body shaming or the quiet pretending I don't care.

[00:29:41] But then really caring inside. Like, no, this is who I am. I don't care anymore. There's so much more out there. And yes, it's a little bit broader than it used to be, but who cares? The perfectionism is much lowered, but the heart and the ability and the embodiment is so much bigger and amazing.

[00:29:59] **Belinda:** And this is like, again, I go back to this, you know, we have one life, right?

[00:30:03] Yeah. And do you wanna live it from the inside out and really feel what you just described? We wanna really feel our own lived experience, our



own sensory. Experience in the body that we have. You know, it's like that's a beautiful thing. And I agree. When I think about getting to that point in our fifties with any of these things, I always think, okay, how can we extend the runway?

[00:30:24] How can we help other people, other women get there sooner? Right? So they don't have to wait so long. Cause I look back at all the time I wasted.

[00:30:33] **Carolyn:** I know that's an interesting question. Do you think it's possible or is there a piece of just natural development and natural evolution through life that time gives us?

[00:30:47] **Belinda:** Yes to both? I think so, yes. I do think there's an evolution and a wisdom and a comfort in her own skin. That does come over time, and I, again, I go back to the revelation piece, like I think younger women are so much more informed, so much more empowered. I see it as my job at this point in my life. To keep opening those doors as much as possible to make the road easier, as much as possible to listen and take their lead and share what I have to share along the way.

[00:31:17] Yeah. So yeah, I do think we can make it easier. I do think we can shorten the timeframe, and I think it's imperative that we do that too, because. We want more people activated earlier. You know, we look at our deadlines for climate crisis, for example. Like, we're about way behind, you know, so we can't go slow on these things anymore.

[00:31:34] I don't, I don't

[00:31:35] **Carolyn:** believe. Yeah. So, Belinda, what advice or insight could you give the listeners that can help them? Find that leadership within them that, you know, maybe they haven't fully tapped into?

[00:31:49] **Belinda:** I think the first thing is to reclaim some time and energy for the work of leadership, which includes a lot of time for reflection, for thinking, for learning.



[00:31:59] For discussing. If we have no time and energy for those things, they just won't happen. And that is the work. We have to have time to think and reflect and make sense of life and learn, you know, whether it's, yeah, listening to this podcast or reading a book, or whatever it might be. So I think first and foremost, we have to value ourselves enough to say, me having time to just reflect is important.

[00:32:21] **Carolyn:** How do, because I'm gonna guess, if I think of myself 20 years ago, I'd be thinking, okay, Belinda, great. Maybe when my kids are a bit older, or maybe when X, Y, Z, or maybe after I get the promotion or like, you know, blah, blah, blah, is there any magical dust you could sprinkle right now that could help inspire or help somebody realize that it's a little bit easier than they might think?

[00:32:47] **Belinda:** Yeah. Well, if we throw in some social context here again, you know, the world benefits from the productivity, mostly unpaid productivity, frankly, of women keeps the world going around, right? It's how our elders are looked after. For the most part. It's how our children are looked after. It's how people get fed and housed and clothed and cleaned, and all the other things that need doing.

[00:33:08] And so that productivity has been unacknowledged, unpaid, and unvalued. Mm-hmm. And. We just say, well, I, I'll be even more productive. Then the perfectionism thing kicks right back in and we're like, okay, well then I'll just do more and then somebody, I'll show you. Value me. Yeah. And I might value myself.

[00:33:27] Yeah. And the reality is I think we are valuable as beings. We are valuable as humans, as people who love other people, as people who care about the world. Like all of that has value. It hasn't been valued. But it has value, and somewhere along the way we have to stop the machine and say, no. I will value myself enough to say that.

[00:33:55] Me being able to think, me being able to go for a walk, me being able to not attend that meeting or whatever it might be, I am enough, you know? Yeah. And then we also, I think, have to do the work of rejigging all the systems



around us to start educating other people that know I actually am enough and I don't have to be constantly producing for you and everyone else.

[00:34:22] Mm-hmm. In order to have value here.

[00:34:24] **Carolyn:** When you say the systems around us, can you just give us an example of what that means? Yeah. I

[00:34:28] **Belinda:** mean, first and foremost, I always say quality begins at home, right? Mm-hmm. So how's your family system operating? Are you doing the invisible labor? Are you doing two and a half times more that, that the World Health Organization says we're doing, or un women says we're doing.

[00:34:44] Yeah. Because if you are, that has to change. Yep. You cannot embrace the work of leadership if you are not giving yourself any time and space to be a leader. Yep. So if you're spending all your time doing all of that invisible labor, that needs to change. So you gotta make it visible. Yeah. First and foremost.

[00:35:05] To yourself. Yep. Half of us don't even realize all the things we do. Yep. To yourself and to all the other people in your household. And then start to redistribute the work. And that's essentially what UN women is calling for is redistribution of household work. Caregiving work, mental load. Yeah. You know?

[00:35:23] **Carolyn:** I know one, one thing I did when my boys were really quite young, we were in a family situation that was, that was really tough and challenging, and it was just the three of us for a few years. And I remember overtly saying to the boys, the three of us have to make this work. We didn't want your dad to not be in our lives.

[00:35:43] And he passed away. And so it's the three of us. They were four and five. So what did that translate into? Is it translated into them learning how to get breakfast? They made their lunches. We would go grocery shopping together and make lists, and it did mean that if they didn't feel like making their lunch some days.



[00:36:04] Then they were gonna have to learn what that felt like. And mom didn't support it, but mom wasn't gonna fly in. And I mean, I hated making lunches too. I had my own challenges to make my own lunches. It doesn't, um, but you know, like they learned how to do laundry and it meant like we would take it down together and, you know, we would put the detergent in together.

[00:36:24] I wasn't like, Hey, go to figure it out yourself. And they learned at a young age. Was it perfect? No, but I do feel that. We created a sense of ownership as a household, as opposed to me running the show. And what a

[00:36:39] **Belinda:** gift to your boys, right? Yeah. Because they now not only know how to do those things, they can take pride in the fact that they are contributing Yeah.

[00:36:46] In a meaningful way to their own home, to their own household and family, which is brilliant and so important for self-esteem and confidence and sense of self, and should they end up in a heterosexual partnership one day. They will be more of an equal partner as a result of what they have learned and have experienced here, all of which are part of the revolution.

[00:37:10] It's all part

[00:37:11] **Carolyn:** of the change. Yeah, and I remember like, yeah, sharing that with some people and they're like, what? You don't make their lunches? What if they don't eat? I said, well, they have access to all sorts of food. They need to learn that it's not up to the mom to come in and save them. Now, I will say it took a few years for that sort of tole to realize, just in general, that these skills, you know, and again, doing their laundry when they got older, our meal delivery service, everybody takes a day to cook the meal.

[00:37:41] I mean, I think mail delivery services are amazing for that shared labor, so, and I'm glad you shared that bit about the system because I think again, when we hear the word system, it can be Oh, huge. And it's like, oh my gosh, how can I impact the system? Yeah, whatever. So family. So family, like what you can impact at home.



[00:37:59] Is there anything else when it comes to systems? Yeah,

[00:38:02] I

[00:38:02] **Belinda:** would say same thing of whatever your workplace is, right? So have a look around, just spend a bit of time noticing who does what around here. And how does this work? How does it really work? Like open your eyes in a different way to just observing first, and then I think the work is like making it visible for other people.

[00:38:20] Mm. That's no small feat. Right? Right. The revelation. Bringing about the revelation. Yep. And then inviting people into a conversation about change. Right. How do we change this together? What's, what do we actually want here instead of this? That to me is the work of

[00:38:36] **Carolyn:** leadership like that is, and that is why we need self-aware leaders who don't fall into the divisive, I'm angry you, we have to change this.

[00:38:46] And bringing all of this anger and shame into it versus here's what I'm seeing. How can we change this? Why does this matter? And really bringing people into the discussion. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I could talk for hours alone on my own. I'm sure my husband would tell everybody that. Um, but when we have so much insight and experience that you, you bring into this blender, I really hope our listeners pick your book up because you know, we are gonna be inspired to help evolve and change our systems to serve everybody, not just a few of us.

[00:39:19] And I think your book just did a really, really powerful job in framing that up and, and really empowering people to do something.

[00:39:26] **Belinda:** Thank you. I really wrote the book so that women would feel seen. Mm. And so that they would also then understand their own value and importance in doing this work. Right.

[00:39:37] Doing this work of change.



[00:39:39] **Carolyn:** Yeah. And where could our listeners find you in, in all of your great stuff? I.

[00:39:44] **Belinda:** So women's leadership intensive.ca is where you can find us, and there is a book page there. So if you're interested in the book, you can just click on the book page and that will take you to all the info you need

[00:39:54] **Carolyn:** there.

[00:39:54] Wonderful. And we'll make sure that that is in the show notes. Now, Belinda, at the end of every podcast, I ask my guest three questions. Are you ready for those three questions of an evolved leader? Fire away. All right. Alright, so the first question is, share a moment that was potentially quite uncomfortable yet full of insight about yourself.

[00:40:19] **Belinda:** So this is a super uncomfortable story, which is I brought someone in to do a workshop as part of our year long women's leadership intensive program. And I've worked with this person before and she is very direct. She calls stuff like, Hard makes people uncomfortable. It's partly why I love working with her.

[00:40:40] Anyway, the women were not ready for the degree of directness. She was experimenting with some new material that was really challenging. People felt called out. There was nothing about what she was bringing to the table that I would disagree with, but the way she brought it. Was a challenge for people.

[00:40:58] Mm-hmm. And also wasn't really aligned with the rest of how our program runs, which is very much about calling people in, not calling people out. Mm. Right. And so it just, the fit was off and it was a virtual session and so like, as it was unfolding, it was kinda like watching a car crash. It's like, I don't know what to do.

[00:41:15] I don't know how to like step in here and like turn this around. And I was struggling the whole time. I tried a few things that didn't work. Anyway, the whole thing ends and I'm like, oh my God. Like that was not okay. And it was not okay that I as a leader did not find a way to make it okay for people.



[00:41:38] Right? I didn't look after people in that moment, and that is like a knife to the heart for me, because looking after people, that's my number one job, right? I'm a event supporter of, of people. And so it just felt terrible and I just stewed about that thing for days and like all the things. And I talked to several participants who were on the call and got their take on it anyway.

[00:42:00] I mean, I realized what I really needed to do was apologize. Mm-hmm. And so when we got back together at our next retreat, which is like a couple weeks after this sort of off the rails experience, I just started by saying, listen, like that's on me. Hmm. This is my program and I didn't keep you guys safe in that moment.

[00:42:19] And it's on me, and I absolutely apologize for it. And we had a really great group discussion about it. And the learning was really like, here we go folks. The job of leadership, you're not gonna be perfect.

[00:42:32] **Carolyn:** Yeah. Which sucks when

[00:42:35] **Belinda:** it does. When happens to you because it's like, I'm all for imperfection.

[00:42:40] **Carolyn:** I'm gonna stop me.

[00:42:41] It's like, ugh. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:42:44] **Belinda:** Anyway, it was ugly and beautiful and I did the work personally of working through it myself, and we did the work collectively about understanding it together and learning it.

[00:42:54] **Carolyn:** There's just so much about what leadership could be in all of that that you said there, you know? Cause if we are gonna disrupt and change and challenge, which again we all cognitively say we wanna do it, to emotionally do it, is a whole other.

[00:43:09] Level. Yeah. It took



[00:43:10] **Belinda:** me like a week just to like metabolize the whole thing, you know? Yeah. Like, it, it, that is the work though. I mean, I could have just like shut it down and not thought about it, but that's

[00:43:19] **Carolyn:** not the job. You could have sent an email out and said sorry. Yep. Um, it's the whole experience in bringing everybody into the discussion that made it a true experience to move forward with.

[00:43:29] Yeah. Oh, wow. That's, that's amazing. All right. Second question. What is a practice or ritual that keeps you in a calm or regulated state? Oh,

[00:43:40] **Belinda:** I'm really peeling the onion right now on what is calm and regulated state, because like I think I'm there and then I'm like, is it, am I actually, or is my gut still a little bit clenched?

[00:43:51] Is my breathing a little bit shallow? Am I a little bit vigilant? Yeah, you know, So I'm writing a lot. I journal every morning. It's the first thing I do when I wake

[00:44:02] **Carolyn:** up. What do you write about when you say it's the first thing you write about when you wake up? Like do you ask yourself a series of questions or is there just like stuff ready to come outta you?

[00:44:12] I

[00:44:12] **Belinda:** just sit down with my pen. I don't have writing prompts or anything. I just sit down with my pen and my journal and I let whatever's on my mind come out. Sometimes it's very short. It could be like, you know, a few lines some days. And then like yesterday I wrote five pages. Mm. And a lot of times it's like the synapse is firing overnight.

[00:44:30] So it's like, you and I have this conversation and then I have an experience and then I read a book or what, like all of the things then, then I like, it all centers in my brain overnight. And then sometimes I'll wake up in the morning, go, oh, holy mackerel, I have an insight. You



[00:44:45] **Carolyn:** know? And you

[00:44:46] **Belinda:** just let it out.

[00:44:47] Then just let it out. But other times it's not an insight. Other times it's just like, I had a crappy sleep period. The end.

[00:44:55] **Carolyn:** Yes.

[00:44:57] **Belinda:** So it's profound. It's, and there's no intention of it being profound. Hmm.

[00:45:01] **Carolyn:** That's good. That's good. Final question, what is a song or genre of music that makes you feel connected to others or part of something bigger than yourself?

[00:45:12] **Belinda:** Um, I am a big fan of Pink. Mm. And so her song Effing Perfect. Yes. Is like an anthem to me. Yeah. My son just runs his eyes as I like dance around the kitchen to that song. Kind of like fist pumping in the air and whatnot. Yeah. And it's just, to me, it's just such a social commentary, right. Of, of what we do to ourselves and unfortunately to our kids too.

[00:45:38] Right. Yeah. And what happens about this demand for conformity. And getting in line. And she just for me, represents someone who refuses to do it. And

[00:45:49] **Carolyn:** I'm like, yes, thank you. Yeah, she really does. I saw a clip of her accepting an award a few weeks ago, or months ago maybe now. It was iHeartRadio, I think. And she got up there and she just basically said like, my life's work is to help us be vulnerable and you can either like it and that's fine or not like it, and that's fine, but I'm not stopping.

[00:46:10] And she just does it with like, So much conviction, but so much like take it or leave it. Yeah. I think that's why she resonates with so many people, regardless of gender. I mean, obviously there's certainly, I'd say when I go to her



concerts and I do go to all of them, there's just a shared connection that she builds with everyone, which is You're all amazing.

[00:46:34] Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Well, will I see you at that concert coming up in June or July? I

[00:46:39] **Belinda:** think so,

[00:46:40] **Carolyn:** yeah. All right. All right. Well, so again, Belinda, thank you so much. It, this really has been a fabulous conversation. It went in a few different fun, but, uh, I think really meaningful ways. So thanks again for coming on the show.

[00:46:53] Thanks so much for having me. And listeners, please, please have a look at, uh, the show notes. I'd urge everyone to check out Belinda's work and definitely her book. It will help you pause and think. And I think Belinda too, there's some good materials in there to help people, like ask questions about the, like, about what they're reading and to help synthesize it along the way.

[00:47:14] Yeah,

[00:47:14] **Belinda:** there's a self-reflection guide in there as well as a book club guide.

[00:47:18] **Carolyn:** Beautiful. All right. Well, thanks again for, for coming on the show, Belinda, and for all the listeners out there, thanks for listening. Really appreciate you tuning in every week on the website of Belinda's organization, the Women's Leadership Intensive, it states who they are and this.

[00:47:40] Statement. I'm gonna leave with you. If you found your way here. You're looking for a different kind of leadership. If you've listened to this conversation, I hope you have found ways to embrace that different kind of leadership. It's really hard right now to do all the things that we want to do at home, at school, at work.

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TRANSCRIPT

[00:48:10] In our communities and to find it is not easy. So thank you for investing in yourself. Thank you for not giving up on making the world a better place. This conversation with Belinda really, really inspired me to continue to be aware of the system that I'm in and my role within it. And also the importance of taking time and space to reflect and to do that in small moments instead of big, long, long moments that made me span over weeks or uneven.

[00:48:56] Thanks so much for listening to the podcast. I'm really grateful you're here. If you like what you're listening to, please rate, review, and subscribe, and you can find my book, *evolve the Path to Trump*. Informed leaderships online where you buy books. Take care. We'll see you soon.