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Sheila Long: Hello, everybody, welcome to the Head of the Table podcast. My name is Sheila Long, and I will be your host for today's show.

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Hello, everybody, this is Sheila Long. We have a great guest here today. She's going to be talking to us about a lot of the things that are very near and dear to our heart. How to align people who are working for you? How to really leverage the talent, and how to really inspire and help people become great leaders. I'm very excited to introduce our guest today, her name is Therese Heeg with Life Work's Coaching and Training.

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Therese Heeg: Thank you, Sheila, for such a nice intro. Sometimes I have a hard time describing the work I do, but I think you did a good job there.

Sheila Long: Thank you, yes. It is such a wonderful business that you have, and it's so needed, especially what we do here, we definitely deal with women. It's just great to have people inspiring women and helping them move them along. We met a while ago.

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Just going off topic here, but Therese and I have a rich history, where I actually was on the Life of Meaning and with her on her YouTube channel, right? It was great. I'd never done something like that, so I was really nervous, but Therese helped me through it. Therese helped me through it and so now, the tables are reversed here. We're talking to Therese about her stories. This is fun for me.

Therese Heeg: Very cool.

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Sheila Long: All right. Let's hear it, can you tell us a little bit about your business?

Therese Heeg: Well, as you said, my business is Life Works Coaching and Training Inc. We help organisations small and large shape cultures, so that people feel comfortable about coming to work. I work with leaders and teams in building accountability systems, helping improve trust and communication. It's really a great combination of listening to what are the strategic priorities of the organisation and then helping them, like you said, leverage the talent, to get the work done while also creating a culture where people feel good.

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Sheila Long: Isn't that so important, that people just wake up and want to go to wherever they're going in the morning?

Terese Heeg: Yes. In organisations that don't have a healthy culture, people actually get to work and turn their brain off before they walk in.

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I want to help organisations do the opposite of that. I love to help leaders learn how to light people up versus shutting them down.

Sheila Long: That is so wonderful. Congrats. Thank you for doing that. Just what a great service you're providing for everybody. You have such a wonderful background. How did you – what is your current role? What did you decide to move in this direction?

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Terese Heeg: Well, this is my life's work, it's a calling. I love to help people go to the next level of success, whatever that means to them. I started out 30 years ago as a career coach. Then moved into executive coaching, then into organisational development. Organisational development pieces together all of those things. Career development, change management, leadership development, team development, and we help organisations think through how much of that they can build into their normal day-to-day work.

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The work that I do with them, I help them integrate it into the work they're already doing. It's not working on top of what they're already doing. A leader's work is to lead people. I just give them better systems and tools to help them do that more efficiently and effectively.

Sheila Long: Sounds great. That must be, I've said it before, very rewarding.

Terese Heeg: It is. When people thank me for the work I do and go home energized instead of crying and exhausted.

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That means a lot to me. Like I said, it's a calling because I am serving people.

Sheila Long: Well, congrats. You got into this; you've been doing it for a while. It sounds to me like you definitely have that background in organisational development. Also, you coach a lot of leaders, sounds like not just people who are leading different sized organisations.

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You definitely have a background in knowing what it is to be the head of the table. How would best define that? Either from your perspective or your clients, or just life in general?

Terese Heeg: Great question, when I work with leaders, I help them think about how to step into that leadership role, whether it's an entrepreneur who's scaling their organisation or a high-potential leader going to the next level.

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As an executive, I help them first look at who they are as a human being when they sit down at the table, and help them really look at their skills, their values, their purpose, and what creates meaning for them. If they can be anchored in that, then they can learn how to lead others. So much of leadership is helping create meaning and meaningful conversations with the people that you lead.

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Especially today with the accelerated pace of change. A lot of the work I do is around building change leadership capabilities, which includes helping leaders have a self-awareness of how they feel when they have to go through change. Also, an awareness of all the different emotions that people feel when they're facing change. It does start when you're at the head of the table, you really have to look internally first before you look up and work with people.

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Sheila Long: Yes, that is just so important to know your internal gauge, so that you can really effectively lead others. Just the myriad of change in all of those emotions you go through as it's happening. It depends how fast the organisation is moving.

Terese Heeg: Yes, in these days, lots is happening. It used to be a change in the workplace was similar to the old-fashioned rollercoasters, where you slowly go up one hill and then, woo, you go down.

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Now, change in organisations is similar to the new rollercoasters, where you twirl around, go up and down, tip upside down. You can't even know which direction you're going in the newer rollercoasters. That's how people feel in the workplace right now.

Sheila Long: Okay, wow. Since you speak to a lot of different people, who would you say are your biggest role models, or who have influenced you?

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Terese Heeg: Well, I have to go all the way back to my grandma because she worked really hard, got up every day and faced the day, even under difficult circumstances. She was grateful. She just woke up every day grateful, so I try to look for the good around me and look for the good in others. That's how I frame my day. I got that from my grandma.

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My parents taught me how to make connections by, again, seeing the good in people and not judging their story. As a coach and a consultant, that's what I need to do, is show up and work with people wherever they are without judging them. Then, of course, there are thought leaders who I look to. So many people are studying leadership development, team development.

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The most recent work that I'm studying is the neuroscience behind leadership. I was able to work with David Rock, who was an early adopter, early leader in that area. Most recently, completed a program with Judith Glaser, who wrote Conversational Intelligence. It's all about the neuroscience behind why we act the way we do.

Sheila Long: Wow, what a great bunch of people to really inspire you and to help you. Everybody has parents, right? We all take different things from them.

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Then our grandparents, there are so many wonderful lessons that come from grandparents. I'm just a big fan of having them be in our lives. Just teaching you how to be grateful. That's huge.

Terese Heeg: She could have looked at all of the challenges, but she didn't. She just woke up every day and said, what a great day.

Sheila Long: I go through this with my kids. It wasn't like their life was simpler because actually, it was harder. Now, we have a lot more technology, but still, just to be able to see the good in each day and just to be grateful, that's really important.

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Then just having... just being able to be non-judgmental. I know you personally, you are a very non-judgmental person. You always really try to have an even keel about you. That's something I really admire about you.

Terese Heeg: Thank you.

Sheila Long: You're really good with that.

Therese Heeg: Thank you.

Sheila Long: Then just the fact that you know about the neuroscience thought leaders and you're listening and learning. That's just such a great value I'm sure that you bring to your client and to the workplaces too.

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Therese Heeg: Yes, it's pretty cool to help people understand how we're wired. To watch for the natural response. Then ways to step over and see things differently. Slow down the fight or flight reaction.

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Notice it, slow it down, and then step into a conversation without having to win or be right or save face. Just step into it with curiosity. Curiosity is one of the mechanisms that we can use to light up the brain, to open up the brain. When you're in fight or flight, the prefrontal cortex shuts down, so the thinking part of the brain shuts down. What you want to do is open that back up. A good way to do that is to just be curious without judging.

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Like, I wonder why this is happening? I wonder what we might have missed. Using the word might is very powerful. Even when people are at complete odds. You can have each person state their case and then say, it sounds like this is where you're at, this is where I'm at. I wonder what we might have missed. I wonder what a new way of looking at this might be. It just opens that brain up.

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Sheila Long: That is really cool.

Therese Heeg: It's interesting.

Sheila Long: I speak Spanish and Portuguese and that is actually how you say it. Say, I wonder is, what would have happened instead of I wonder. Like, you say, what would have happened. Then it just totally sparks the curiosity, looking at it from a different viewpoint. That's why it's so important. Just knowing about the fight or flight.

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Also, looking back at your past experiences too, that you might have had a similar experience happen. Then you might just go into that mode of thinking.

That's such a great gift you give to everyone, to just remind them to look towards being curios.

Therese Heeg: Well, that's how we're wired too. We operate on past experience because our brain doesn't want to think about every single thing we do.

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That's why you might be driving a car and your car takes you home when you really needed to go some place else. The brain wants to simplify our life, so then we will operate on past experiences without thinking about it. When it's an emotional past experience, we do have to think about it. We have to figure out a way to show up in a new way. I'm not a counsellor, not a psychologist, but I do help people self-reflect.

Sheila Long: Yes, that is just so cool. Congratulations.

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Therese Heeg: Thanks.

Sheila Long: I know you've done a lot, what would you say is the accomplishment that you're the proudest of?

Therese Heeg: Well, we can't count my two wonderful children.

Sheila Long: Why not? They're great.

Therese Heeg: Two amazing strong young women. Personally, the biggest accomplishment was being a first-generation college student. Coming from a town of 2,000 where the expectation was, I would get married and have a family.

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Figuring out a way to go to college was the biggest accomplishment. Then after that, after my children, it would be starting the business. I never saw myself as a businessperson. I just wanted to do the work that I love and that I'm called to do. Now, I am successfully in business and growing the business and hiring and that's pretty cool.

Sheila Long: Wonderful. Congratulations.

Therese Heeg: Thanks.

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Sheila Long: Well, thanks a lot for being on the show. We're really inspired by what you do. Where can people get in touch with you? Do you have any social media handles or...?

Therese Heeg: Generally, Therese Heeg, T-H-E-R-E-S-E H-E-E-G. I'm on Twitter and LinkedIn. My website is www.lifeworkscoachcentre.com.

Sheila Long: Thank you. There are so many key learnings coming out of everything that you've told us today. I just want to go home and look up these authors. David Rack, you said. Judith Glaser.

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Therese Heeg: Glaser.

Sheila Long: All right. Just remembering that fight or flight methodology, right, just how important it is to be curious. Therese is a really amazing coach. If you really want to move your career to the next level, please get in touch with her.

Therese Heeg: Or your business to the next level.

Sheila Long: Or your business, right, exactly. Thank you, everyone, for tuning in, please, we look forward to continuing to inspire women and the people who support them to be great leaders. Thanks to everyone.

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Therese Heeg: Thanks for having me, Sheila.

Sheila Long: Yes, thank you, bye. Thanks to everybody for listening to the Head of the Table podcast. Please, feel free to look for us wherever you find your podcasts. Let your friends know, as well. Thanks, everyone.