

My inspiration – 2nd episode – Build your network

Romaine Johnstone/Sandra Fillaudeau I'm Romaine Johnston, and I'm Sandra Fillaudeau, and we'll be your hosts on this podcast series,

Voice-over Orange presents My Inspiration.

Sandra Fillaudeau Here's what you can expect from each of the seven episodes we'll be airing

Romaine Johnstone Each month you'll discover an honest conversation on key aspects of what it means to better own your career and your self-development.

Sandra Fillaudeau Some real life examples taken from Romaine's coaching experience and our own lives, as well as tools to help you better understand yourself, others and your relationships.

Romaine Johnstone And we'll always wrap up with a practical exercise for you to start implementing these concepts in your own life.

Sandra Fillaudeau Our ambition is for you to feel energized and empowered after listening to these episodes, so enjoy and share with anyone you think may benefit from the episodes. Thank you for listening.

Networking is a key and it can be fun. Hi Romaine, Hi, Sandra. Glad to be back for the second episode on networking this time. And I'm going to be honest with you. I think this is a really key topic. And it's something, you know, personally, I only recently discovered that I actually love networking, but because I had to rebrand it. So we'll get back to that. But I spent a lot of years being very stressed and very uncomfortable. Every time someone brought up the topic. But now I think it's fun. So just to let you know, listeners, if that's how you feel about networking. We get to you and hopefully this will help you. So let's start from there Romaine. Why do some many people fear or dislike networking?

Romaine Johnstone Yeah. I think why do people dislike? Why do we all dislike networking or used to? I think it is about managing change. It's going from a situation we know to a situation we don't yet know. And it's all about going over that edge. We call it an an edge in systemic coaching is going it's going over a mountain which can be over the top of a mountain, which can be pretty steep, it's about to going over the edge, it's about it's frightening and it's uncomfortable having to do something we've never done before, going from what is known to what is not yet known. It means stepping out of a comfort zone.

It means leaving our tribe. What we know, our community, the people we know that people were familiar with. Even if we don't particularly like them, we know who they are, what we think we know what they are and who they like. And it's about making an effort, isn't it, really? I mean, we do need to kind of push ourselves a bit, but that's okay. So embracing the new does not mean replacing the old. Just because we're doing something we haven't done before doesn't mean we're abandoning our tribe. It doesn't

mean that we come back. Go back to our comfort zone. It doesn't mean that we're giving ourselves the opportunity to grow. Because for me. And, you know, I used to hate the word networking. Just the word, just the word and the word [Unrecognized]. And actually now and we experience will come back to that something together. It does give you the opportunity to grow and it doesn't have to be a big step. It can be baby steps at a time will come back to that, too. But yeah.

Sandra Fillaudeau So if you take the bias around that, the term itself, what is networking really? And why is it so important?

Romaine Johnstone I mean, there are so many different reasons. But I think let let's go with let's go with the main reasons here. This is in and we're talking professional environment, but it can be a personal one as well. So why is it important to network? Because it gives us opportunities to change projects, you know, to change relationships as well, to have new relationships, different relationships, to change jobs, to change careers. And that seemed like maybe, you know, the ultimate.

Sandra Fillaudeau Yeah, that's kind of what we have in mind when you think of networking. There's always a sort of. Yeah, very high goal.

Romaine Johnstone Yes, very high goal. And maybe that's what contributes to making it fearful for people there. So another reason is, is to boost visibility, of course, to become top of mind. And this is what people this is what turns people off as well. I think to boost your visibility, to become to put yourself more in the limelight, really to satisfy our desire or our need to change our paradigm. Yeah, I think and I've seen that from the work that I've done with many groups. Now on on the topic of networking, changing your paradigm. Actually, you get bored if you're in your comfort zone all the time. And so challenging yourself out of your comfort zone will actually will actually help you change your paradigm, change your, you know, your daily life. So to bring in the new. So that's what you said being the new contacts, new relationships, new projects, new opportunities, definitely new jobs, new resources too. People things that can help us that we hadn't even considered before. So, and there there's a potential of diversity, because for a lot of people going out, people who are different to them and therefore embracing diversity can be quite challenging. And so to be able to hear other people's perspective, have a people point of View and to build these relationships without having to be friendly relationships.

Sandra Fillaudeau Right. Right. And there was something that you mentioned and this and these first reasons that I think was really interesting as the whole comfort zone idea. Yeah. And that you can actually grow your comfort zone.

Romaine Johnstone That's right. You become more and more comfortable with a greater number of things of relationships. The more you do something, the more comfortable you get. Yeah. Edit I really think you do. I mean, from my experience and from and from the experience of people that I've worked with, the more you do something, of course. Yeah. And then a certain routine kicks in and then that's when you start getting bored again. But it's true then that you'll find that your comfort zone grows.

Because I had had a client who said to me all the time, but she said I'm always out of my comfort zone. But so she's always stepping out of my comfort zone. Why? Because she gets used to doing something. And another challenge comes along and she embraces it and she moves on. And so it's almost as if, you know, being out of her comfort zone has become her paradigm. Interesting.

Sandra Fillaudeau And you were also going to talk about something I know we've discussed together about the workplace becoming increasingly complex. Increasingly demanding, yes. How does networking help in that context?

Romaine Johnstone Yeah, that's a really important point because in times of, you know, galloping globalization and has fantastic opportunities for a sort. But at the same time, it is placing a lot of pressure on everybody at work, of course. And even personally and it's precisely when we're stressed or busy that we need to work on network most, that we need to be able to rely on our network and call on our network. And stress creates a kind of blind spot. And we no longer see our own resources, our own resources within us and those of our potential allies. And I think that's really important because we we can't take the time to slow down and consider what we know how to do and who could help. We panic and hide in a cave. And that's. That's right. And so a sight out then that it would help to have to build a network and to do to step out of that comfort zone.

Sandra Fillaudeau That's really interesting. But so I guess there's probably good networking and terrible networking and we probably have terrible networking in mind when we think of it. So what's good networking? What does that look like?

Romaine Johnstone Yeah, I think that that's probably to a certain extent personal, but I really believe that quality is more important than quantity. In other words, you can reach out foreign wide, but at some point you have to be thoughtful about what you're doing. And I think investing in your relationships is really important before you get anything in return.

Sandra Fillaudeau But I mean, so what does investing mean to you?

Romaine Johnstone Investing means taking the time to build those relationships, being curious about the other people that you're wanted to reach out to. So you obviously can't do that. Over 100000 people. You know what I mean is quality relationships is about thinking about who you want to be with, who you want to be in a relationship with. So that's what I mean by quality over quantity. You can have, you know, thousands of contacts on LinkedIn, know do those people really know you? Do they really you know, do they really can they really do something for you? I mean, LinkedIn is, of course, the best example. But then the second thing I like to say, it is about a good networking for me is about a social hub. And this I found it's not my I didn't coin this expression, but I really found it quite powerful, a social hub and not a social bubble. So I think it was Barack Obama who coined the expression social bubble. And he said, you know, you young people be very careful of not creating a social bubble and living and talking and breathing only with people who are like you and think like you reach out to people who think

differently to you, even if you reject their ideas afterwards. But you actually either become more sure of your opinion or you begin to see have a different opinion. So don't go for the social bubble. And this really refers to social media. Yeah, but go for social hub and a hub and a hub is what it's like, you know, Charles de Gaulle airports coming in and out all the time. But they're for the same reason and looking for the same thing really. I think where there's a lot of exchange, a lot of learning, it goes both ways, not only about taking and I come back to that idea of not just taking giving too. And hate to say this, but you have to give before you get back.

Sandra Fillaudeau Yeah, I think that's that's a really important point. We'll get back to that a little bit later. But there's also something that you mentioned about networking from a place of strength. Yeah. And I like that idea because we often feel less than when we start networking. We end with we are a mind automatically goes to everything that we think we don't have. Yes. You've offered to reverse the process. So could you explain like what you're saying?

Romaine Johnstone So I said networking and networking from a place of strength is about a case. Take a step back and, you know, do your homework, consider your values. What is important to you? We've talked about values in another podcast. You know, do that exercise. What are what values are important to you? What and who, what and who would help you better honor those values in your relationships in your network and do some kind of assessment process, assess your existing network and seek diversity. Again, we're back to the topic of diversity. Who is in your network? You know, what are the similarities? Are they all the same? Well, think about the differences. What are your filters? How do you choose your network? How do you choose your connections? How do you choose your friends? What's the benefit? What are you missing? Where are the gaps? Where are the gaps? Who do you really want to be connected to? And when you're considering the gaps, consider the age, you know, age, hierarchy, gender, profile and talked about culture. I talked about identity. So consider everything. And if there are too many similarities and you're living only with clones, really consider changing things because that's where all the learning and growth is going to be. And be curious and generous with your time. Be curious with your time. Ask questions. Listen to other people. Take the time to listen and really listen. Don't be already projecting yourself into your next question. Really be there for them in the moment and listening with all your with all your pores. Really listen to their questions. Listen to listen to their advice, too, and share your story, ask for theirs. Be curious. And again, you can hear the kind of bilateral communication. Ask them for their stories. Give them you. You know your stories. Given, take given, take your time.

Sandra Fillaudeau How can we get comfortable with all of this if people are listening, think, well, how am I ever gonna do that? Do you have some tips on how you can make it feel more comfortable?

Romaine Johnstone Yeah. The first thing I want to say, we're all in the same boat. Okay, we're rolling. Yeah, we're all normal then there. Yeah. And we all freak out beginning definitely. And going over that edge that I was talking about earlier may seem more or

less daunting, frightening depending on what we have to do or the person we have to speak to or the moment that we're in. And so we can take it in phases, we can decide to take baby steps at a time key and ask ourselves there's killer coaching questions. What is the worst that can happen to me? What is the worst and what is the best cut that can happen to me? And what is the worst that can happen to me is just so enlightening, right? It gives you wings.

Sandra Fillaudeau It's actually really fun to be talking about this topic with you because we met during, I'd say, a networking event. Oh, yeah. I'm a part of a project in the women's network. Could you share your experience with networking?

Romaine Johnstone Yeah. And your own journey. It's very yeah, it's very cool. And so I suppose I mean, I've always been in associations and collaborative work, and I think that's partly to do with my dual nationality. It's very Anglo-Saxons. And yes, it a unity spirit. And I've always done that. And when I created my own business and I became an entrepreneur only five years ago, and for me, that was that was a huge step, as I said. I joined the Professional Women's Network and it is an international group for the empowerment of women and the reasons why I chose it. Again, sorry to go on about this is all about diversity. And the professional women's network, which is open to men, has gender balance at the heart, at the heart of its model. Okay. And it's at the heart of my personal professional life. So it made perfect sense. And you and I worked together on a project around women and ambition. And we worked hard and I did. And I have a very, very vivid memory of what you and I did together, which was a combination of all our work together. We presented the results of our research on women and ambition to a forum of 180 people, men and women. And I had to get up on stage with a microphone in my hand in front of 180 people. And I was absolutely petrified. You remember the two weeks before ? I was petrified. And actually that morning I felt, okay, remain you can do this. And I appreciate that. The fact that it was voluntary and it was an association really helped me to do it and to let just let go of my anxiety. But now I know that I would have to do it again. I would do it again. My eyes closed and I wouldn't be able to I wouldn't be comfortable. I would still be stressed, but I would have that positive stress. And so that's what that's one of the things that networking and I have grown so much for so many things that I do now and so many things that I say now that I would never have said or done before. And I'm part of another community, which is my coaching community. And in the same way, I do so many things now. And it's taken me to places that I would never have dreamt being able to go.

Romaine Johnstone/Sandra Fillaudeau It's the whole comfort zone comfort. I also wanted to share the whole what I sort of hinted at in the introduction is that I used to be very, very uncomfortable with that working because I remember when it was brought up, I thought I imagined myself exactly as you described. You know, I was standing in the middle of a room with all these very scary, frightening, high level see that people that you want to talk to, but you've no idea what to say. And I'm a marketer and I rebranded the term. I stopped calling it networking that I think you were talking. Yeah. And I sort of approached it as sharing. And that's why I liked your whole thing about sharing your story and asking questions. Because when it comes from a place of just it's basic human

interest in other humans. And being very we're being very open and being very honest about, you know, the questions that you're asking yourself and you're seeking help and also how you can help others, what you can offer them and re-branding in that way really, really helped me. And now I think it's I think it's fun. I don't even call it networking anymore. I just it's just meeting people and sharing with them, being yourself and being yourself and being yourself.

Romaine Johnstone I think being genuine in you are so genuine. That really helps.

Sandra Fillaudeau Yeah. And yeah. So I think, you know, there's marketers out there. Listen, just call it call it something else and it really does help. So yeah, I love that idea. Oh cool. Back to very practical things and how we can help our listeners get comfortable. You shared a really great three step plan with me that helps make networking fun but also intentional, which I think is a key. So I'd love for you to detail it to listeners.

Romaine Johnstone/Sandra Fillaudeau Yeah. I mean, it's just to try to make something simple so that it's less daunting. And for me, there's a kind of before, during and after. I think that's how it goes. And so the first step is, is having a little bit of a strategy before you start.

Right. So this is before, right? This is our prep. And I just want to say be strategic and be disciplined. So be strategic is really thinking about what you're wanting to achieve and how far you're prepared to go and what your objectives are. Okay. And then what you can do to reach those objectives. So that's very factual and pragmatic. You strip out the emotion and you put it down on paper. Okay. Be disciplined. In other words, do your prep and do your prep for before and do your prep for during and do your prep for afterwards. What I mean is think about, you know, the whole process and practise, practise, practise. You won't get it right necessarily in your in your view. The first time in your view, in your. But practise, practise, practise, you'll get more and more comfortable with it. You can also be feedback from others anyway. So. So in other words, that's the prep are. Yeah. Well, did you have that? What's this? What should the strategy encompass? What should the strategy encompass? So it's a where are you going? Okay. What are we talking about? Who do you want to meet? Who do you want to talk to? Who you want to connect with? How do you want to do that? Who could help you ? So, again, it is about what we talked about earlier. You know, who could help you in this process and prepare your pitch. And the you know, the word that people hate the pitch. Okay. So basically, forget about the pitch. Let's rebound the worst hit. I think what you want to say about yourself, you know what you want to say, but use of what are your values? What are your skills? What are your talents? You know, think about your CV and what you put in that kind of those motivational few lines at the beginning of your CV. Be genuine, and be honest. Don't try and oversell yourself because you won't feel comfortable with it. Balance and remember some key words. Okay, so this is not about learning it off by heart. It's about you feeling comfortable about how you present yourself. So don't underestimate your skills. You know, don't brag, don't be too cocky, but don't underestimate your skills. We do that all too often. Be clear about, you know, what you want to ask and do your homework. Look, look at the backgrounds of the people that you want to talk to. Social networks are fantastic source of information.

Sandra Fillaudeau. That's a good point. And that's sort of an anchor that can make you feel comfortable, because if you already have a top line that you can sort of guide them, steer them towards that, that really helps.

Romaine Johnstone. It really does help because it shows that you have it opens up the dialogue. Right. Shows that you've done your homework, but it also shows interest for what they are. Exactly. And then you're bridging the gap between them and you. And you're opening yourself up to listening to them and you're creating that dialogue, which will be essential and which will make the difference between just talking to them and talking with them written like that.

So once you've done all that, so once you've done all that, you go for it. Okay. You're in the ...during. So introduce yourself. Introduce yourself, and for example, someone else who's also on their own. Go for them as soon as this. But somebody on their own. Go with them and introduce yourself and tell them a little bit about yourself and be curious. Ask them about them or join a group of three and contribute. After a few minutes of listening in, you know, or go and talk to the keynote speakers if you dare. Generally, if you genuinely found their speech interesting. And why ? Yeah. Don't forget it. Absolutely. Thank the organizers. Simple as that. You know, even if it means queuing for a couple of minutes, you know, and take the trouble to do that. That's a good way to practice. It is a good way to practice. It's not very. Or were risky. Right. Is the word and be ready with your pitch and be ready with your business cards. Although I find that fewer and fewer people use their business cards and conclude, don't forget to conclude, you know, you got to say goodbye. You thank them for their attention, even if they've already switched off. Be brave and say goodbye and promise to write to them and promise to send them something. And when I was talking about, you know, being generous earlier, if you think that it would be useful for them to share something or someone that you know about, let them know and follow up. Okay. So be generous with your contacts as well. And that's really important. Yeah. So that's the step, too. So we've done that before. We've done that during a lot more things that you can do, obviously, but it's just to give you some a few guidelines and the after. Don't leave it at that. You made promises. Deliver on your promises. Always. So don't oversell yourself and don't tell them they're going to do something that you can't honor afterwards. So deliver on your promises. If you're genuinely interested in meeting that person again, make it happen. Maybe don't do it straight away. Contact them a little later. Suggest coffee, lunch at the canteen or elsewhere. Go along to an event. They're organizing. Maybe go on to meeting that. They're organizing where you can you know, which you can contribute to. So make it brief. Okay, and stick to the time and the place. Agreed. So respect their time and the time and the energy they're giving you. And thank them, of course, connect with them on social networks, on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram, follow them, follow the groups they follow. That's also interesting. If they're in a field of interest, which interests you, be curious about what they're reading and what they're posting, what they're, you know, willing. Send them an article, you know. And as I said earlier, offer your contacts as an act for top and that networking opportunity, connection, connection, be generous. Don't be too protective of your contacts because that will funny. Yeah, that's. Yeah. Why would someone even do that? Don't you think people are protective about their contact ?

Maybe some. Yeah. Yeah, I think some people are. And I think that's what makes it difficult for them to network because they want they want to take. But you have to give first and share your context. He's so much comes back from it. If you change your paradigm, let your context know, you know, you've changed jobs, you change projects, you done something exciting. You've been promoted, you've been in it. Something wonderful happened to me recently. And I've started consciously telling people about the promotion, if you like, the promotion I've had what I would never have done two years ago, I promise. Yeah. So there you go.

Sandra Fillaudeau. That's a good point, because I think we often feel sort of like, well, what do they care if I changed jobs or, you know, we always felt we're interrupting or bothering people, but people are very happy to hear. Yeah, they're happy for they are very happy if you're so good. Yeah. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed our chat today. And next time we'll be talking about something that I think complements today's topic really well, which is how to tackle your limiting beliefs, which is kind of what we addressed. Yeah, right here is so, you know, the limiting beliefs being those that are very, very deeply embedded in your mind and that determine your behaviors and sometimes don't allow you to do what you'd love to do.

Romaine Johnstone/Sandra Fillaudeau So I can't wait for that one. So is it all of you who are listening? Until next time. Please let us know how this episode helped you. Share it with a friend or a colleague. It could be used too. Thanks for listing. And now it's down to you guys. Bye. Bye.

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