

42.-Kindness-vs-People-Pleasing-

Welcome to coaching for Latina leaders, the only podcast dedicated to the advancement of Latinas at every level of life with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Latina with over 20 years of leadership experience, Harvard grad physician and mother of two.

Hey Mujeres. Before we jump into this week's podcast, I want to let you know about my course that's coming up. So the first week of April, I am launching my life leadership course, the leadership accelerator. So this is going to be a 12 week course and the content is off the hook. So in the 12 weeks, we cover everything you need to execute at a really high level with a ton of self compassion, you learn how to have an unshakable level of confidence. So even into spaces that in the past have made you feel insecure, you show up with self confidence, you learn how to be a brain ninja, so that you're hyper aware of your thoughts and your emotions. And you're no longer paralyzed by guilt, by shame, by anxiety or fear of disappointing other people. And I'm going to teach you how to live a life of attention. So that the choices you're making every day really reflect your values, and you're thriving in those everyday life stressors.

And I'm going to teach you the nuts and bolts of transformational leadership, we're going to cover those big three things that you need to be an effective leader, including public speaking. So I'm going to teach you how to speak to influence in any setting, whether you're giving a keynote address, you're leading a workshop, or you're just running a meeting, you're going to learn how to show up like you're on a TED stage.

Number two, I'm going to teach you the art of transformational negotiations. So you walk away from every negotiation feeling really good about the outcome. And I'm going to teach you how to manage people, I'm going to teach you how to be the best boss that the people that work with you have ever had. Okay, so I deliver the content in a way to make sure that you just don't learn it, but you actually start to use it and you retain it. So a year from the last day of the course, you're still using the content that you've learned. So the way the course is delivered is you get weekly modules. And these are super high yield. They're short, and they're easily digestible, because I know you are all incredibly busy women, and I am not about to waste your time. And you also get weekly coaching and teaching sessions. So every week we come together, and we review some concepts that you've learned over the week, and we do ton of group coaching. And you also get individual one-on-one coaching sessions with me. And on top of that, and probably the best thing about this entire thing is that you get to join an incredible community.

When you join the course you're joining a community of other really amazing and compassionate female leaders. Now imagine being in a community with other really amazing women that care about your success just as much as you do. That's what the leadership accelerator gives you. Okay, so the program launches April first, the waitlist will be open on my website, the second week of February

VanessaCalderonMD.com. And you want to make sure you get your name on the waitlist right away, because you want to be the first to hear about any course updates. And you want to get first dibs at registration because it's going to be limited to only 20 women, and I want you to be one of them.

Okay, now, so I just finished this course at Stanford in positive psychology, it was a coach training course. And part of the course we did some training on empathy and self compassion. And one of the things that the instructor recommended we do is we find a childhood picture of ourselves that we love and really look at that person and the essence of who we are. And so now on my desk, I have a new framed picture, which is a picture of me and must be about three years old or so I'm wearing this little red looks almost like kind of a baby doll dress. And I had to enlarge it because it was a picture of me and my sisters when we were little kids. And it's the cutest picture in the world. And now I have it on my desk, and I'm so happy to see it every day. Because little Vanessa was so adorable. Okay, so I wanted to share that because as I was logging in, I went to go turn on my computer, and I saw my little picture. She's so cute. So anyway, we're talking today about emotions and being sensitive. And the first question I have for you is, has anyone ever told you that you're too sensitive? Or that you need to stop being so emotional?

When I was a kid, I heard that a lot in Spanish, of course, because people spoke Spanish in my house. And so I made it mean that there was something wrong with me. And if this is you, and you've heard that a lot, I want you to know right now that there's nothing wrong with you and that thinking that there's something wrong with someone being emotional, or sensitive is total BS. And yeah, that's like the patriarchy at its worst. Because regardless of how you identify On the gender spectrum, being sensitive, being in touch with your emotions being a feeler, that's a superpower, it means that you'd likely rate higher in skills of empathy and emotional intelligence. And high EQ is associated with stronger emotional connections. stronger emotional connections are associated with greater happiness. And it's also associated with improved leadership abilities. Because feelings and emotions are behind 100% of everything we do. And when you master your emotions, you will have total control over your actions and your results in life.

Now, the second pillar of the leadership accelerator is mastering emotions. And in the leadership accelerator, I teach you exactly how to hone in on those emotions that propel you forward and release the emotions that hold you back. So today, I want to talk specifically about two different actions that can seem similar on a surface level, but they cause totally different emotions in our bodies. And the two that I'm choosing to talk about today, the two actions are kindness versus people pleasing. Now I chose these two specifically because people pleasing is so universal. And when I'm coaching my clients on this, it's there's often confusion about how do I know when I'm people pleasing versus just being nice. So that's what we're going to talk about today. So people pleasing is when we're changing our actions based on what we think will make others around us happy. Okay, so we people, please for different reasons.

Number one, you may have been socialized to be a people pleaser, you may have seen examples of people pleasing around you, and you thought that was the way to live, okay? It's especially true if you identify as a woman, because you've likely been socialized to people, please, as a woman, to always

make everything about other people never about you to do things that are going to make your kids happy or your spouse happy or your mother happy. I think back a lot when I think about this example to my grandmother, my dad's on my dad's side, Mama Senada. Now I was super, super close to my grandmother, and she lived in LA when I was going to medical school. So she lived very close to me. And when I would go hang out with her on the weekends, and I'd asked her "que quere" I said, What is it that you want to do today?

Her response was always the same. Whatever you want, lo que quieras hija, lo que quieras. I be like, No, grandma famosa you want to go get our nails done? Do you want to go do this too, and just go for a walk. And it was always the same thing. And you know, she was much, much older at the end of her life already. And this is just who she was. She was someone that never didn't even know what her wishes were anymore, didn't even know what her preferences were, because she had lived a life of totally been about everybody else around her. Now, that's one reason we can people, please because we've been socialized. Now the second reason we people please sometimes is a trauma response. And when I say trauma response, I mean it's fear based, okay, it's coming from the part of our brains that's centered around our fear center, the amygdala. Now we've all heard of the common fight or flight response. But you may not know that there are actually four different trauma responses, the common fight and flight, but there's also freeze and fawn. Now, fawning is the people pleasing aspect of the fear response. It's trying to change our behavior to please those around us so that we can be friend them so that we're safe around them. That's where that comes from. Now for me, I've been a huge people pleaser all of my life. And it came from a combination of different things. Number one, no doubt, I was socialized to be a people pleaser. I shared that example about my grandmother. But I also experienced a lot of childhood trauma, a lot of yelling and fighting in my home. And I internalized that traumatic response of fawning. So in my mind, I made I made it mean that if I would, if I made other people like me, if I was really kind of nice, then there would be no screaming or yelling that there would be no fighting.

Now, those two things, the socialization the trauma response, combined with other sort of more complex, inherent and innate qualities of my brain, and how I prefer to manage conflict led me to become a pretty substantive people pleaser. Now, again, people pleasing is when we're changing our actions based on what we think will make others around us happy. So I'm going to give you an example of how this shows up for me. So I started working at a new emergency department a few months ago. And when I showed up in the department, I knew all the physicians there because I've met them from other hospitals where I've worked, but I didn't know the nurses and the clerks. And something that I did just totally based on it. A responsive wasn't even conscious response. It was sort of like a subconscious response is I started complimenting the nurses and the techs, I would start complimenting the clerks. And I realized I was doing that because I had this underlying thought error that if I didn't do that, they wouldn't like me. And so again, people pleasing is when you're changing your actions based on what you think will make others around you happy now The very sort of pinning, underlying that thought error is that you, you think that in order for you to be liked, you have to compliment other people for, for me, for example that are ordered to be liked, you have to people, please, in order to be safe you have to people, please. Which means that if you're if you don't people, please the opposite. If you don't people,

please then you may not be safe and somebody may not like you. Okay, so what's the difference between people pleasing and kindness.

Now kindness on the other hand, kindness, kindness means that you're still honoring your own needs. Kindness means that you're genuinely it's a virtue, meaning that you're genuinely being nice, but you're honoring your own needs first. And the underlying assumption here is that you're already safe. Because when you feel safe, when you already feel safe, your brain feels safe. It allows you to honor your own needs to create healthy boundaries, where you can be kind and love someone and still create boundaries that honor your own needs. That's the difference between people pleasing and kindness. Now, I want to walk you through an exercise right now of what it feels like in your bodies, because this whole episode is about emotions and what it feels like in our bodies, okay? Because, and the reason why I want to talk about this, about what it feels like in your body is because emotions are felt in our bodies, they're not something we analyze in our brains, emotions are something we feel in our body. Alright, so let's start first by visualizing what people pleasing feels like. So what I want you to do right now, if you are driving in a car, just take a few deep breaths and to try to visualize this as you're driving. If you're in your house, doing housework, see if you can stop for a second and do the visualization. If you're going for a walk, you might be able to do this as you're walking.

Okay, so the first thing I want you to do is I want you to visualize a time where you were people pleasing, and put yourself in that space, put yourself in that space where there were others around you, and you felt like you needed to go out of your way, maybe you were over complimenting, maybe you were saying yes to a lot of things they wanted to do, even though you didn't really want to do that. Put yourself in that space. Okay. And now as you're visualizing the things that you were doing, so visualize the things that you were doing what you were saying, I want you to think right now about what you're feeling in your body. What does that feel like in your body? Do you have a sort of discomfort in your chest? Are you feeling kind of a funny feeling or butterflies in your stomach? Does it feel a little restrictive? Now for me, when I visualize that last example I just gave you about starting in the emergency department. What I realized for me is that it was a restrictive tightness feeling in my chest. Because again, people pleasing as a trauma response.

So when you're doing that, what's happening is that your brain's fear centers at work, it's releasing all of the hormones, the stress hormones, telling your body that you're not safe. And that's what causes the tightness in your chest, a little bit of discomfort, that kind of funny giggling sound that we sometimes make when we're uncomfortable. That's the fear response. And the one thing I want you to realize here is that when you have that thought, again, that you will not be safe unless you people, please, that sets you on this sort of nasty cycle. Because the cycle is if you think you're not safe, unless you people, please, you will always people, please, because that's what you think creates your safety. So that's going to strengthen that neural connection in your brain telling your brain that the only way for you to be safe is to people, please. So you will do that over and over again. And inherent in that thought is the thought error that if you stop people pleasing, you will feel unsafe. So that right there is the work to be done. That's the work we do because you can train your brain to do otherwise you can train your brain to stop people pleasing. But it takes work. It takes work to do that. So now I want to do this exercise, again, the visualization exercise, but I want to do it with kindness instead of people pleasing. Okay, so

now I want you to envision a moment, visualize a time right now, when you were genuinely being kind to someone else.

Think about maybe how you act with people you love where you already feel safe. Maybe it's your children, maybe it's your spouse, maybe it's a really good friend. So put yourself in that space right now. When you're genuinely being kind. How do you feel in your face? Are you smiling? What did you say? Are you genuinely complimenting someone? And how does that feel in your body when you're being genuinely kind? For me, it feels really expansive, it feels really warm, I kind of get a little watery eyed because I'm happy. They're like happy tears. That's the difference between kindness and people pleasing. People pleasing is fear based, it feels restrictive and tight in your body. You're releasing all of the stress hormones in your brain. And it sets off a cycle that strengthening that neural connection that thought error that you are not safe unless you please. Now kindness on the other hand, that's different. Okay? Kindness again, feels expansive, it feels warm. Kindness feels like if you were to call it a light for me, it would be like a bright, warm, light, kindness feels light, and expansive. And kindness is based on safety.

Kindness is inherently based on safety, you are already safe. So you can genuinely be kind. You can take care of yourself first, you can create those healthy boundaries. That's kindness. That's where unconditional love comes from. Okay? And again, how you know the difference is how it feels in your body. That's how you know the difference, you know? So if you are asking me, How do I know whether I'm people pleasing versus just being kind, I want you to ask yourself, How does it feel in your body. And that's why emotions are so powerful because emotions are telling. And when we're in touch with our emotions, they can help us navigate how we make choices in life. They help us navigate and ensure we're living a life that's in integrity, with our values with who we are. That's why emotions are so powerful. And again, emotions are felt in the body.

Emotions are not something we can analyze in the brain. So when we do these exercises together, it's really important for you to feel into your body. Sometimes when I'm working with my clients, I have them close their eyes, because I want them to stop thinking and I want them to just feel what's happening in their body. Alright, cuties. That's all I've got for you today. Make sure you go to my website VanessaCalderonMD.com check out the leadership accelerator. I would love to have you in our next cohort. It starts on April 4, and Registration closes March 31. Be on the lookout for my webinar. It's coming out where I will be inviting you and teaching you how to be more effective without burning out. And it'll also be an opportunity to get all your questions answered about the leadership accelerator. Alright, until next time. Adios!

Hey mujeres! if you enjoyed this episode, make sure to subscribe, rate review and share it with a friend. And if you love what you're learning here, then you have to sign up for my weekly love letters. I send you all the good stuff, doses of inspiration and all the skills you need. So you can live lead and make money like the Chingona that you are, subscribe on my website at VanessaCalderonMD.com. I'll see you there.