

EP 032 Unprofessional on Purpose with Thomas Lahnthaler https://www.lahnthaler.com/

(Un) Professionalism

Professionalism is a frame that helps us connect: a set of unwritten rules that make us feel safe and that only become visible when someone breaks them. Unprofessionalism begins the moment we break one of those rules on purpose and own whatever follows.

Unprofessional Advice

Sneak in a swear word. Start your next meeting in a way you consider unprofessional, and notice how it feels.

"When I deliberately do something wrong,
I'm more ready for whatever impact that could have."

Wisdom Nugget

Choosing to break a rule changes what the breaking does to us. Decided in advance, the risk comes with a kind of readiness — we've braced for the reactions and kept some say in where they lead. The same label, arriving uninvited, puts the whole nervous system on alert.

"Our own ideas of professionalism are basically things that make us safe."

Wisdom Nugget

The rules we defend most fiercely might be the ones keeping our own nerves quiet. Punctuality, composure, the right way to sit in a chair — each one is a small agreement with ourselves about how to stay safe in a room full of strangers.

Try It Out

In your next meeting, open with something personal before the agenda — a small story, a self-deprecating line. Then watch for the moment shoulders drop and people settle into their chairs.