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[SPEAKER_02]

In today's podcast, we pick up again with Nikolina Jovic, an Erasmus student from Croatia.

She talks to us about the importance of soft skills as a research student.

[SPEAKER_01]

We're back in the studio with Nikolina Jovic.

[SPEAKER_02]

You were talking about, which I think is really relevant for all students, especially research students, that you'd learned about the importance of communication and time management, which are very soft skills, which we don't often talk to research students about.

But I wonder if you could say a little bit more about what that meant for you.

[SPEAKER_00]

Yeah, sure.

I mean, like you said, those are some soft skills that maybe people kind of, after you get to a certain age, people assume you acquired those skills, you know, but it's not that intuitive, at least not for most of the people, I think.

And the reason why it's so important, because it kind of, it guides you through the very complex process that is really enjoyable if you enjoy that kind of work, but still

It guides you.

So regarding communication skills, it comes down to having a good relationship with your mentor, first and foremost, to be able to communicate maybe fears.

Because we, as not yet formed practitioners and still in the status of students,

we feel like we don't know as much.

And when you go to a foreign environment, you want to make best impressions.

So it's hard to, you know, say, okay, this is something I don't understand.

This is something I don't know how to do, even though I maybe painted a picture that I'm good at some skills.

You just, you know, in a way you are doing the best you can and you want to, get your opportunity and maybe you paint the picture of yourself the greater than in reality is so all of that affects kind of honesty and and how

comfortable you are being with with with another in in you know to have an honest communication so i think it's important for me

it's it it helps me a lot to you know always uh there's this saying like a dressing elephant in the room when i'm uh you know whether i'm nervous or i don't like i just don't have an ability to mingle the situation you know i just find it the easiest for me to just be honest about my expectations and about my knowledge in general and that's where good relationship with your mentor comes into uh into spotlight because you know they will guide you and uh after all they were probably once in the same situation so it's not that unfamiliar and it's not a unique position to be in as a student and regarding time management skills it's just like we talked about it earlier but it's there is no magic formula for getting things done it's

I'm still in the process and I'm obviously a bit biased and I don't have that objective distance from the whole process.

So I don't have any tips and tricks in my pocket.
But yeah, being aware of time and just trying to, you know, do your work every day and try to reproduce even a slightly...
No matter how amount of tasks, just reproduce something at the end of the day.
And things will get easier because down the line, you will eventually become stressed out.
You will eventually burn out of the topic you've been reading for such a long time.
And also life happens.
It's not like the only thing you have on your mind.
So once you do come back from that state of stress, you will still have enough time because you just work your best every day.
And just, I think I would say to myself first and foremost, and then maybe to others who are listening, just pretend like deadline is sooner than it is.
I think it's helping too, you know.

[SPEAKER_02]

Yeah, because there's so much of what you're talking about.
I really hope my research students are listening because I think a lot of what you're saying when you're talking about the relationship with your mentor and I like the word mentor rather than supervisor because when we're working on research projects we always have a mentor but it's always your projects but you were talking a lot about what I think is about teamwork, actually.
That actually teamwork is about communicating, having regular meetings, and being open.
And I think sometimes if students are very fearful, some may try and hide that they don't know, and actually sharing and being open about your limitations and what you do know and what you can bring to the table, but also what perhaps, you know, where you are fearful, because then we can sit in and help.
And it's something about, I think...
what's really important about being a research student is the ability to to learn and learn learning means that you have to be quite humble so you and everybody is learning so like you may have learned something from me but i've learned something from you so it's it's um it's also to understand that your supervisors or you're not your supervisor your mentor um there's a lot in it for them as well um
you're doing work that they're interested in I'm picking up I've learned more about restorative justice in the last six months than I had in the last six years maybe so it's it's it's realizing that you've got something to offer the the mentor but but but also but being open and sharing so that that's i think something that any research team would be aware of um and i like to also think about that thing of something at the end of each day because i know especially my phd students yeah and actually every project i do it
Sometimes things get so overwhelming that you begin to shut down because you're so fearful.
And actually having that strategy of saying at the end of every day, I'm going to have produced something.
And I like that.
And plus your deadlines.
Set early deadlines because things always take much longer.
So, yes, I thought a lot of those, I'm really hoping my research students are listening.

[SPEAKER_01]

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