Interview topics

The only woman in the room

Cornelia spent more than twenty years in the international steel industry, and for a time was one of only two female steel traders in the world. More than once, visitors to the boardroom asked her, the CEO, to make the coffee. She talks candidly about staying visible, being heard, and what has and hasn't changed for women in senior roles.

You always have a choice

Early in her career, a trader shouted and swore at her in the middle of an open-plan office. The realisation that followed, that she could decide what her story would be, shaped everything since. A conversation about agency, resilience and making an industry work for you without becoming someone else.

Imposter syndrome and the inner critic

Nearly everyone has a voice that says they'll be found out, including very senior leaders. Drawing on her talk "Imposter Syndrome: Tame Your Inner Critic", Cornelia explores where that voice comes from, how small comments add up over time, and practical ways to quieten it.

The science of connection

In her steel industry days Cornelia was more direct; her natural style is more collaborative. She talks about behavioural styles, why understanding your own and other people's makes work easier, and how small shifts in approach lead to better conversations.

Better questions, better decisions

As a CEO she learned that making a decision is often better than making none, that saying "I don't know" is a strength, and that the best answers come from people who will respectfully disagree with you. Good ground for conversations about decision-making, leadership under pressure and building teams that aren't all alike.

Leadership beyond work

Cornelia has managed ice hockey teams through her son's playing years, taken England junior teams to international tournaments, and served three years on the board of the national governing body for ice hockey in England and Wales. A route into volunteering, grassroots sport and leadership outside the office.

From Russian at 13 to a closed Siberian city

Learning Russian as a teenager took Cornelia somewhere she never expected: a year living in a closed city in Siberia as the Soviet Union opened up. The full story is for her forthcoming memoir, but it is a lively starting point for conversations about curiosity, culture and saying yes to the unexpected.

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