



Leaderonomics

The Science of Building Leaders

The Power of Guidance

Understanding mentorship,
role models and secure bases

ONE of the key determinants of success is the creation of a secure base – an environment that allows one to turn to a trusted individual or set of beliefs that can allow them to survive and thrive.

Exploring this theme, we take a look at the development of secure bases through parenting, mentorship among one's personal and professional circles – a manager, a colleague, or a good friend – and others.

A few questions we often ask ourselves as we study this key element in our *Science of Building Leaders* framework are:

- Are you going back to your secure base when you have to?
- How can you as a person be a secure base to others?
- To whom are you a secure base, and are you making the most out of that relationship for that person?

Here's where the essence of guidance come into play – a consistent and reliable guide would be both daring and caring at the same time.

This essentially means that to effectively influence, inspire and help someone to achieve their greatest potential, one needs to be able to address challenging topics with a mindset for improvement.

A secure, caring and loving environment, free of

negative judgement would be the place to go to.

As you browse through our pages this week, read about how to identify the right mentor for you. Who do you choose; the 'best me' mentor, the 'what's next' mentor or the 'insight' mentor?

If you've been thinking about becoming a guide, learn what it takes – effective communication, and providing good feedback among other things – to be a better mentor.

Parents too have a crucial role to play in the making of a secure base. Oftentimes, they form the first, and powerful, level of secure base in a person's life.

Understand what to do and what not to do when mentoring the young, and find out how to shape young leaders through role models and character-building.

All this and more this month! We would love to hear your thoughts on any of our articles. Drop us a note at editor@leaderonomics.com.

Happy reading!

THE LEADERONOMICS.COM TEAM



Like us at www.facebook.com/Leaderonomics/



Follow us
@leaderonomics

UNTUK kandungan pembangunan kepimpinan dalam Bahasa Malaysia, kunjungilah portal BM kami di www.leaderonomics.com/bm atau halaman Facebook kami @LeaderonomicsBM.

contents

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ROSHAN THIRAN

MANAGING EDITOR
LYDIA GOMEZ

DIGITAL CONTENT LEADER
(BAHASA MALAYSIA)
YEOH LIN LIN

HEAD OF SALES
OWEN NG

ASSISTANT EDITORS
CHRISTIE CHUA
LOUISA DEVADASON
MICHELLE HARRIS
SHASIDHARAN KESAVAN

DESIGNER
WAI BEE

WRITERS & CONTRIBUTORS
GEORGE KOHLRIESER
SHERRIE CAMPBELL
PADMINI JANAKI
AMANDA CHUA
LILY LAU
JESSE LYN STONER
JOHN FEATHERBY
JESSICA THIEFELS
JOHAN MAHMOOD MERICAN
SANDY CLARKE
JEROME PARISSE-BRASSENS
BRIGITTE ROZARIO
MARCUS LIM
AUDREY TONG
EVA CHRISTODOULOU
NIKHIL BANSAL
JONATHAN YABUT
DR CAROL KINSEY GOMAN
LIM LAY HSUAN
AVA DIAMOND

3

Lessons from the life of a musical genius

How many of us continually push ourselves to better our craft and learn from those who are better than us? Beethoven's approach to life allowed him to accept his ailments and adjust to life accordingly, and his love for music drove him to achieve the impossible – being able to compose music while deaf.

4

People-related mistakes leaders make

6

Choosing the right mentor for yourself

8

What colour is your brain?

10

Defining the role of senior leadership

With organisations today requiring a much more bottom-up approach, where does that leave senior leadership? Check out the four roles that senior leaders should play in an organisation.

11

How to become a better mentor

When done right, mentorship is an equally beneficial process for both parties involved. As a mentor, you can relish in the satisfaction of developing someone's career, while mentees gain an insider's perspective on what it means to be successful in a certain line of business.

13

Insights from Professor Dominique Turpin on *The Leaderonomics Show*

18

Helping children excel through character and values

An individual's leadership journey begins at a very young age and spans his or her entire life. Different elements at various periods contribute towards the individual becoming the leader they aspire to be, and it is during childhood and adolescence that a few key building blocks should be put in place for this journey to be a fruitful one.

20

Hunger for praise hinders success



By ROSHAN THIRAN

roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

"Don't only practise your art, but force your way into its secrets, for it and knowledge can raise men to the divine." – Beethoven

IN the spring of 1787, a young musical prodigy realised his dream of meeting the greatest living composer with the ambition to take lessons from the celebrated maestro.

"Play something," said the teacher to the student. As he began to play one of the teacher's own compositions, he was rebuked. "Anybody can play that. Play something of your own."

As the young musician finished his piece, the great composer went into the next room and excitedly told his wife, "Watch out for that boy. One day he will give the world something to talk about."

The composer was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and the young prodigy who had travelled to Vienna to meet the master was 16-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven.

Being beaten to greatness

Born in the German city of Bonn, Beethoven (1770-1827) was taught music by his father who was frequently brutal towards his son.

It's said that the child was often deprived of sleep and would be beaten for the slightest hesitation or mistake, even when he struggled to reach the keys of the clavier.

His father had very high standards and when drunk, would take it out on his son whom he expected to achieve levels unimaginable.

Today, we have many 'helicopter parents' who push their children like Beethoven's father did. Yet, it backfires, and children often quit the moment they get an opportunity or a say.

Why did Beethoven press on and persevere in spite of his father's abuses?

There is a key difference between perseverance and compulsion – Beethoven was driven by personal interest and the desire to be a great musician.

As parents and leaders, a key question we can ask when we push our children (or our employees) is if they share a deep passion and interest in the area or space they are being pushed in.

If they do, holding them to high standards activates and pushes them to greatness. If they were compelled, pushing them will only force them further away, and even rewards to keep practising will only have a temporary effect.

Beethoven had a father who may not have been a role model, but knew his son had a deep passion for music and set the bar high for him very early in life. This enabled him to set the bar high for himself later on in life.

Overcoming life's challenges

Quite early in his life, Beethoven had an interest in music. He somehow managed to convince the church organist to teach him how to play the organ for free.

At school, Beethoven struggled with literacy and numeracy. He withdrew from formal education at the age of 10 to study music full-time with the opera composer, Christian Gottlob Neefe, publishing his first composition at the age of 12.

Although he had ambitions to learn under Mozart, Beethoven left Vienna after only a few weeks, when he received word that his mother was ill. He would remain in Bonn for a few years, carving out a career as a rising court musician.

He did, however, manage to be pupiled by Mozart in his early twenties. In 1792, Beethoven returned to Vienna and became the pupil of Joseph Haydn, who was now considered the greatest living musician following Mozart's death a year earlier.

As I explored Beethoven's life, I found it very interesting how he was constantly learning. He had established early on in life that Mozart was the 'guru' he had to learn from and regardless of obstacles, he found a way to be his student.

Later, he pushed himself to learn from Haydn, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, Antonio Salieri and others. He relentlessly pursued continuous improvement and learning as his mantra, partly driven by his father's early push to keep practising and learning.

How many of us continuously push ourselves to bet-

Leadership Lessons from Ludwig van Beethoven



ter our craft and keep learning from others who are better than us? How many of us are like Beethoven, obsessed with learning from the best around us? Learning is the key to our growth and success, and Beethoven knew its importance.

Nothing like hard work

As Beethoven began his rise to prominence, his legendary personality became notorious throughout Vienna. He was known as having a strong personality and was often difficult to work with. He believed that creativity was not bound by time and so, was regularly late for appointments.

He also gave little thought to his appearance and was so sure of his greatness that he once wrote to a patron, Prince Lichnowsky, "*Prince, what you are, you are through chance and birth; what I am, I am through my own labour. There are many princes and there will continue to be thousands more, but there is only one Beethoven.*"

But part of Beethoven's arrogance was the deep belief he had due to his really hard work and drive. Many of his great feats, he achieved in dire straits.

He wrote the final act of *Fidelio*, the only opera he ever wrote, when he was extremely sick in bed. Later, his opera would be a disaster, with many complaining that it was way too long.

Beethoven took that feedback and shortened it – and it worked. He was a man who had the belief and arrogance of a genius but also took significant feedback and rework to remain a genius. That was a key essence of his success story and why he is the one and only.

The entrepreneur and disruptor

There is indeed only one Beethoven, whose famous works include his nine symphonies, *Moonlight Sonata*, *Fur Elise*, *Fidelio* (his only opera), and *Missa Solemnis*. Such was his talent and work rate, that he is said to have been the first entrepreneur in music.

Beethoven achieved great fame and decided to be a disruptor. Unlike his other colleagues who relied on the royal court for commissions, he started writing and selling his own music to publishers directly.

This set an important precedence for musicians, who would put their music directly to the people and, if it was popular, earn a lot of money. This was the 'Uber' of the music industry back then.

This change in direction for musicians gives a key insight into Beethoven's leadership qualities, the most prominent of all being the quality of believing in yourself.

Had he contented himself with living as a court musician, he would no doubt have led a comfortable life. However, Beethoven believed in his worth and knew he could reach far greater heights than any other composer who had gone before him.

Never giving up

Another of his key traits was perseverance in the face of adversity. As many people know, Beethoven began to lose his hearing and, at the age of 30, he acknowledged in a letter to a friend that his hearing had worsened steadily over the past three years of his life.

Although he could joke about his other health issues, the loss of his hearing sent Beethoven into despair – he was losing the very faculty that enabled him to work at his craft and to hear the sweet music coming back to him.

Despite his melancholy, the great composer worked tirelessly, producing some of his greatest works at a time when he struggled greatly with this ailment. In Vienna, his *Ninth Symphony* was performed in public for the first time on May 7, 1824.

Although Beethoven was present and acting as conductor for the orchestra, he could hear nothing, and an official conductor led the musicians instead.

A touching *Time* magazine article from 1932 notes, "He did not sense the applause which came afterwards until one of the soloists, a Fraulein Caroline Unger, turned him around so that his eyes could take it in. The music passed into the background then. The demonstration took a sudden, emotional turn as the people started shouting, beating their palms together still harder in an effort to assure the fierce-looking little man of their sympathy, their appreciation."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

FROM PAGE 3

The *Ninth Symphony* was said to have been “written inside his head” as he imagined the work and how it should sound. Although Beethoven despaired at losing his hearing, and while it took him some time to reveal the news to friends, he absolutely refused to allow his disability to restrict his genius.

In leadership, it can be easy to focus on problems that exist and fixate on what we’re unable to do because of them. Beethoven’s example shows us the importance of always looking towards what we can achieve, and to constantly push ourselves, regardless of our circumstances.

How about us? Do we let setbacks rule us? Do we give up when the going gets tough? We need to learn from Beethoven and overcome these setbacks and remain focused on achieving the vision we set for our lives.

Final thoughts

The accomplishments of Beethoven have been described as “superhuman feats of creative genius that stand on the outer limits of human achievement”. His approach to life was one that allowed him to accept his ailments and adjust to life accordingly.

Through his convictions, he offered everyone during his time – and beyond – the challenge to never dwell on what limits us, but rather to find new ways in which we can reach the outer limits of our own potential.

He was a disruptor and entrepreneur who loved what he did. His love for music drove him to achieve the impossible – being able to compose music while deaf.

Do we love what we do? If we are passionate about our dreams and goals and keep learning daily, relent-



lessly pushing ourselves, we may just overachieve as Beethoven did.

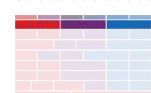


Roshan is the founder and CEO of the Leaderonomics Group. He believes we can learn from everyone and hopes others may go forward to make a difference in this world by learning daily like Beethoven did. To connect with Roshan and to receive daily leadership nuggets from him, head to his Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or Instagram profiles.

**Did You Know?**

One of Beethoven’s greatest piano works wasn’t named by the composer himself. *Piano Sonata No. 14* was renamed in 1832 – five years after

Beethoven’s death – by the German poet Ludwig Rellstab. He said that the first movement sounded like moonlight shining upon Lake Lucerne, and so the name *Moonlight Sonata* stuck.



PERFORMANCE CHARACTER What sets a person apart and earmarks them for success. These are the traits that take us the extra mile. This includes grit, self-control, optimism, curiosity. This is part of Leaderonomics’ **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one’s life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLP1 to find out more.

By GEORGE KOHLRIESER

editor@leaderonomics.com

MUCH of today’s leadership writing focuses on what high performing leaders should do. Certainly, that material helps from a theoretical and aspirational point of view.

However, what haunts leaders on a day-to-day basis are the mistakes that they make. They don’t trip up because they are bad people; they most often fumble because of a lack of knowledge, bad habits or too much stress.

The most common – and, not coincidentally, most damaging – mistakes involve interacting with people in the wrong way. Here are 10 such ‘people mistakes’ that I see in the field, and I’m sure you witness them too:

1 Not taking the time to bond with people

A leader who is not interested in people on a human level is off to a bad start. A leader who is conceptually interested in others but doesn’t make time to ‘bond’ with people, misses the mark as well – whether those people are employees, colleagues, customers, or other stakeholders.

Bonding is a deep emotional connection that is different from simply liking someone. In fact, you do not have to like people to bond with them. You do have to get to know them and understand what makes them tick. And that takes time above and beyond pure task-oriented work.

2 Being unavailable and inaccessible

Clearly, leaders need to delegate tasks. Yet, delegation should not mean emotional detachment. Leaders who assign tasks and walk away with a completely hands-off approach, abandon their people. Good delegation relies on continued connection and accessibility.

You can maintain a sense of connection by signalling that you are willing to be available. That doesn’t mean that you’re immediately responsive to every small request. It does mean that you’ve created channels for people to reach you as well as guidelines for using those channels.

3 Not focusing on developing talent

Too often, leaders focus exclusively on driving the achievement of company goals. In their efforts to do this, they deny the inherent human need to learn. People want to expand their skills and

‘People Mistakes’ Leaders Make



competencies while doing their work. Understand that learning is an integral part of achieving results.

When you prioritise learning, you become a great leader who can spot and develop talent in people who might themselves be unaware of it. You become, quite simply, a talent hunter.

4 Not giving regular feedback about performance

People achieve high performance only if they know the truth about their effectiveness. Leaders often ignore this need and thereby rob people of the key to their future.

While tough feedback can be painful, great leaders know how to deliver this pain in a way that transforms it to such an extent that they say, “Thank you – give me more!”

Talented people – those who want to learn – would rather be ‘slapped in the face with the truth than kissed on the cheek with a lie’. Develop your ability to convey hard truths about performance and unlock the door to higher performance.

5 Not taking emotions into account

The strongest emotions are related to loss, disappointment, failure, and separation. In fact, research clearly shows that loss and even the fear of anticipated loss drives people’s behaviour much more strongly than potential benefits and rewards.

Leaders who ignore the emotions of loss and disappointment make a major mistake that greatly reduces employee engagement. You can make a huge difference simply by being aware of these emotions and

showing true interest in that part of a person’s experience.

6 Managing conflict ineffectively

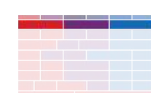
Conflicts that are not addressed block cooperation and alignment around common goals. Tension, negative emotions, and polarisation build up. Conflicts become ‘fishes under the table’ even though everyone acts like they are not there, their abiding ‘smell’ permeates the whole atmosphere.

It’s up to you as a leader to put these fishes on the table and ‘clean them’ by solving the underlying conflict. Your reward: a great fish dinner at the end of the day – an environment that provides nourishing enjoyment and can build even better and stronger teams.

Do you find yourself slipping up in these areas? There are four more mistakes that leaders tend to make – for the full list, head to: bit.ly/peoplemistakesGK



George Kohlrieser is a Professor of Leadership and Organisational Behaviour at IMD, a former hostage negotiator, and an award-winning author. He loves spending time in Malaysia and looks forward to helping more organisations in Malaysia develop high performance leaders. To contact George for his special leadership programmes, email info@leaderonomics.com.



DEVELOPING BASIC LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES There is a big range of competencies that fall under this. Some key ones are decision making, driving change, bonding with others, attention to quality and excellence. Developing these and many more is a process that takes significant time and refining over the years. This is part of Leaderonomics’ **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one’s life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLP1 to find out more.



By **SHERRIE CAMPBELL**
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE two biggest things people search for are simple: the desire to be happy and the desire to feel satisfied with life.

To attain these goals and to achieve great satisfaction in your life and career, consider working to incorporate within yourself these 10 simple qualities:

1 Be authentic

Be yourself. Let the results of your life reflect your readiness to express your personal freedom. Take care to exercise your own ideas, your free will, and independence.

Live from your individual uniqueness and the willingness to be different from others.

Your authenticity is that place within you that is true and secure enough to withstand the destructive external negative pressures that often come from life and business.

When you are true to yourself and passionate about your life, you choose to see choice rather than challenge.

Your true essence is not set up on false pretences because whatever paths you choose in life, personal and professional, are completely congruent with who you are.

2 Be truthful

There is nothing of greater significance to offer your life or business than honesty. To understand why being truthful is important, question how anyone, including yourself, ever benefits from dishonesty.

The one thing you cannot afford to lose is your reputation. Once that is lost due to dishonesty, it may be impossible to recover.

Living from the truth allows you to build relationships based on trust between you and your loved ones, colleagues, competitors, staff and customers.

Those around you become energised by your honesty, compelling them to continue in their business and personal relationship with you going forward.

3 Challenge yourself

In order to make the most of your life and career, challenge yourself. You cannot fulfil even a fraction of your dreams by sticking to the comfortable and secure – where there is security. There is nothing there forcing you to rise to the occasion of maximising your potential.

Challenge yourself to always pursue those goals that will stretch you. You have to have that ‘thing’ that makes you set out to achieve those goals – that elusive ‘thing’ which propels you to engage in life in ways that you wouldn’t if you remained secure and comfortable.

The more you challenge yourself and flourish, the greater your confidence becomes to challenge yourself yet again. Challenges not only help you grow in skill and knowledge, they help you develop your belief in your capacity.

4 Put love first

The most significant people in your life are those who genuinely feel for and worry about you. These are the individuals who will always be there when you have been disappointed by the world.

The people who love and accept you despite your mistakes and weaknesses, and do not need you to be different, are those who bring the most value to your world. They help refuel your belief in yourself when you cannot.

There is no amount of financial gain that could substitute for the love these individuals offer you. They bring a sense of connectedness and belonging which serves to make your life happier and more fulfilling.

Those who do not value their loved ones are less well-rounded, less happy, and less motivated and successful in life. Do not let this be you.

5 Be thoughtful

Treat all of those you interact with, with a sense of dignity and value. When you can make another person feel significant, he/she will be motivated to maintain that feeling. Being thoughtful of others does not make you a pushover.

Thoughtfulness is that high-level quality of being

Achieving Professional and Personal Satisfaction



emotionally intelligent in all your exchanges. When you treat others with openness and respect, you have a calm power to stay rational and present in your communications.

Keep in mind that anger is never useful in relationships, personal or professional, as it is nearly impossible to respect an angry person. Anger doesn’t wear intelligently on anyone.

6 Be a good human being

Be mindful of others in the ways you expect others to be mindful of you. Practise tolerance and acceptance to bring a sense of peace to your life and world at large.

Let go of small-mindedness, bigotry, the belittling of others and self-righteousness.

Tolerance is an essential quality to possess. Think about who you are in the global world, or in the wholeness of life, and what you want your personal impact to be.

Strive to be that bigger person. Be open-minded to learning from all types of people and their differing beliefs, as you never know what type of person holds your next biggest opportunity in his/her hands.

7 Practise patience

Knowing the difference between patience and waiting is key to a successful life and career. Patience is not about waiting. Waiting is ‘actionless’. When you practise patience, you never stop working toward your dreams even when you do not yet see results.

If you are ‘waiting’ without working, you have stopped. When you are passionate, there is no limit to the amount of work you will do if you see it as bringing you closer to your goals.

Patience means believing enough in what you have set out to achieve to keep going.

8 Live your dreams

Do not just follow your dreams, live them. Make each wish a manifested destiny. Work to make your dreams reality, with consistency, precision, and commitment.

Living your dreams is the stuff a well-lived life is made of. What you pursue passionately will bring you a life full of vitality, excitement, and the joy that you deserve.

Your dreams and passions bring deeper meaning to

your life and to the lives of others. When you live your dreams, you become inspiring. You instil in others the belief that if it is possible for you, then it can also be possible for them.

9 Have a grateful heart

When you have a grateful heart, your positive emotions become stronger, decreasing the negative emotional experiences of envy, victimisation and jealousy.

Gratitude makes your memories more positive and is a great catalyst in helping you to bounce back quickly from stress.

Gratitude helps you achieve life and career goals, making both your personal and professional lives more loving, productive and enjoyable places to be for you and everyone you touch.

10 Remain humble

Commit to working quietly and allowing your success to do the talking. Humility is based on internal reflection. Yet, when it comes to choosing where to focus your time and energy, it is all about other people for you.

In being humble, you are not being self-centred or worrying about your image; you have the courage to risk and try new things. You are not compelled to try to be perfect, because you are not stuck on expectations. This frees you from the paralysis of fearing failure as your main concern.

When you are humble, you approach life with openness and flexibility. You are not afflicted by the search for happiness or success for yourself alone, because your main focus is not about trying to be either successful or happy.

Instead, you are caught up in projects, passions, people, and things you consider bigger and more important than yourself, and from this, you end up with more happiness and success as a simple by-product.

In conclusion

The surest path to becoming happy and successful in life is in helping others to achieve the happiness and success they desire.

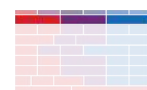
To experience happiness and that deep sense of well-being and satisfaction with who you are, what you are doing, and who you still desire to become, you must contemplate daily what it means to be authentic.

You must be committed and deliberate in your search to challenge yourself, to face fears, to be good to others and to be the conscious creator of the wholeness of your overall life experience.

■ This article was previously published in print.



Sherrie Campbell is a psychologist in California with two decades of clinical training and experience in providing counselling and psychotherapy services. She is the author of *Loving Yourself: The Mastery of Being Your Own Person*. Connect with her at editor@leaderonomics.com.



DEVELOP VISION FOR SELF AND A CLEAR SENSE OF PURPOSE Having a future-oriented picture of the end-result, as a goal to work towards. This is part of Leaderonomics’ *Science of Building Leaders*, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one’s life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

By **PADMINI JANAKI**
editor@leaderonomics.com

A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could. – Zig Ziglar

MENTORS are important as they are able to share their experiences and guide you through the phases of your career and the challenges that come with it. However, it can be difficult to identify who would be a suitable mentor for you.

First of all, if your mentor only tells you that you are fantastic, it's time to find other mentors. Your mentor should puncture your ego every single time you're wrong.

A mentor should be constantly throwing you in situations that help you realise the reality of things, but also motivate you at the same time. If they're only nice to you, call them your best friend and not your mentor.

We meet leaders, peers, managers, gurus and heads everywhere, but not everyone is suitable to be your mentor – or rather, not everyone is ready to spend time listening to you.

Nevertheless, many people are genuinely interested in other people's success; your success story starts when you find them and carefully nurture the relationship. Let's take a look at the types of mentors and how to pick one.

1 'Best me' mentors

This would be someone who is one or two levels higher than your grade, who can tell you when to stop and when to just pause; someone who has been in your situation and done what you do today. They help in getting new ideas, and you always take home something constructive from a conversation with them.

This mentor should be someone who can help in the betterment of **today** and someone you aspire to be

Identifying the Right Mentor for You



tomorrow. You may consider this person the best version of you.

Remember, you become whom you spend time with.

2 'What's next' mentors

You will find these mentors if you're clear about where you see yourself in two to three years. You feel a spark when you talk to them; you love listening to them and feel like noting down every single point they say in a conversation, and you can share your career plans and next actions with them.

I prefer having this type of mentor outside of the company I work in, so that they can bring in new perspectives and standards into my work and help me understand where I stand.

3 'Insight' mentors

A thought leader is another type of mentor, someone who can give you direction and a 360-degree view. In general, these people are

matured, experienced, genuinely interested in your success, and committed to your growth. They can give you advice about life and help you make the best career, as well as personal decisions.

People in this category are very busy, so these mentors need professional handling. I send calendar invites and set meetings only when there is an agenda worth the discussion.

Final thoughts

Few people get what they want because they don't ask for it. When you went through the three categories above, I am sure three different people popped into your mind. Now, it's time to shamelessly ask them to be your 'board members' – after all, what's the worst that is going to happen?

However, do not forget that mentorship is all about 'give and take'. We should never be super-selfish and only think about extracting and receiving good things from the mentor.

This relationship is never transactional, and consideration for your mentor's growth is equally essential to help keep the mentoring relationship healthy.



Padmini Janaki is a product manager. Passionate about causes for women, she is the chapter lead for Women In Product. Padmini has also founded an NGO for poor single mothers. Have you ever had a mentor who changed your life, and if so, how did you meet them? Let us know at editor@leaderonomics.com.



JAMIE ANDREW

Leading from The Edge

Despite losing his hands and his feet in a climbing accident at the age of 29, Jamie Andrew has achieved the seemingly impossible: running marathons, completing an Ironman triathlon, skiing, snowboarding, sailing, and of course mountain climbing.

Jamie has inspired people across more than 30 countries through his 13 years of speaking experience where he tells his story with great passion, sincerity, and humour.

As a regular presenter for The International Institute of Management Development in Switzerland on several programmes, including the hugely popular High Performance Leadership course, Jamie uses his experiences as a mountaineer in relation to principles of successful business practice. His sessions are gripping, inspiring, and uplifting – addressing the following topics:

**LEADERSHIP | MANAGING CHANGE | RESILIENCE |
MOTIVATION | GOAL SETTING | TEAMWORK |
ACCEPTING CHALLENGE**

Book a session with Jamie Andrew for your organisation today!

Available dates: 28 March – 8 April 2019

By **AMANDA CHUA**
 editor@leaderonomics.com

"For many of us, our fathers show us by the example they set, the kind of people they want us to become. Whether biological, foster, or adoptive, they teach us through the encouragement they give, the questions they answer, the limits they set, and the strength they show in the face of difficulty and hardship. Our fathers impart lessons and values we will always carry with us. With their presence and their care, they not only fulfil a profound responsibility, but also share a blessing with their children that stands among our truest traditions."

– **Barack Obama, former President of the United States**

THAT was Obama's Presidential Proclamation speech on Father's Day in 2012. As his quote suggests, a father's influence is subtle but powerful.

All children bear their father's traits in one way or another, being profoundly influenced by their fathers whether positively or negatively.

"The child is the father of the man", wrote William Wordsworth in his poem *My Heart Leaps Up*, which indicates that our formative years as a child shape the character of our tomorrows as an adult. This is true for us not only as individuals but also in our leadership capability.

Fathers and father figures play a vital role in bringing strength and stability to the home. They shape our lives, giving permission to step out of our comfort zones that form our secure base, autonomy, and independence as adults.

Dr Meg Meeker, author of *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, wrote: "A father has authority with a capital A." She is a firm believer that a father's influence plays a vital role in the development of women.

"From the first years of a girl's life her father is larger than life. She looks up to him, and for the rest of her life she craves his admiration, his respect, and his affection."

In a *Forbes* article, she wrote that the reciprocal exchange of admiration, respect, and affection present in a father-daughter relationship is the recipe for successful women.

I, for one, had the privilege of having an amazing father and, growing up, I never doubted the love my dad had for me. Although he is no longer with us today, his influence is still so profound.

Here are some of the leadership lessons I learnt from my late father that I continue to use to this day.

Grit, drive and ambition

My dad was a driven man. He came from a lower income family without having much in his early years. But his ambition to see the world and to break out of the cycle of poverty was his driving motivation.

After graduating from high school, he sold insurance to make ends meet. However, it was only when my mother pushed him to pursue his dream to study overseas that he saw a real kickstart to his career.

Studying both his degree and MBA in Hawaii while juggling two part-time jobs within two years was a major feat, partly due to the limited financial assistance his family could afford to give him.

After graduating, *carpe diem* was his motto where he lived every day, seizing every opportunity to go for training overseas and taking up regional roles that required him to travel frequently.

He climbed the corporate ladder quickly, thanks to his strong work ethic that led to people around him establishing him as a top leader.

My dad's sheer grit and tenacity still inspire me to this day in my own career.

The people's leader

Despite his success, he remained a caring people's leader. His wake service was filled with not only his friends, family, and loved ones, but his present and ex-colleagues who had great things to say about him as a boss, colleague and friend.

His life was never about himself but how others would be blessed by his giving. An immediate subordinate of his gave a eulogy on how my father not only managed to turn around a company within two years, but kept the entire staff together and cheered them on

Paternal Wisdom: Lessons from My Late Father

to boost their spirits even in those challenging times. "Celebrate the small wins" was the mantra he used to boost his team's morale.

That is one of the many things I have learnt from him – to have that spirit of encouragement and positivity, seeing the silver lining in every cloud. I am proud to hear that, as successful as he was in his career, he also made an impact in the lives of others.

Love through giving and sacrifice

As much as my father was a busy man, he never failed to put his family as a priority. I remember when I was growing up, he would not only shower us with gifts every time he came back from his travels, but he would never hesitate to give us what we needed.

He was always giving without expecting anything in return. He would go to great lengths to help his friends in need, even if it meant personal losses. Yet, he never let those experiences dampen his spirit of generosity.

Being the sole breadwinner in the family, he worked hard to provide us with the very best, including sending all four of his children overseas to study and giving us a comfortable life.

I remember at one time, we had to make the difficult decision of whether or not to move the family overseas. My father said that he was willing to stay behind in Malaysia, alone, to continue earning money so that his children could have a better education living in a foreign country.

That is where I learnt that leadership is sacrifice. As John Maxwell quoted: "The heart of good leadership is sacrifice." As much as I was thankful to enjoy the love and sacrifice my father showed over the years, I am even more grateful to learn the value of giving and sacrifice from my father early on.

I now find that very relevant in my own career, as I lead teams and take up leadership positions.

Servant leadership

My father was a humble man and epitomised the concept of servant leadership. Despite his accolades, he never boasted about them. He would only speak of his children, his family, and their achievements.

He would be thoughtful in knowing what we needed without asking for it, from servicing our cars and pumping petrol, to blending fresh juice every morning, chauffeuring us around, and running errands for us.

He would do them without complaining. He enjoyed serving people and expressing his care through acts of kindness without expecting anything in return.

He was a man of integrity. He always taught us to do what was right, and to never compare ourselves with others, but to be excellent and honest in everything we do. He even had a quote in his study that said, "Your work is a portrait of who you are, autographed with excellence."

These servant leadership traits are principles I hold dear as a leader today. From sacrificing his time and himself to humbly serve others out of love, I learnt from my father that leadership is not about position, perks and power. It is about how you influence and give up your own right and lead through giving.

Build camaraderie and togetherness

My father was a true family man who took every opportunity to spend time with us as a family on the weekends and take us for family holidays.

My favourite memory of Dad was him making a hearty breakfast for us every Sunday morning. He took delight in cooking for us every week so that we could have them just in time before going to church.

You see, he was not just doing that out of love for his family, but he believed strongly in creating rituals to bring the family together. Forming rituals is applicable even in organisations to create the bond and camaraderie

to bring everyone together and work better as a team.

With a united team, we can get through anything. In my career, I have emphasised unity to the people around me and the ones I lead. With togetherness, not only do we form a strong formidable force to overcome challenges ahead of us, it also makes the journey better.

Following my father's footsteps

A father's influence is one of the major factors that shapes one's career path, especially for women.

In a 2009 study from the University of Maryland, it was revealed that women were three times more likely to follow in their father's career footsteps and go into their father's business.

The increase is due to the changing economic role of women in the world today. With women comprising 50 per cent of the workforce, fathers are now spending more time with their children – greatly impacting the role of fathers in their children's lives.

Experts say that a 'father's love' plays a significant role in children's development to help them make sense of their place in the world. This trend leaves a positive impact and it is not surprising to hear of how daughters often eclipse their fathers' careers.

I am a personal example of this as, when it comes to pursuing my dreams, Dad was the one who encouraged me to study psychology and pursue my passion in leadership development.

Dad was the general manager of a large regional bank, and he organised frequent team building and management retreats for his department. Hence, I was exposed to training and leadership development at a very young age, with Dad bringing me along his company retreats, field trips, and visits to factories to learn the ins and outs of other businesses better.

The exposure I had growing up piqued my interest in learning and leadership development, and led me to work for Leaderonomics.

The first leader

They say that the first leader you know and emulate is your own father. Obama believes that fathers bear a fundamental duty and major role in their children's lives.

In 2009, he wrote: "Show your children, by example, the kind of people you want them to become." He praised his daughters Malia and Sasha, then 11 and eight, who were following their father's footsteps by being actively involved in community service projects and impacting the people around them.

My father is an inspiration and has had a tremendous impact on my life.

His influence shaped me and I am proud to say that my passion to develop leaders is because of him. He was a leader who I greatly admired, and I am who I am because of who he was and by the way he lived his life.

Just as how others speak well of him and are touched by his love and leadership, I aspire to carry on that remarkable legacy that he left behind.

Dad, thank you for teaching us how to love and lead sacrificially, unreservedly, fervently and faithfully. May your legacy live on.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose. – Jim Elliot



Amanda Chua would like to dedicate this article and her successes to her father, Chua Jim Boon. Just as she was inspired by her dad, she hopes that his life story continues to touch lives and inspire others to live a life well-lived. Get in touch with her by emailing editor@leaderonomics.com.

By LILY LAU

editor@leaderonomics.com

IMAGINE two computers, a Mac and a PC (Windows). Both can run Microsoft Excel and Adobe Photoshop (graphic software), yet you cannot run software designed for one type of computer on the other. Both programmes have a slightly different look and feel to them.

Additionally, Excel runs faster on a PC and is a bit slower on a Mac, but Adobe Photoshop runs far faster on a Mac than a PC.

Similarly, there are people who like mathematics and will excel in the subject, and others who do not like the subject but force themselves to learn it to fulfil some exam or entry requirement.

Which category are you?

Those who love mathematics will find the subject fascinating because their brains are genetically wired to make the subject appear easy.

The second group of people – where mathematics is not their strength – take a longer time (and added effort) to grasp the subject (like running Adobe Photoshop on a PC). They however, may excel in the field of creative arts, as their brains are wired differently.

The Directive Communication™ system organises the different ‘types of brains’ into colour classifications based on their genetic neuro-processing which is responsible for the way people experience their environments, absorb information, and interpret them.

This results in specific ways of perceiving and evaluating events, situations, and even the development of ideas.

Types of coloured brain processors

Green Brain – Random or chaotic processing

People with a Green Brain are forward-moving. They process their overall surroundings and see the ‘bigger picture’. Their thinking is non-linear in random chunks, so they can only fully concentrate on one situation at a time.

As a **Green Brain leader**, you are action driven and like to get things going. When working in a team, Green Brain people like interaction in the form of sharing and tossing ideas around.

They can come up with creative approaches and see things on a broader perspective. However, they cannot give you details unless they are deliberately asked to do so.

They are good at getting things started but may have difficulty following through. They are perceived to be impatient due to their nature of getting things done at a rapid pace.

Red Brain – Linear processing

Clarity is power to the Red Brain. They have to maintain a clear sense of purpose.

They are precise in their communication and process facts in a logical way which allow them to detach themselves from situations and be extremely objective.

As a **Red Brain leader**, you are structured and your style is to create frameworks and policies. You have a clear sense of direction and you tend to think long-term, looking and planning way ahead into the future.

You think things through before speaking and do well in accomplishing goals and objectives. As a result, you will only take calculated risks and action upon thorough analysis.

Blue Brain – Intuitive processing

Blue Brain people are emotional and they process and communicate through their feelings. They are versatile, flexible, and are capable of playing many roles. They have a strong sense of personal connection which makes them highly relational and empathetic.

As a **Blue Brain leader**, you are all about caring and sharing. You perform well in roles that require you to interact with other people. You are great at resolving people issues and are a natural organiser.

For personal communication, you are intuitive and can often address organisational insensitivities with positive results.

Purple Brain – Relational processing

Information is king to the Purple Brain. Their style of processing requires them to absorb a lot of information

What Coloured Brain Leader Are You?

How we are wired influences our communication style



in order to take appropriate action.

Their mind is connected through data and they need the details to give them a safe sense of direction. They are key in operational functions and are very practical in their applications.

As a **Purple Brain leader**, you are meticulous with details and are organised in nature. You accumulate data even for future use.

To get things done, you need considerable context in a hands-on environment and sufficient time to assimilate the information garnered. You excel in developmental areas involving systems or operations.

Your ability to plan and observe details are applied in practical solutions to problems and improvement of situations.

Why should leaders be aware of their brain ‘colour’?

As a leader, you have your own way and style of doing things. You also have strengths and weaknesses. Awareness of the colour of your brain gives you the means to maximise your capacity to act intelligently.

In other words, to turbo charge your natural gifts and use them to maximise your ability to develop the ‘software’ in your brain and create greater competence across many disciplines.

It allows us to understand others at a deeper level and unleash potential for better teamwork, greater harmony, and cooperation regardless of the environment we are in.

As a leader in your organisation, department, or team, your brain ‘colour’ dictates your nature and the culture of your working environment.

Say for example, you are the head of your department and you fall in the Green Brain category and you have three subordinates who fall in the Red, Blue, and Purple Brain categories, respectively.

How is your communication affected?

Being Green, you love tossing ideas. You like to brainstorm and bounce off ideas and get feedback. You probably get excited and go out of agenda, which in your opinion is still valid. You bring up an idea that came to you last night and your team is just hearing about it.

In your team, the Red Brain will feel that he is wasting time discussing something that he is unprepared for and does not lead to a conclusion. As result, he does not participate actively in the discussion.

The Purple Brain may feel lost for not having sufficient information to share since the agenda was impromptu. He is also unable to contribute effectively.

The Blue Brain may feel that his boss’ last minute change of idea is insincere and may lose trust.

As a result, the meeting may not be as productive as the Green Brain boss intends it to be. The outcome can create unwarranted frustration, unnecessary tension, and possibly, conflicts.

Developing ‘communication flexibility’ as you climb the ranks

Brain flexibility helps you to communicate and



Key Characteristics in Summary

Green Random/Chaotic Processing	Red Linear Processing	Blue Intuitive Processing	Purple Relational Processing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing is connected• Must act to understand• Need feedback• See big picture• Find alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need clarity• Must see objective• See logic• Must analyze• Find structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everything is connected• Feel environment• Insightful of surroundings• Multi-tasking• Intuitive of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must have information• All data is linked• Need details• Find system• Find options

© Directive Communication™ / Arthur F. Carmazzi

build better rapport with others. The main genetic foundation of our brain communication does not change, but as we develop through our environment, we acquire flexibility in the way we use our genetic processor.

Just like writing software for a PC or Mac processor to accomplish a specific task, you can write software for your genetic brain processor.

Yet, you may find it challenging to be creative, analytical, systematic, or more sensitive towards others. Here is where awareness sets precedence to effortlessly accelerate the process.

Taking the example of the Green Brain leader again: If he gets promoted and is aware of his strengths and weaknesses, he learns to think things through before taking action.

He would probably do a little homework and gather some points for discussion. He may also send out the agenda and give time for his team to assimilate the information.

He can also list out the framework and guidelines to assist the team, for a fruitful discussion. By consciously doing this, he gains some control over the outcome of his impending discussion and can expect a fruitful and effective brainstorming session.

Knowledge of ‘coloured brains’ helps us to understand one’s behaviour and raises our expectation to create more intelligent actions and reduce stress.

The Green Brain boss will become more prepared instead of being spontaneous. He accepts his team members’ strengths and as a strategy to develop talent management, he should capitalise on the strengths of each team member based on their capacities and capabilities.

This understanding also helps minimise misunderstandings and increases teamwork and productivity.

■ This article was previously published in print.



Lily Lau is a trainer and faculty of Leaderonomics. She aims to inspire people to reach their potential through self-discovery of personal talents. She is master certified for directive communication psychology and has conducted many training sessions on this topic. To engage Leaderonomics for your organisation’s training needs, email info@leaderonomics.com.



Rewire Your Brain

7 ways to become a better leader

By **JESSE LYN STONER**
editor@leaderonomics.com

OVER the last few decades, studies in neuroscience have shown that you can literally, physically rewire your brain. You can change the 'default network' you were born with, the one that ensured the survival of our primitive ancestors who lived in a very different world.

Our 'fight-flight' reaction and strong memory for painful experiences are hardwired from birth. Our brains detect negative information faster than positive information and are drawn to bad news.

This hardwiring is further reinforced as we grow up because our negative experiences leave an indelible trace in our brain. The brain continues to learn and change itself throughout our life.

The good news is we are capable of over-riding our primitive reactions that don't serve us well, and creating new neural pathways that reduce stress and irritability, and generate more happiness and wisdom in our lives.

These seven practices create incremental, accumulative changes in the neural structure of your brain and can improve the effectiveness of your leadership and the quality of your life.

1 If someone in your team disappoints you or lets the team down, allow your feelings to dissipate before you say or do anything.

Pay attention to what you are feeling without reacting further until it dissipates. This is to limit the amount of epinephrine and cortisol stress hormones released by your brain.

Acting out when you are upset creates a temporary discharge, but ultimately prolongs your stress because eventually, you will need to deal with the fall-out from your behaviour.

Some people think the solution is to cut off their feelings. However, this is also only a temporary solution as your feelings go underground and continue to drive you unconsciously.

2 If you feel angry, hurt or annoyed, don't overlay meaning onto it.

We don't think rationally when feeling a strong negative emotion. Instead, we draw conclusions that reinforce our negative views.

Sweeping generalisations like, "He can't be trusted because he always let us down" or "She really doesn't really care about our team and our work" reinforces the current neural pathways.

Rational thought will be more quickly available if you allow yourself to stay with the feeling without making assumptions about what the event means. Wait until the feeling has passed before you analyse what it means or decide what you will do.

3 If you are in a tense meeting, check your breathing.

When feeling tense, notice if your breathing is shallow. Activate your calming parasympathetic nervous system by taking a few long breaths, inhaling deeply and slowly exhaling.

4 If you find yourself replaying an upsetting scenario in your mind, stop.

If reviewing a scenario does not bring insight or resolution, don't keep replaying it in your mind. You are reinforcing negative neural pathways.

Instead, create a new pathway by associating it with a positive memory. When the unpleasant memory arises, recall a similar experience where you experienced success or recall an experience with someone who appreciated you.

This will gradually infuse the disturbing memory with a positive feeling. The memory won't go away, but the strong bite will.

5 Choose words and actions that benefit others.

The more you consciously choose actions and words that benefit others, the further your prefrontal cortex develops. This is the part

of your brain that sets goals, makes plans, shapes emotions and that enables you to override your primitive instincts.

Compassion for others, and for yourself, is the motivating force that drives the desire to benefit others. When you are having difficulty feeling compassionate, remember someone for whom you do feel compassion, perhaps a child or someone you love.

This memory will increase your oxytocin (associated with blissful closeness and love) and your ability to access compassion more fully.

6 Savour your positive experiences.

Positive things are happening all the time, but our brain is wired to focus on the negative. We notice something positive and then, our attention quickly shifts away.

Counteract that by consciously paying attention to the small things like the smile of someone who passes you, the taste of your breakfast, or the beauty of a sunset.

Extending your attention to pleasant experiences increases your level of the neurotransmitter dopamine and your ability to control your attention.

7 Focus your attention on what is happening in the present moment.

Your brain learns from what you attend to. The best way to shape new neural circuits is to stay present with whatever is arising in your awareness. It is only in the present moment that we experience real happiness, love and wisdom.



Jesse Lyn is a business consultant and co-author with Ken Blanchard of the international bestseller Full Steam Ahead: Unleash the Power of Vision. She is the founder of Seapoint Center for Collaborative Leadership, which hosts her leadership blog. Get in touch with her by emailing editor@leaderonomics.com.

What's the Role of Senior Leadership?

By **JOHN FEATHERBY**
editor@leaderonomics.com

GIVEN that 21st century organisations require a much more bottom-up approach, where does that leave the senior leadership?

At its most basic, the role of management will be about adding value to its employees, but most status quo organisations have employees serving bosses, not bosses serving employees. Furthermore, 21st century organisations will ask their employees to define what value managers can add.

As such, management roles will only survive if they can demonstrate that they can offer something teams won't (be able to) do themselves.

Here is a list of four roles that could remain (or become) a vital part of a senior leader's existence. Together, these roles allow leaders to 'curate the context' for a more human way to work. By this, we mean they are a vibrant source of example and energy for the organisation, replacing *control* of employees with *service* for them.

1 Curating a personal context – what behaviour (internal and external) is important for a new era executive?

a) Personal nourishment

If organisations are to confront the lack of humanity in the system, then senior leaders must address it in themselves. This means scheduling time to invest in their whole selves: mind, body and soul.

This will be one of their most challenging tasks in a demanding personal and professional schedule that has probably spiralled out of control. But without this, asking employees to bring their whole selves to work will be seen as an inauthentic performance ploy. What's more, leaders will need the rest, energy and identity that investing in oneself provides.

b) Personal purpose

We need to connect employees' personal purpose with that of their organisation. Senior leadership is not exempt from this. If they're going to ask employees to find more meaning at work, then they must begin by finding their own.

c) Moral courage

Things are improving, but moral courage has long been absent from the boardroom. This is a senior leader's toughest yet most important role.

d) Living by example

We're not expecting senior leaders to be perfect – we're all human. But if they want positive change to take hold, they must apply it all personally – to walk the talk.

In particular, this means being willing to shift the tone and language of their organisations to something more intentionally authentic, honest and emotional. To show vulnerability. To act with humility. To seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

All the relational traits that we value in relationships outside the workplace are not only now relevant in the workplace, they are necessary. We can't hope to build relational organisations if we aren't prepared to engage with all the aspects that real, committed relationships involve.

2 Curating a classic context – which executive duties will remain similar?

a) Providing clarity

Senior leaders will have to make the constant effort to clearly communicate information such as: what they require from the organisation, how they see the outside world, what the boundaries are, what business they're in and where their organisation's social license to operate comes from.

b) Final say

Having a more equitable working environment where employees find genuine freedom does not mean senior leadership loses its voice. If the norm is, say,

85/15 in their favour, we're not suggesting a reversal or anything below 50/50 – 51/49? That may well be the case, but senior leadership has a high-level perspective that others don't – and that protects their right to have the final say.

c) Organisation structure

Senior leadership is responsible for deciding how the organisation should be structured. Their broad perspective of the ecosystem which the organisation inhabits, and the marketplaces it forms a part of, give them this authority.

d) Setting boundaries

Senior leadership can set boundaries for what or who the organisation is involved with, which includes setting limitations to the services and products. This is an area where moral courage may frequently be called upon: what markets they are going to be part of, what pricing strategies are they going to pursue, etc.

e) Thinking and dreaming

This is massive. Too many senior leaders have become over-absorbed in problem-solving and the day-to-day operations, and accepting too great a management burden has come at the cost of thinking and dreaming. Distributing authority should make room for what really matters – thinking about what matters!

3 Curating a redesigned context – how can an executive facilitate change, away from the status quo and toward a more human way to work?

a) Redistributing privilege

For freedom to work within an organisation, senior leadership must redistribute the privileges and protections they enjoy.

b) Reimagining functions

Whole departments – particularly finance and human resources – need to be totally reimagined in freedom-centred workplaces; this is a big task that is loaded with emotional and practical challenges.

c) Dismantling bureaucracy

From finding processes that slow things down, to considering the impact of predict-and-control and management-by-objectives, to talking to stakeholders about where life could be improved and piloting new ideas... there's a lot to unravel and rethink.

d) Rules for redesigning

Building more human workplaces is a redesign effort which touches on some of the most sensitive elements of an organisation. It is therefore important that senior leadership applies some limitations, even temporary ones, to ensure change does not get sidelined by politics.

For example, early in the change process, a senior leader may decide not to fiddle with the remuneration system. This kind of control is, arguably, close to the status quo way of operating but it can be an effective way to prevent change from being derailed early on.

e) Social contracts

Social contracts are the (often unspoken) agreements we make in our relationships. For example, employees show loyalty by doing whatever they're asked but expect the boss to fight their corner with the organisation in return. In freedom workplaces, these social contracts need verbalising and intentional redefining.

f) Reshaping rewards

Organisations need to move from a rewards-based to a more recognition-based system. Behavioural science tells us financial reward is not the prime motivator we have long thought it to be – meaning is.

Senior leadership needs to recognise this and rethink incentivisation. This is not about paying people less. If anything, it's probably about paying most of the people in the organisation more. Either way, it does involve re-evaluating the wisdom and application of performance pay.

g) Information distribution

If organisations are like gardens, then information is

like water. The status quo hordes it as a power play. Senior leaders must find ways to increase and broaden the level of transparency.

4 Curating a new context – what are the day-to-day duties of a new era executive?

a) Doing the work

Senior leadership has become so distracted by the need to manage (not lead) that they've stopped doing the actual work. Nobody within any organisation should spend their entire time managing other people; everyone, whatever their position, should also do some of the core work on a fairly regular basis.

b) Offer clarity on what, not how

This is the main point where the boundary-setting role of senior leaders end and the employees start to take over. To do so, business units must constantly 'purchase' the freedom they desire with promises to commit to the organisation's guiding principles and a set of outcomes.

In return, senior leadership remains a key architect of what those outcomes are – not *how* the units are expected to get there, but certainly as a contributor to *where* they're expected to go.

c) Focusing efforts

The role here is not so much to illuminate what's going on within the organisation, but more to apply a spotlight on what to focus on: choosing (with guidance) what to change, how to resource it and where to begin. This does not mean they articulate how to solve problems – senior leadership needs to get far better at highlighting issues without feeling the need to instruct on how to solve them.

d) Co-mentorship

Senior leaders should consider rethinking the traditional mentorship model and place themselves into co-mentorship relationships. Mentorship perpetuates the teacher-student relationship – we want to try and break that down.

e) Offer access to commercial literacy

Employees are woefully underprepared for the working world, let alone something with more responsibility and accountability. We can't expect the average employee to leap into a heightened level of decision-making authority without furnishing them with the tools to do so.

That we have kept so many employees uninformed about the reality of running an organisation illustrates the lack of shared purpose and endeavour within an organisation, and the loneliness and exhaustion that is rife within the ranks of senior leaders.

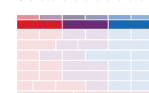
A huge effort is required to educate them in everything from 'what is debt?' to 'how do we read a profit and loss (P&L)?' Senior leadership must make this happen.

f) Broker and banker

Teams and business units need resources. Senior leaders are a key help for providing employees with what they ask for to get the job done – from finances to relationships. This role best encapsulates the shift from people working for those above them, to those in authority serving those below.



John is the founder of UK BCorp, a non-profit organisation dedicated to using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. To engage with him, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.



SENSE OF WHAT LEADERSHIP IS FOR SELF Understanding my personal leadership style, what leadership means in my own context and circumstances, and what works for me. **BUILD TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES TO SUPPORT VISION** These competencies would be different for various individuals, depending on the needs of their specific roles at any given point in time, as well as working towards one's plans for the future. These are part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

How to Become a Better Mentor

By **JESSICA THIEFELS**
 editor@leaderonomics.com

ADVANCEMENT doesn't occur in a vacuum. Whether it was a supervisor at your college internship or a more experienced co-worker at your first 'real' office job, chances are high that some influential people advocated for and contributed to your upward trajectory in the business world.

This type of mentorship is critical to the professional achievement of so many. In fact, 92 per cent of entrepreneurs who have been mentored indicate these relationships had a direct impact on the growth of their small businesses.

An opportunity to invest in the career of a future leader is beneficial for both the mentee and the mentor.

You have the unique clout to impart what you've learnt on to someone who's just starting to grow and learn. In doing so, you mould both the development and expertise of the next generation in your field.

However, simply telling someone what to do, or accepting a mentorship without thinking about how you can truly add value, means you may not be the best mentor you can be.

To have the greatest impact, you need to become an equally great mentor. Take the following steps into account as you prepare to assume the role of a truly life-changing mentor.

1 Communicate expectations

Whether you're assigned a mentee or approached by someone who wants to be mentored, the first step is always to create ground rules and set expectations. Describe the level of commitment you expect of a mentee and how they should behave within this relationship.

Some justified expectations are honouring scheduled appointment times, listening with undivided attention, being prepared to absorb and utilise feedback, assuming the initiative to be coachable, and establishing trust and honesty in communication.

This is also a good time for the mentee to lay out their goals for mentorship or what they hope to learn. This will both inform and define your role, and help you develop a structure for how they will get there.

2 Be aware of gender disparities in your industry

Mentorship is even more essential to women confronting the corporate gender divide. Yet, almost 50 per cent of women entrepreneurs name a lack of mentors as one of their main difficulties.

This has been the reality for HealthMarkets chief human resources officer Sandi Knight, and she's seen it affect many other women, in healthcare and beyond.

Knight explains, "I have faced this challenge in the healthcare and insurance industry, but I also know women across many industries have faced this same issue: needing a mentor or several mentors to give career and business guidance. Since healthcare is both fast-paced and ever-changing, this guidance is particularly important."

To be a better mentor, be available to everyone who needs your guidance. Stay aware of this gender disparity, ensuring that you're able to guide anyone who's looking to move up in their career or business.

3 Check other implicit biases you might have

Actively notice and resist your own socio-



cultural biases, which could harm the relationship. Whether these entrenched impressions are based on racial, economic, sexual or religious factors, be intentional about removing the stereotypes from your mind-set as a mentor.

Start "monitoring your thoughts when you hear an ethnic last name, see a skin colour, hear an accent, view a disability or learn that a person is [LGBTQ]", suggest career experts at Monster.

4 Learn how to provide good feedback

There will be times when you need to give feedback – if you're not providing feedback, step one is to make time to do so. This is one of the best ways for your mentee to learn. The key is giving feedback in a way that's both useful and constructive.

Here are some features of great feedback, according to The Boda Group managing partner Jennifer Porter:

- Organisationally aligned: If you're a manager at your mentee's job, bring organisational values into the feedback.
- Behavioural and specific:

Provide clear and focused feedback; don't use vague phrases without specific examples.

- Positive and negative: "Despite the fact that many of us struggle to hear it, negative feedback serves as important fuel for other changes that are needed. And recognising progress on meaningful work – which positive feedback highlights – is one of the best drivers of engagement, motivation, and innovation," says Porter.
- Pattern-focused: Share feedback on regular patterns of behaviour, rather than a one-time event.
- Link to impact: Always focus on how this good or challenging situation impacted the person or company.
- Prioritised: Prioritise the feedback by what's most important. We can only work on so many changes at once.

You have the unique clout to impart what you've learnt on to someone who's just starting to grow and learn. In doing so, you mould both the development and expertise of the next generation in your field.

5 Boost their growing professional network

While you're not required to facilitate all of your mentee's business connections, you likely know other professionals who could benefit the mentee's career goals. If they're serious, proactive and intentional about growth opportunities, consider introducing the mentee to contacts in your own network.

Nearly 85 per cent of positions are filled as the result of connections made between talented young workers and established authorities in the field, according to a LinkedIn survey. If you can help your mentee cultivate and maintain those relationships, you can take one more step toward furthering their success.

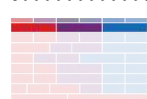
Be a better mentor

When done right, mentorship is an equally beneficial process for both parties involved. You can relish in the satisfaction of developing someone's career, just as mentors have done for you, while they gain an insider's perspective on what it means to be successful in a certain line of business.

This reciprocal dynamic is one of the most rewarding and impactful ways to make a difference for the trailblazers and innovators of tomorrow.



Jessica Thiefels is the founder and CEO of Jessica Thiefels Consulting, a content marketing agency. She has been writing for more than 10 years and has been featured in top publications such as Forbes, Entrepreneur and Fast Company. She also regularly contributes to Virgin, Business Insider, Glassdoor, Score.org and more. Connect with her on LinkedIn or get in touch by sending an email to editor@leaderonomics.com.



MENTOR TO OTHERS Willingness to guide others who want my help – genuinely interested in the betterment of others around me. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

One Ring to Rule Them All

Precious leadership lessons from an enduring story

By **JOHAN MAHMOOD MERICAN**
editor@leaderonomics.com

FOR me, *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) remains my favourite film and book trilogy. This is especially the case given that so much can be learnt on leadership from LOTR.

In case you missed the lessons when you watched it the first time, do ask your boss for one day away from the office for ‘leadership development’, and from the comfy sofa of your home, watch the LOTR trilogy back-to-back.

To help you out with your learning experience and especially if you have to write a report on your ‘training’ day, the following are parts you should look out for in the films.

1. Choosing to lead

Frodo: “I will take the Ring; though I do not know the way.”

We have been conditioned – probably by society, possibly by Hollywood movies – that leaders are born and are heroes by virtue of being the smartest, bravest, strongest, or all of the above.

The beauty of LOTR is that Frodo is none of these – he has not the wisdom of Elrond, the courage of Boromir, the skill in battle of Legolas, nor Gandalf’s magical powers.

Yet, among the great people assembled for the Council of Elrond, it was Frodo who stepped up and volunteered to take the Ring on the quest to Mount Doom (despite not knowing how).

Leadership has been defined in many ways. What appeals to me is that there are two parts that define a true leader. The first part is unhappiness with the status quo or the situation at hand. On this, almost all of us can lay claim to having the first part.

However, what distinguishes true leaders is the second part, which is when the unhappy individual decides and commits their entire self and energy towards effecting a change for the better.

Viewed this way, leadership is a choice. But it is not a half-hearted option of ‘let me try first and see’. A true leader commits to doing what it takes to make a difference.

Frodo inspires us that anyone can choose to be a leader, though at the same time, that choice is not without difficulties, challenges, and risk.

Frodo: I wish the Ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened.

Gandalf: So do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.

In the above exchange, Gandalf reinforces the point on choice. Leaders cannot adopt a victim mentality of bemoaning how the world seems to be against them.

Leaders focus on what they can do, making the most of what they have. True to Gandalf’s wisdom – time is often our most precious resource.

Gandalf’s advice is reminiscent of how Dumbledore counsels Harry Potter, “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”

2. Strength of fellowship

Aragorn: If by my life or death I can protect you, I will. You have my sword...

Legolas: And you have my bow.

Gimli: And my axe.

Boromir: You carry the fate of us all, little one. If this is indeed the will of the Council, then Gondor will see it done.

A leader may choose to make a difference but rarely can an individual achieve much alone.

The key to leadership is to build a team, ideally a diverse team bringing the different skills needed, but a team united in sharing common goals and values.

LOTR emphasises a strong sense of fellowship, where a diverse motley crew of individuals come together to save Middle Earth – and despite their differences, they remain committed to each other and to the cause.

Sam: I made a promise, Mr Frodo. A promise. “Don’t you leave him Samwise Gamgee.” And I don’t mean to. I don’t mean to.

J.R.R. Tolkien’s inspiration for Sam is a reflection from World War I where an officer would be supported by a servant or ‘batman’.

Though typically differentiated by class, there were close and loyal bonds of friendship between the leader (officer) and team members (foot soldiers).

Throughout LOTR, success is achieved through the unwavering loyalty to each other and a willingness to forsake one’s own self-interest (and safety) for the common cause.

Eomer: We cannot achieve victory through strength of arms.

Aragorn: Not for ourselves. But we can give Frodo his chance if we keep Sauron’s Eye fixed upon us. Keep him blind to all else that moves.

Legolas: A diversion.

Gimli: Certainty of death, small chance of success... What are we waiting for?

In the exchange, the team agrees to sacrifice themselves to fight an unwinnable battle in order to help Frodo and ultimately, to destroy the Ring. As they march into certain death, Aragorn rallies his troops:

“Sons of Gondor, of Rohan, my brothers! I see in your eyes the same fear that would take the heart of me. A day may come when the courage of men fails, when we forsake our friends, and break all bonds of fellowship; but it is not this day! An hour of wolves, and shattered shields, when the Age of Men comes crashing down; but it is not this day! This day we fight!”

Whilst we do not expect anyone to sacrifice their lives for the organisation’s objectives, the ability of leaders to communicate a common purpose and align the organisation to a common goal, to the extent of inspiring one’s team to take ownership of the mission and willingly go the extra mile, is a great key to true leadership.

3. Compassion and values

Frodo: It’s a pity Bilbo didn’t kill him when he had the chance.

Gandalf: Pity? It was pity that stayed Bilbo’s hand. Many that live deserve death. Some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them, Frodo? Do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. Even the very wise cannot see all ends. My heart tells me that Gollum has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before this is over. The pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many.

Despite LOTR involving many battles, the leaders are characterised as having compassion and not taking lives needlessly.

As it happens, Bilbo showing mercy to Gollum, a character seemingly undeserving of mercy, ultimately saves the day.

Tolkien takes pains to develop Aragorn’s character as not a two-dimensional killing machine in battle but also defines him as a healer (where he plays a key role in Eowyn’s recovery). This is in line with situational leadership, being able to take lives and save lives accordingly.



Aragorn: [Théoden threatens to kill Wormtongue] No, my lord – let him go. Enough blood has been spilt on his account.

However, beyond reacting to situations, there is a core of compassion shown by Aragorn above. He is able to not just show total commitment to his friends but also able to forgive his enemies.

In LOTR, Aragorn calls upon the Dead Men of Dunharrow who betrayed his forefathers and was able to convince them to help him and in return, he forgave them.

Aragorn: I summon you to fulfil your oath.

King of the Dead: None but the king of Gondor may command me.

Aragorn: Fight for us... and regain your honour.

Beyond compassion, there is a strong thread of ethics and values running through LOTR. Promises are sacred and honour is to be upheld even in battle.

This is important as in choosing to be a leader, it’s all too easy to sacrifice ethics and values in pursuit of one’s goals.

Tolkien ensures his heroes and leaders never stray from the moral high ground, showing both compassion and integrity even in desperate times. Hence, we are reminded to truly care for our people in the organisation, whilst preserving our values.

Conclusion

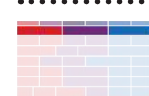
May that be the book/movie wisdom for us all. Embrace the leader in each of us by choosing to make a difference; rallying together with our teams; being compassionate, upholding integrity and ultimately persevering.

Because there’s good in our friendships, organisations, and our country, Malaysia. It’s certainly worth fighting for!

What are some of your leadership takeaways from this series? Check out bit.ly/LOTRlessons to read Johan’s final lesson from *The Lord of the Rings*.



Johan Merican was formerly the CEO of TalentCorp. To send your thoughts on this article, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

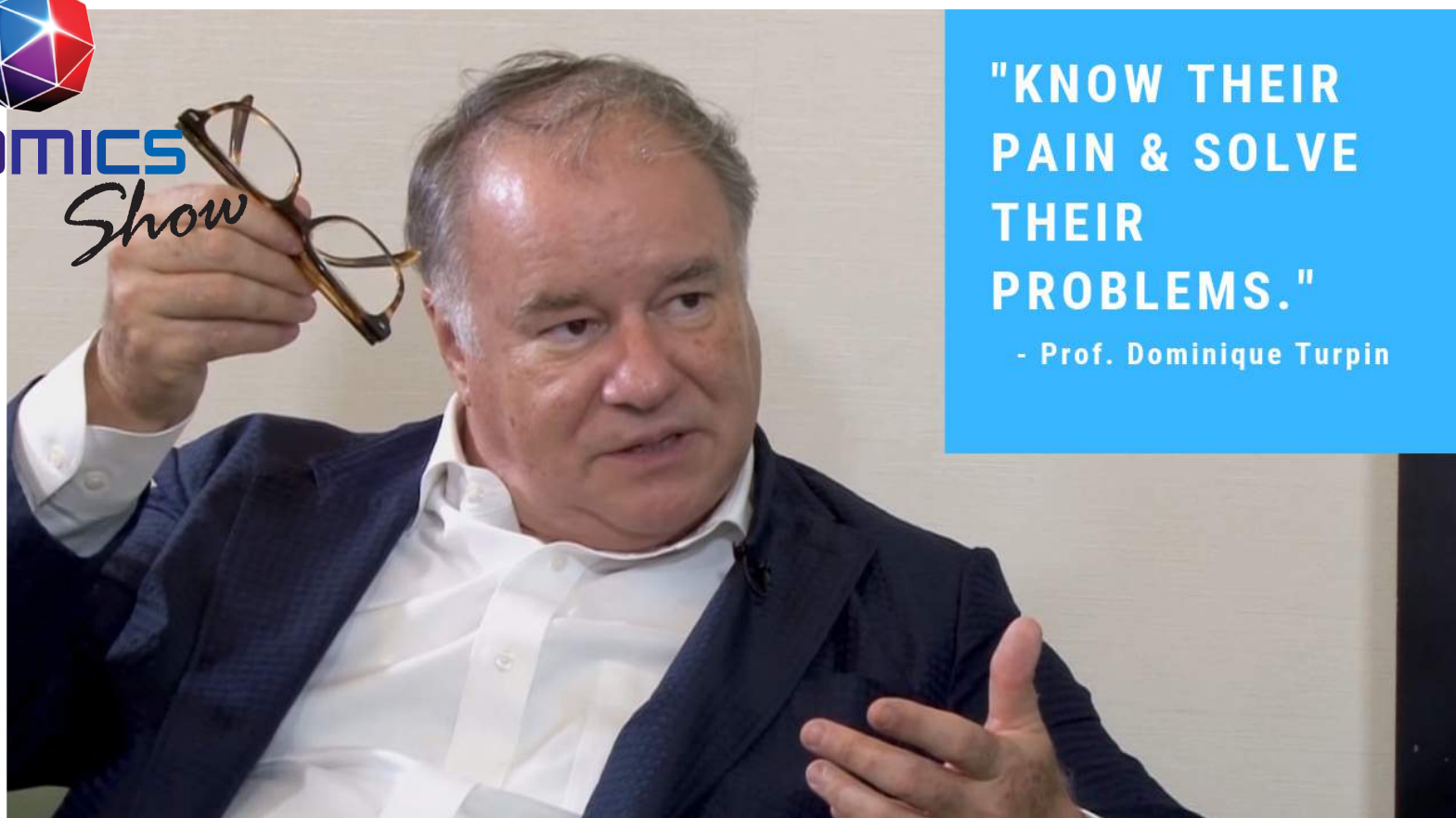


BUILDERS OF COMMUNITIES OF LOVE

Ability to get others to follow us on a mission or journey, and set the right foundations so that they can take it forward on their own if need be. This is part of Leaderonomics’ **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one’s life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

■ This article was previously published in print.

The Leaderonomics Show



This video is available at bit.ly/TLSTurpin. For more The Leaderonomics Show videos, head to bit.ly/TheLDRShow.

By **SANDY CLARKE**
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHEN you think of the word 'marketing', what comes into your head? Chances are, like many people, you'll have a vague notion of what it means and little awareness of its importance for growth.

Thinking back to my days as a student of journalism, I can just about remember the 'Four Ps' of marketing (price, product, promotion, and place), but the rest, sadly, is lost to the lecture halls of history.

One thing is for sure: marketing is vital for growth in any industry today. Appearing on *The Leaderonomics Show*, Professor Dominique Turpin spoke to host Roshan Thiran about the fundamental quality of marketing.

He said, "Marketing is – and always has been – about how you can create value for the customer. Any business needs to provide value to the customer, otherwise why would you buy particular products or services?"

"This is what we've been trying to explain to executives, although to me, marketing is good common sense. But we still have to push this idea that you create value not by asking your customers what they want – because typically, today, they don't know what they want, and the last thing you want to hear is 'price'.

"So, we ask: 'Okay, can you think of how to make your customers' lives easier, better, cheaper? If you can do three at one time, then you are in good business."

When asked why there is some reluctance by some leaders to truly embrace marketing, Professor Turpin – currently the dean of external relations at IMD Business School, Switzerland – suggested that leaders can have a cavalier approach to the concept.

He believes that leaders can be dismissive of marketing because it appears to be simple. But, he says, golf is simple too – you have a ball and you try to get it into a hole using a stick. While it sounds easy in theory, the practice is a different story, and leaders need to recognise the important distinction.

As the fascinating conversation turned to digitalisation, Professor Turpin said that the model of digital marketing tends to flourish in countries that have a single common language and a large population. Smaller

What Do Your Customers Need?

Professor Dominique Turpin on creating value for customers and innovation in organisations

countries that are multi-lingual can, he argued, find it difficult to gain a foothold in the digital space.

He said, "When you see what's happening in the world, digitalisation is happening where the markets are fairly big in terms of scale. So, coming from Switzerland – where we have seven million inhabitants – you don't have the economies for scale. On top of that, we speak four different languages.

"But when you look at the United States, where English is a common language and there is a large population, this is where you see the advances of technology taking place. I don't expect any new insights coming from smaller countries, which have other qualities but don't have economies for scale."

Innovation in large organisations

Addressing organisation scale, Professor Turpin talked about the effect it can have on disruption. As businesses get bigger and more complex, they find it increasingly difficult to maintain an innovative edge.

Disruptors, he said, are those who look beyond the complexities of a problem and look for simple solutions instead. As a result, they are often more agile and can act with greater speed over their competition – especially if the competition is a major brand.

Again, it all comes back to providing value for the customer, and keeping that in the forefront of your vision as a leader. The problems start to arise when business leaders lose sight of this very simple yet powerful rule.

He said, "I recently interviewed the founder of GoPro,

and I asked, 'How did you come up with this idea?'

Because Sony, Nikon, Canon and others have been in business for so long. But he said that these businesses were becoming very complex, and that all he did was to turn the camera 180 degrees to face the person who wants more of themselves on Facebook and Instagram.

"When I meet disruptors, I am always struck by how simple the idea is – and it's always about focusing on a problem we've always been facing. It's the difference between someone in the street who faces a problem, goes home and is very frustrated, and somebody who is going to take action."

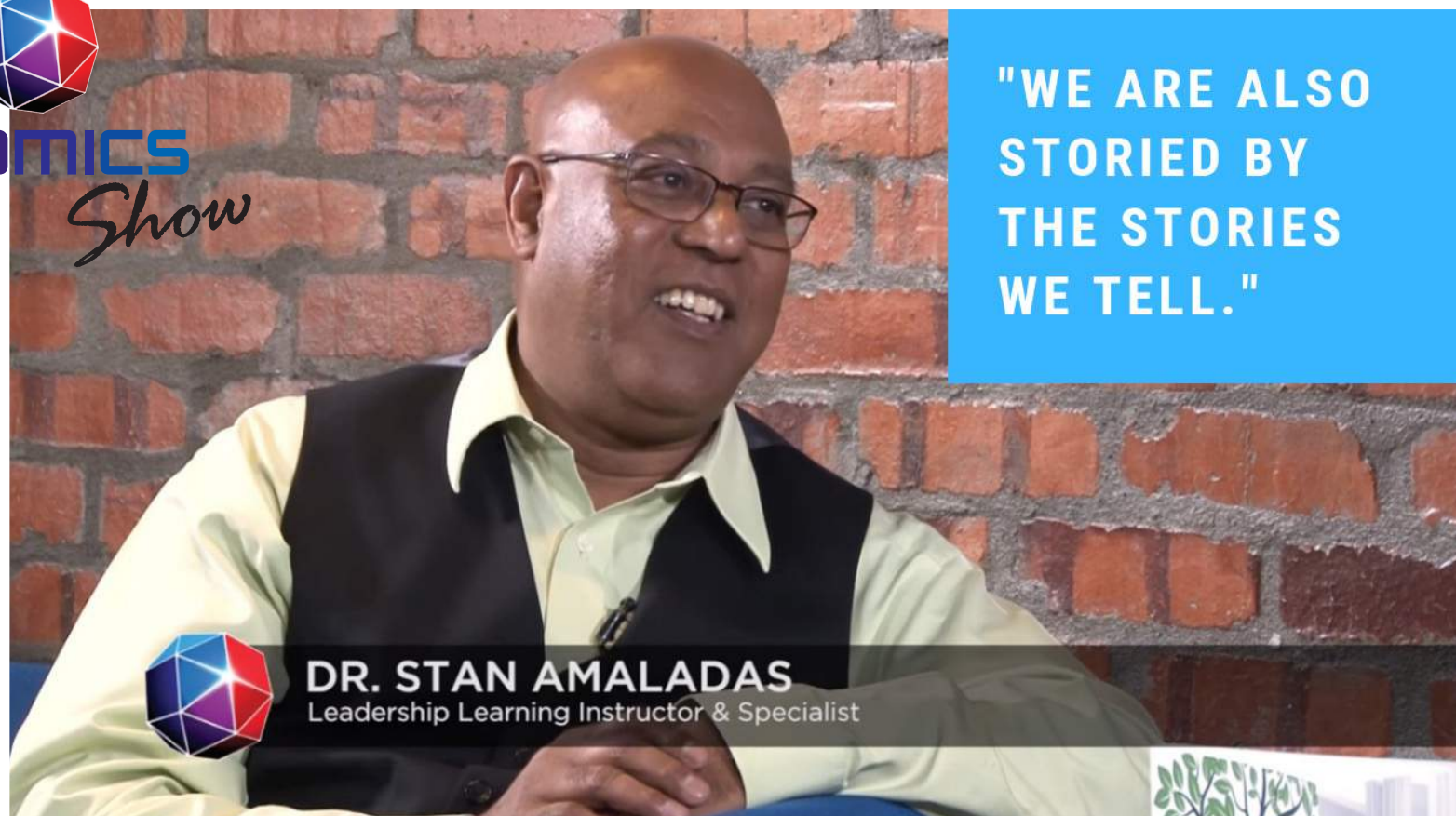
So, how can leaders maximise their skills and resources to be efficient in taking action as the markets become increasingly competitive? According to Professor Turpin, it all boils down to keeping things simple by focusing on making connections and providing value.

He said, "You need to surround yourself with talent and not be shy about surrounding yourself with people who are better than you are. If we take Bill Gates, for example, it's one of the biggest qualities he has – he knows how to surround himself with people who are of a very good calibre.

"So, the human factor will always make the big difference. Yes, you need to think strategically and simply – complexity is a big killer, with businesses putting all sorts of processes in place and so on.

"If you're a big company, you need to put in place simplicity, and a lot of innovation... the complexity is what's killing great potential in these companies."

The Leaderonomics Show



DR. STAN AMALADAS
Leadership Learning Instructor & Specialist



This video is available at bit.ly/TLSStanAmaladas.
Check out bit.ly/TheLDRShow for more videos like this.

Intentional Leadership

How it can be used to break cycles of violence

By **SANDY CLARKE**
editor@leaderonomics.com

THERE have been many aspects of leadership discussed by experts and enthusiasts alike over the years – but how much do we know about intentional leadership?

Dr Stan Amaladas joined host Roshan Thiran on *The Leaderonomics Show* to talk about the principles of such leadership as found in his latest book, *Intentional Leadership: Getting to the Heart of the Matter*.

The book approaches leadership from a fascinating angle, looking at how people react to violent situations through interruption, presence, imagination, and acting out of one's imagination of what could be.

In other words, rather than to keep the same old cycle spinning (violence → counter-violence → more violence), intentional leaders consciously choose to shift from the usual reactions to difficult situations in an effort to end damaging cycles.

Never-ending story

Stan, a research associate and lecturer at the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, and Okanagan College in Canada, has spent years researching the power of stories and how they shape us. He believes that effective leadership has much to do with the heart as the mind, in terms of engagement.

On the power of stories, he says, "When I began to read up on leadership, there was a tremendous influence of stories... There is a whole notion that we tell stories, but more than that, we're also storied by the stories we tell."

"On the one hand, you make your stories and you have tremendous authorship in telling your stories. But what happens over time is people forget the authorship of their stories, and they allow their stories that have been told, to story them."

How to be an intentional leader

In his book, Stan reveals the Four Critical Dimensions of Intentional Leadership. He discovered these while researching his material, from which he drew stories from a range of people, including actresses, people in positions of authority, professors, teachers, and basketball players.

His quest was to find out what decisions they made in

the face of adversity, and how their decisions replaced elements of fear, cynicism, and despair with positive outcomes.

4 dimensions of intentional leadership

1. The courage to interrupt prevailing consciousness

It's common in leadership to follow the trends of conventional wisdom (i.e. "This is the way we've always done it.")

However, progress comes when we interrupt the flow of consensus and take bold steps to move in a new and necessary direction.

It's a call to wake up and pay attention. As Stan said, "Some call it agitation. It's an interruption, not a disruption – but the interruption can cause disruption."

2. The courage to live a wakeful life

How do intentional leaders react differently to circumstances?

In December 2012, a gunman fatally shot 20 children at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Connecticut, United States (US). One of Stan's friends, Jimmy Greene, who is a saxophonist and a professor in music, had just moved to Connecticut prior to the tragedy. Unfortunately, his daughter was one of the victims.

While feelings of anger, bitterness, and revenge would have been understandable in such circumstances, Greene took a different approach. He wrote a song called *Beautiful Life* in honour and celebration of his daughter's life.

He refused to give his power away to the incident, choosing instead to transform his pain into love rather than hatred.

3. The courage to choose hope and reject despair

Stan uses the leadership of former US President Barack Obama to demonstrate the possibilities of imagining a different course.

Rather than manipulate others through the politics of fear, Obama chose to lead his followers in the politics of hope ("Yes We Can!" was Obama's slogan in his presidential campaigns).

Imagining a story of hope is to reject fear and despair. Leaders have an enormous responsibility to shun toxic leadership. Stan observes, "The power to lead is the power to mislead, and the power to mislead is the power to destroy."

4. The courage to engage others

In the 1950s, the late Lee Kuan Yew believed that Singapore couldn't flourish without being part of Malaysia (Malaya before 1963).

On the campaign trail, he tried to discourage what he called 'Chinese Chauvinism' and called for a 'Malaysian Malaysia'. This kind of talk, says Stan, got Lee into trouble and, eventually, "independence was thrust upon Singapore".

Lee, the nation's first Prime Minister, had to carve a new path for his country and wake up to his own thinking that Singapore wasn't viable as a nation.

As Lee acted out his vision, Singapore flourished, so much so that he took the country to heights far greater than anyone could have imagined.

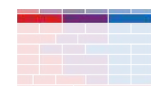
In perspective

The real world can be a tough place to live. While there is so much good happening, there is also so much to be fixed. Stan's call to all of us is to take life's tragedies and use those difficult moments of reality to create something opposite to the hardship and suffering we find.

This is what it means to be an intentional leader. It's about paying attention to what calls for our attention, waking up to limited beliefs and conventional thinking, and not only imagining a different reality, but asking ourselves what we'd be willing to give in order to bring that new reality to life.



Sandy Clarke is a former managing editor at Leaderonomics. Prior to that, he spent 10 years as a journalist and broadcaster in the UK. As a long-time student of mindfulness, he agrees with Dr Stan that we can be more effective in making a difference to the world when our hearts and minds are positively aligned. Send us your thoughts about intentional leadership at editor@leaderonomics.com.



DRIVE CHANGE Ability to take the initiative and overcome obstacles in order to drive myself and my team successfully through a change initiative. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

Bring Back Love Into the Office

By JEROME PARISSE-BRASSENS
editor@leaderonomics.com

I am obviously not talking about the shenanigans that come to mind when you see the phrase 'love at work' – I'll leave that to someone else. What I am talking about here is the value of love, the resulting behaviours, feelings, and mindset, and the impact it has on our working relationships.

What is love in the office?

Love can take many forms: We can love our teams, our peers, our leaders, our business, or simply our work. All the words below are an expression of love in some way, shape, or form:

- Empathy
- Passion
- Diversity
- Emotional intelligence
- Listening actively
- Seeking to understand
- Acceptance
- Trust
- Care
- Mindfulness

An unexpected expression of love

I was facilitating a workshop with a cross-functional team that had been through an intense few weeks of work with a highly strategic remit.

They had had a tough time but had bonded in the process and achieved something highly significant for their organisation.

As they were sharing their experience, one of the participants, a down-to-earth forty-something male with a technical job who had struggled with some aspects of the project, suddenly blurted out: "Love you all".

This was followed by a second of blank silence before the conversation resumed, but the tone was different.

The sharing was deeper, the atmosphere more relaxed, and people were smiling. The difference that expressing love had made was striking. In an organisation that repressed emotions, this person had broken conventions and made the team incredibly stronger.

Why is love good for the office?

One of the most important aspects of a mindset of love is that it breaks down barriers. A lack of cooperation is often underpinned by a lack of feelings, in other words a lack of interest in others.

With love, forget about the blame culture that cripples so many organisations. Love removes buffers; it fosters collaboration.



Love and empathy

Empathy is a strong expression of love, and it is used to describe a broad range of experiences.

It is often defined as "the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling".

It is about finding yourself in the shoes of the other party. Empathy is a key ingredient of successful relationships because it helps us understand the perspectives, needs, and intentions of others.

It also reduces a number of unwanted behaviours such as prejudice, bullying, and inequality.

Research has shown that managers who demonstrate empathy have employees who are sick less often and report greater happiness.

How do you become more empathic? Get out of your own head, focus your attention outwards, don't make too many assumptions, and use mindfulness.

Meditation has been proven to increase empathy in the short-term. Empathy is also at the very heart of customer-centricity.

Often though, our clients will argue that they are customer-centric, that they know who their clients are, and what their needs are. But just as often, we find that true customer-centricity – the understanding that comes from listening actively; the emotional relation-

ship with; or more simply, the love for the customer – is not present.

I got to know better the person who expressed his love for his cross-functional team, whom I mentioned earlier.

All the teams he leads love him (please note my choice of words). People will go a long way for him. Why? He shares love, he says the word, he gives hugs, he has time for people, and he tries to understand them.

Never stop

I have learnt that you should always hear the other side of the story. One of my colleagues is of the opinion that too much love is not good, because it leads to compromises and to doing something to please the other party rather than doing what is right. What do you think?



Jerome Parisse-Brassens is a culture change expert and a management consultant with over 25 years of experience in culture transformation, change management, leadership development, and business improvement. He helps organisations assess and shape their culture in alignment with their strategic goals. To contact him, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

FINANCE FOR NON-FINANCE FOLKS

Learn, understand and recall better through Leaderonomics' hands-on simulation programme

Finance is the language of business, and functional leaders in human resources, information technology, marketing and other areas need at least a basic grasp of finance to succeed in this competitive, volatile and complex world.

At Leaderonomics, we have developed an engaging simulation programme where participants have fun as a team while learning the essentials of finance, from reading a profit and loss statement to understanding the balance sheet to grasping a cash flow statement.

Get in touch with us to find out how your organisation can benefit from simulation-based learning in finance and in many other areas.

To watch a short video on this course, go to:
goo.gl/uzuUCq

To learn more, email info@leaderonomics.com

By **BRIGITTE ROZARIO**
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHAT do you do with the information and knowledge you spent more than half your life amassing? Should you share it with others? How do you go about doing it?

For those who find themselves in this situation, there is always the option of mentoring younger workers or even family members and friends. It is a great way to coach the younger ones and help them in their own lives.

Leaderonomics faculty trainer Joseph Tan says that mentoring is sometimes called coaching, bridging the generation divide, or even talent management.

"It's called different names in different companies, but the essence is the same – how to ensure the passing on of the baton from the older to the younger, how to make sure that the ideals or the aspirations of the company or family don't just fade away with the passing generation," he says.

Tan, who works with senior managers, explains that it need not be in a formal setting.

"At the end of the day it's about appreciating each other's perspectives. Of course, I think the attitude of the young towards the older should be one of respect, and the older towards the young should be of understanding. For me, it's like a dance. That's what accounts for a healthy mentoring relationship."

Why mentor?

More importantly, when the senior wants to mentor the junior, there should be motivation and competency.

He explains that almost everyone would have the motivation to mentor, regardless of what they want to mentor. He believes that the older we get, the more we want to talk and share with others.

He adds that in the old days, it would be during moments spent together when family traditions would be passed down from father to son, or grandfather to grandchild.

These days, it is easier said than done because families are more fragmented. They don't even sit down together for dinner on a daily basis anymore.

Because of that, Tan says that mentoring needs to be more intentional. That means to consciously meet up for meals or walks, or just to spend time together on a regular basis. That's when you can mentor the younger friend or family member.

He says mentoring needn't be difficult or formal – even a movie outing or a meal together can present an opportunity to mentor.

Conditioning

"In certain situations, it is not really mentoring with any specific purpose in mind. I would call it conditioning mentoring. This is like sending your car regularly for service so that when the situation demands it, your car is able to perform," says Tan.

Sometimes it could start from just asking them how they are doing. By spending more time with the younger members of the family, you condition them so that the next time they have a problem, they will come to you for advice because they are comfortable with you.

"Initially our goal in mentoring is to give them roots so that they are rooted in how they view the world, in the sense of right and wrong, and in terms of their morality and values. Then, the next phase is to give them wings to let them be independent if they are youngsters.

"We should work on getting them rooted in the basics. Then when they fly, they will be very responsible," says Tan.

What to do

One of the first steps of mentoring is to make yourself relevant. Tan explains that one of the dangers of those who aspire to mentor but don't have the skill is that they tend to think of themselves as an old sage on the mountain top, waiting for the younger ones to climb to the top of the mountain to seek advice.

According to Tan, that scenario largely does not happen today. "Learning to be relevant doesn't mean you walk, talk and dress like them. You should at least know what they are talking about. You should know the top 10 issues they face," he adds.

Secondly, you should learn to ask good questions. That means, ask questions that are aspirational in



nature rather than problem-solving. Sometimes, older folks tend to be quite set in their ways and think that what didn't work for them in their time, will not work for the younger ones either. They need to be less judgmental and interrogative in their questioning and ask more open-ended questions.

Sometimes the younger ones will give you sarcastic responses or comments that are way out there, just to test the waters.

For example, if your grandchild says he wants to play video games all day and get paid for it, avoid telling him he's lazy. Instead, try asking why and perhaps get him to start thinking about other possible job opportunities using the skills he has or what he loves doing. He may not have explored all the options.

"You capture the heart of what they are saying and graciously lead them along another path. For example, if they have an ability to draw, that doesn't mean they can only go into the video game industry.

"I think older people should listen with their eyes and their heart. People long for your acceptance and understanding before they can accept your correction.

"In the Asian context, when we talk about mentoring, we tend to think of the Shaolin temple type of mentoring where you have the *sifu* and whatever the *sifu* tells you to do, you do. The more painful it is, the better it is for you.

"That only works if you have a motivated student who doesn't mind going through pain to achieve a higher performance level, but I don't think that should be the default mode," says Tan.

Thirdly, you need to focus on the relationship. Focus on what you are really trying to achieve – which at the end of the day, is for the other person's benefit.

This means understanding the situation, the younger person, and what is helpful to them, rather than giving unsolicited advice or insisting your way is the best.

What not to do

One of the things not to do is to belittle the younger person you are mentoring.

"We live in a generation, for better or for worse, that is very hung up on affirmations. People tend to judge their work by the number of likes they have on Facebook. They look out for how many likes or if there are any negative comments. In a way, I would say that people today are a bit more fragile in that sense.

"So, I think as a mentor, we need to go in with our eyes open, knowing that their sense of self-esteem would need to be taken into consideration. It's important not to belittle them.

"The other thing is don't be too anxious to dispense your advice. Those who are mentoring have a lot of good seeds to sow. But the seed would only grow if it falls on the right soil. Sometimes as mentors, we focus too much on the seed. We want to just keep planting the seeds but the thing is, the soil is not ready."

"I guess in the first few conversations, we need to test the 'soil'. Is this person ready? Sometimes the

heart is a bit hard, so you need to do a bit of ice-breaking, till the soil a bit, do some activities together," says Tan, explaining that this could be something simple like going for a walk together or just sharing a meal.

If the younger person is ready, only then should you dispense the advice that he is ready to hear. Don't be too quick to share your philosophy of life in the first conversation. While you may think you are running out of time to share your wealth of knowledge, the younger person is in no hurry as they have a lot of time. If you share too soon, the advice will only fall on deaf ears.

Additionally, Tan believes that seniors who are mentoring should not feel obliged to have all the answers. Sometimes there's a tendency for mentors to feel inadequate if they can't provide all the answers. It is okay to admit you do not have the answers and that perhaps someone else would be in a better position to assist.

Conclusion

"Somehow, we are wired in such a way that we want to pass on traditions or life lessons, because we want to leave a little bit of ourselves behind. As a mentor, you would feel fulfilled and satisfied that you have left a legacy and that you have deposited something into the lives of others that will potentially grow and multiply. There would be the satisfaction of having made a difference.

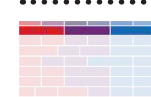
"It's about getting involved in someone else's world that will really make those rich deposits. I think it keeps you vibrant and healthy and gives you a reason to wake up each morning," says Tan.

He believes that while mentoring juniors within the company is good, our family members should not be neglected.

"As with most things, it is the people closest to us that we take for granted because we assume that they will always be there. When it comes to mentoring, it is easier to get ourselves involved in work-related or performance-related mentoring because many times, that puts us in the limelight, but those closest to us need our mentoring, too.



Let us know about your mentoring journey in your family or workplace by writing to us at editor@leaderonomics.com. For mentoring programmes for your organisation, write to info@leaderonomics.com.



MENTOR TO OTHERS Willingness to guide others who want my help – genuinely interested in the betterment of others around me. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLP1 to find out more.



Struggles of a Youth Leader

By **MARCUS LIM**

editor@leaderonomics.com

ON the first day of secondary school, I observed the towering presence of a person who had been entrusted with the highest authority any student could receive – the head prefect.

His voice boomed through the school microphone, requesting all students to gather for the morning assembly.

Almost immediately, the prefects sprung into action to round up the masses, who obediently fell into perfect rows.

As a young Form One student, this activity looked and sounded amazing and I swore to myself, I would be head prefect when the time came.

Eyes on the goal

To achieve my goal, I decided to be the best candidate a teacher could find. In Form One, that meant helping teachers carry books, helping my class monitor control the class, making sure I looked tidy and neat at all times, and coming to school early.

I hung around the prefects and spoke to them about their duties, showing an interest every chance I got. All these I did to prepare for the day when they would nominate prefects from the first formers. Surely, my name would be mentioned as a candidate.

True enough, my wish came true. I was nominated to be a prefect – one step closer to my dream of becoming head prefect.

Right after my instalment, I felt a surge of authority and power over my friends. I began to use my newly appointed position to get them in line. At 13, that included shouting, giving commands, and threatening to report them should they not follow. It worked very well!

As a Form One prefect, it was rare for us to take on the older students in the upper forms, but to be a potential head prefect, I needed to control everyone.

This, of course, got the teachers' attention as proactiveness, but little did I know, I was slowly losing friends as I appeared arrogant and power-hungry.

Throughout Form Two till Form Three, I would actively participate in spot checks, continuing my shouting and commanding of others. I viewed the phenomenon of losing friends as part of climbing the ladder.

I told myself: *"The higher we go, the more we leave behind."*

I was adamant that the best way to go about my duties was the hard way; to give students ultimatums they should follow, creating harsher punishments for those who faltered, and revelling in the ceremony of cutting students' hair.

Lone ranger with a purpose

The teachers loved my determination and commitment to the school. They would entrust me with duties and projects that no other prefect wanted, but as these increased, my reputation as a fellow student dropped in the eyes of my friends.

"It's lonely at the top," some would say. Everybody who comes up to you and does nice things for you is only trying to "curry favour" – either a pardon for their wrongdoing, or to get into your good books. And as you interact, you learn that all the things you say, may it be good or bad stuff, travels very fast.

I felt misunderstood but I told myself, these were signs that I was achieving my goal to become the head prefect.

In Form Four, there were very few students who would still speak to me. Whenever possible, they would avoid me because I had offended them. But I did not mind at all.

Until one incident happened: there was a random spot check in my class and a good friend of mine, who was also a prefect, handed me her mobile phone.

The defining moment

At that time, bringing devices to school was prohibited and knowing that I was a favourite with the teachers, she felt that I would surely be excused from the search.

While checking the belongings of everybody else, my mind was racing. Should I turn her in or should I let her go? My prefect mind said nobody gets excused for such crimes, and that she should be turned in. As the future head prefect, I should not allow myself to be biased. At the same time, it would be an outright betrayal of her trust.

After the entire spot check period had passed, I decided to turn her in. I surrendered the phone to the teacher-in-charge and confessed everything.

She was called in and her phone was confiscated for the entire week. The teachers deducted her marks and warned that her badge would be stripped should she ever be caught again. I got praised for being a good prefect and for not being biased towards friends.

I felt good at that time, but something inside me knew that I had lost another friend. This time, someone I valued highly.

Stepping back for reflection

This sorry incident began a cycle of reflection of how I had been behaving as a prefect and as a friend.

I finally became the head prefect of my school, but I had lost all my friends and everyone else's respect. I still stood at the front of the assembly hall, and gathered students for announcements, but I had no friends to share this burden with.

It was only in Form Five that I realised that shouting and commanding people was not the only way to rise up as a leader. Unfortunately, it was too late.

I realised that as humans, we have a tendency to use what we are familiar with to deal with situations.

As for me, I spent four years shouting at people thinking that it would get the job done. Little did I know, all I had to do was take a step back, and try to understand and communicate better with my friends.

Building relationships

If I had worked on building strong friendships, I would not have needed to shout at all, since friends who trust each other will readily do what is asked of them.

As I began to understand this, things started turning around. I started building friendships with the lower forms because I figured they had seen the least of my shouting and commanding self.

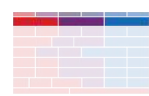
Slowly, I built up the circle to include students in Form Five – my own peers, the ones I had hurt the most.

It was surprising to find out that when I reached out and asked for help, they supported me and helped me despite all the abuse I had hurled at them over the years. And I knew I had succeeded in balancing my ego when one of my friends said: *"You're a lot cooler now, you used to be such a pain!"*

■ This article was previously published in print.



Marcus Lim was part of the youth division in Leaderonomics. He played an active role in developing young leaders by coordinating and managing Leaderonomics Clubs in secondary schools around the Klang Valley. If you are interested to find out more about our other initiatives for youths, get in touch with us at youth@leaderonomics.com.



CRUCIBLE MOMENTS Key events in one's life – positive or negative, that change one's perception and goals.

Crucible moments are usually negative events, and differ significantly among individuals. These could also be positive events – moments that lead to a ground-breaking realisation that skews the individual and causes a shift in the way they view the world. The important thing to look for here is not so much the event itself, but what the event taught us – what did we get out of it, how did we overcome it, and what was it that allowed us to do so? How would it change us in the future? This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

By **AUDREY TONG** and **EVA CHRISTODOULOU**
editor@leaderonomics.com

AT Leaderonomics, we believe that growing a person into a leader is a journey that spans one's entire life. As such, different elements at different periods of a person's life contribute towards the individual becoming the leader they aspire to be, or the leader that suits their dreams and goals in life.

This is a journey that begins from a very young age. We believe that during childhood and adolescence, a few key building blocks should be put in place for this journey to be a fruitful one.

These revolve around character, values, having the right role models, and having a secure base.

Additional elements would include first leadership experiences, building basic leadership characteristics, and developing the capacity to be agents of change.

However, in this article we would like to focus on the two that we consider the most important for this phase of one's life – character and role models.

Education has a big role to play when it comes to developing these elements in children and adolescents. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of development shows that children and adolescents are influenced and impacted by everything that surrounds them:

1. Their family, friends and people they have direct relationships with (the microsystem);
2. Interactions between people they know, such as their siblings, or between their parents and teachers (the mesosystem);
3. Things that may not directly involve them but also have impact, like changes in a parent's workplace or their larger neighbourhood (the exosystem);
4. Political and economic systems as well as cultural patterns and values also significantly impact a child's development (the macrosystem);
5. Changes across time that may bring about new advancements in the world around them or new policies and practices – these could even be changes in one's address or a parent's employment status (the chronosystem).

Therefore, education and development of a child cannot be isolated to just a segment of the child's life or environment.

It should be a shared responsibility between parents, teachers, and the community within which the children and adolescents live and interact.

Character

In 2009, we had a pair of teenage siblings attend our youth leadership camp. They were enrolled by their father and needlessly to say, were extremely reluctant to be seemingly wasting their precious holiday at a camp filled with strangers and located away from their usual comforts.

The early days at camp were filled with subtle defiance, and conflicts with other campers. But suddenly, the older of the two decided that since there was no way out of the camp, and there was still half of it to go, she was better off just making the best of it.

With that, we saw her rise above her peers, enjoying her time at camp, leading her team and ending camp with the best camper award.

In developing talent in young people, Benjamin Bloom looked at successful high-performing individuals in different fields and found that the child who 'made it' was not always the one who was considered to be most 'talented'.

Many of these individuals had siblings they grew up with, and in similar environments. Most of their parents would likely describe another child of theirs to have had more 'natural ability'. This, in other words, meant that another sibling was actually more talented.

Yet, there was something that set these high-performing individuals apart from their siblings and peers. Digging deeper, there are certain characteristics that distinguished the high achiever in the field from his or her siblings. The terms most often used to describe them are persistence, competitiveness, and eagerness.

The children who succeed display a willingness to work and a desire to excel that is above and beyond their naturally-talented siblings.

Helping Children Excel

Shaping young leaders through role models and character-building



Angela Duckworth, a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and a MacArthur Genius, studied adults and children in challenging situations. She had previously noticed during her teaching tenure, that children with the highest IQs were not always the most successful, and that there were less-academically-abled students who went on to excel greatly.

Her research found that beyond IQ, physical capabilities, and social intelligence, it was **grit** that set the successful ones apart.

Students who are able to persevere despite difficulties stand to win out over their peers who had more talent. Duckworth explains it as 'passion plus perseverance for long-term goals'.

This seems to be contrary to what many of us have been told about 'working smart not working hard'. We may have believed that if we need to work very hard for something, it might mean that we had no *talent* for it and should focus our attention elsewhere, or if there was no better, easier, *smarter* way to do something, we shouldn't be doing that thing.

We may have inadvertently devalued the need for consistent – and determined – effort towards achieving goals.

In one of our DIODE Kids programmes two years ago, we ran an activity for the children to learn origami and to teach each other the different ways of folding new objects.

In one group, the children (aged 8-10) were supposed to create an origami box. They all struggled to do it. It was difficult and complex and the folding instructions were not clear.

After a few tries, the children grew increasingly frustrated and they gave up. At this point, the facilitator gave the group another, much easier item to fold and the group eagerly got to producing many of those items. Except for one girl.

She was determined to get the box right. She did not care that the group was now on to something else and she politely ignored the facilitator who was encouraging her to participate with the group; all she wanted was to finish what she had started, all she wanted was to get her box right.

You see, we often do not give enough opportunities for our children to overcome and work through their challenges. Like the facilitator, we swoop in and

change the game, we fix it so that it is easier and the children can excel in their comfort zones.

We want them to feel successful, so we curate an environment that will ensure they achieve. Don't get us wrong, it is important that children understand they can be successful. It grows self-esteem and it builds confidence in themselves and their capabilities.

But we also need to challenge them (within reason) and encourage them when it gets difficult. Did the girl get her box right in the end? Yes, she did. Was it perfect? No, it wasn't but she was mighty proud of what she did.

And the interesting part of this story? This young girl is a child from a children's home. She does not have the most privileged of backgrounds, but she showed grit when her peers gave up.

Needless to say, the importance of character development has been recognised among researchers, educators and policy makers, so much so, that the debate has now shifted towards what types of traits or characteristics are most crucial for the success of an individual.

Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson define character as "a set of abilities or strengths that they are very much changeable – entirely malleable, in fact. They are skills you can learn; they are skills you can practice; and they are skills you can teach."

Some schools have started paying attention to character and looking for ways to 'teach' and focus on it as much as they do for academics.

Two known revolutionaries in this are David Levin of KIPP Public Charter Schools and Dominic Randolph of Riverdale middle schools in the US. The two principals, initially on their own, were passionate and intrigued by how to teach character to their students, and how to ensure their students excelled long after they left their institutions.

They worked closely with Seligman and Peterson who were working on character traits, and narrowed their full list of 24 character traits down to seven. This way, they were more likely to predict life satisfaction and high achievement.

Their list of seven includes grit, self-control, zest, social intelligence, gratitude, optimism, and curiosity. How did they teach these in school? By using a method David Levin called 'dual-purpose instruction,' with teachers explicitly bringing in character to their discussions.

Math teachers would use character strengths in word problems, and history teachers could use them to talk about the personalities they were studying.

Paul Tough, in his book *How Children Succeed*, explains how this looked like: "...when I arrived in Witter's class, he was leading a discussion on Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. Above Witter's head, at the front of the class, the seven character strengths, from optimism to social intelligence, were stencilled in four-inch-high letters, white on blue. He asked his students to rank Okonkwo, the protagonist, on his various character strengths."

"There was a lot of back-and-forth, but in the end, most students agreed that Okonkwo rated highest on grit and lowest on self-control. Then, a student named Yantzee raised his hand. 'Can't a trait backfire at you?' he asked. 'Sure, a trait can backfire,' Witter said. 'Too much grit, like Okonkwo, you start to lose your ability to have empathy for other people.'"

Our team at Leaderonomics looks at character development in three parts:

Moral character. Simply put, the characters that make an individual a good person and a decent human being, such as generosity, justice, gratitude, kindness, and integrity.

Performance character. The stuff that sets a person apart and earmarks them for success, these are the characters that take you the extra mile, like, grit, optimism, self-control and curiosity.

Intellectual character. Having a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset, believing that you are able to learn and keep growing from challenges and failures and working hard towards achieving success as opposed to believing that you only have a limited capacity and pre-set amount of ability and talent.

All of these three parts are equally important; a person with only moral character would be good, but without the capability, it will be difficult for the individual to make a difference.

Someone with performance character would be high-achieving but without the guiding compass of values and virtue, may become corrupted and exploitative. A person with only intellectual character has no basis to grow from.

All three contribute towards the development of a successful leader.

Role models

At most of our youth camps, the campers are tasked to plan and anchor the celebration night, which happens on the final night of camp. In one camp, the campers decided to do a short skit in which they acted out different personalities. Camp facilitators then had to guess who they were depicting.

The people they were emulating? The camp facilitators of course! After only seven days together, the campers got most of the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the facilitators down to a tee – from the way we carried our bags, to how we walk, and even our hand gestures when we speak. It was funny, entertaining, and a little bit creepy.

It is apparent that children and youths watch and imitate people around them, as well as the people they



look up to. They observe and learn from those they deem successful adults and typically, these role models and leadership examples would be their parents, guardians, older relatives and teachers.

It is crucial then, that we not only surround our children with positive role models, but that we also check ourselves and model the behaviours, beliefs, and character traits that we wish to grow and develop in them.

That said, we may not always be able to control who our children choose to look up to or emulate. They may become beholden by a celebrity for example, or they may admire a fictional character or a popular student in school.

Discuss with them the characteristics that make these role models so desirable. Encourage them to reflect on what is attractive to them and whether these are worthwhile traits to emulate in the long run.

As parents and teachers, it also gives a glimpse into the values that are pertinent to the child, which then serve as a check for us to evaluate if we are setting the right expectations and conveying the right values to our children.

It is also important to remember that there is no such thing as a perfect person – try to think of all the famous leaders of the world and soon enough, you will realise there was an area in their life that was dark; perhaps it was their temper, or their infidelity, or their focus on their work to the detriment of their family.

Discussing with children their role models will help them understand that there are certain aspects that would be great to emulate, but certain others that they should avoid.

What's the role of education, then?

It is important to remember that education takes many forms, and comes through a variety of mediums, not only the formal mediums that we usually think of, such as schools and tuition centres.

Education comes from parents, teachers, and indeed, the entire community in which youths exist – physical or virtual. And with the advancement of technology, we cannot really have full control on the kind of examples our youth are exposed to.

What we can do, however, as teachers and as parents is ensure that we ourselves offer good role models to our youth, but even beyond that, spend the time to talk to them.

Help them make their own choices in terms of role models or character traits that will allow them to achieve what they want – after all, every person is different and may subscribe to different ideals, so our task is to guide them to find their own path.

It's about time that the focus of education shifts towards the development of character, and with that, the focus on role models. This is something that some schools have already started adopting, however, it's not happening fast enough yet.

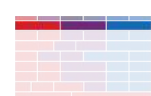
This shaping of young leaders is the joint responsibility of parents, teachers, and society in general.

We often do not give enough opportunities for our children to overcome and work through their challenges.

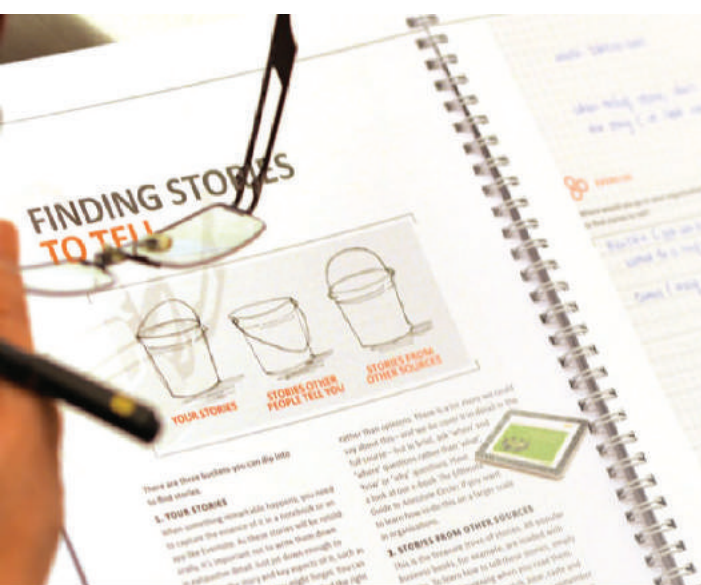
■ This article was previously published in print.



Audrey is the former head of Leaderonomics Youth. The team designs and delivers engaging programmes for youth aged 8-17. She believes every youth can be empowered to be a leader and make a difference wherever they are. Eva is the head of research at Leaderonomics. She believes that everyone can be the leader they would like to be, if they are willing to put in the effort and are curious to learn along the way, as well as with some help from the people around them. Get in touch with them at editor@leaderonomics.com.



ROLE MODELS Role models provide learning and inspiration which help individuals define themselves. Individuals choose their role models and the qualities which they wish to emulate. Individuals judge themselves against the standards that role models set, and seek to emulate them. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLP1 to find out more.



Are your stories inspiring action?

The most successful leaders are storytellers. By mastering business storytelling they achieve extraordinary business results. As a modern day leader, this is a must-have skill that needs to be developed.

Let us help you put stories to work!

Contact us at info@leaderonomics.com to find out more.



Leaderonomics
The Science of Building Leaders

How Hunger for Praise Hinders Success



By **NIKHIL BANSAL**
editor@leaderonomics.com

AROUND the turn of the 19th century, the brilliant minds of America were racing against each other to invent the most revolutionary machine of those times, the airplane.

Samuel Pierpont Langley was one of the topmost contenders in the field. He had the best recipe for success. He was a renowned astronomer and had connections with the most powerful people then, such as Andrew Carnegie and Alexander Graham Bell.

His high esteem landed him a grant of USD50,000 from the United States Department of Defense, which was a lot of money at that time. His team had top graduates from Cornell University helping him accomplish his dream of being the first man to invent the airplane. His popularity was such that *The New York Times* followed him almost everywhere.

Having read so highly of Langley, aren't you wondering why we haven't heard his name before?

Well, Langley undoubtedly was a passionate man, but he was driven by the hunger of attaining fame; fame equivalent to that of inventors such as Thomas Edison, Nikola Tesla, and Bell, which would be possible only if he could make a ground-breaking invention like that of the airplane.

The Wright way

While Langley craved the limelight, a few hundred miles away in Dayton, Ohio, two brothers named Wilbur and Orville Wright were also building the flying machine. In contrast to Langley who had the right recipe for success, the Wright brothers were jokingly known to have had the perfect recipe for failure.

No institution had financed their project – their

efforts were supported by the proceeds from their bicycle shop. Unlike the great Cornell minds, the Wright brothers' team did not have a single college graduate, including Wilbur and Orville themselves.

Though Wilbur and Orville did not have any solid aid, they had a dream bigger than themselves, a purpose which kept their flame to invent the flying machine alive despite hundreds of failed attempts.

Motivated by their dream to help the world travel better, Wilbur and Orville finally succeeded on Dec 17, 1903, when they took to the sky in a field in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

It was a 59-second flight at an altitude of 120 feet and at the speed of a jog. Though the feat was remarkable, it went unnoticed. There was no *New York Times* present to cover the story. Driven by something greater than fame and glory, the Wright brothers were content to wait to tell the world.

What Langley and the Wright brothers were trying to create was exactly the same. Both were highly motivated and had keen scientific minds, but the difference between them was the thing that they were motivated by.

Langley sought prestige and wealth while the Wright brothers had a belief that they were working for. While Langley paid the engineers to help him get rich and famous, the Wright brothers excited the human spirit of those around them to join them in their pursuit of transforming people's lives.

Langley's obsession with success for himself was further seen when he quit once Wilbur and Orville's invention was recognised publicly. Instead of bettering Wright brothers' invention, Langley instantly quit because he would no longer be known as the inventor of the airplane and thus, there would be no fame in his name.

Bringing it all together

The humility and perseverance of the Wright brothers show us the boundless feats that we can all accomplish if we are driven by a purpose greater than ourselves. In addition, the self-centeredness of Langley shows how we can be hindered if we are driven by selfish goals like fame, money and power.

How often does this happen to you? You crave praise when you dress up for a party, or keep checking the number of likes on your Instagram post?

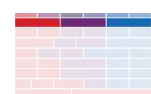
How about when you perform in an event, give a gift to someone, or donate to a noble cause – does your heart *secretly* crave praise from people?

The answers to these questions tell us how much our lives depend upon others praising us and thus, how much happiness we are losing out on because we have these expectations.

If we want to be happy, we have to develop an *attitude of service* towards others. We have to have a higher purpose in life, be content with ourselves, and always keep doing our best.



Nikhil Bansal is a student at the National Institute of Industrial Engineering. He is passionate about reading books and writing based on his observations and insights. Connect with him at editor@leaderonomics.com.



CRITICAL SUCCESS STORIES Identifying and reflecting on success stories can lead to lessons learnt for the future. Take some time to do so. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to bit.ly/SOBLPt1 to find out more.

BURGERNOMICS

WHEN THE GOING GETS HOT, THE TOUGH MAKE PATTIES

Can your team handle the pressure?

A Teambuilding Programme like no other, come find out in a myBurgerlab kitchen as you and your teammates make real myBurgerLab burgers under pressure!



By JONATHAN YABUT
editor@leaderonomics.com

CONGRATULATIONS! After years of working hard and mastering your job, you finally got promoted. You're now the boss. Armed with a bigger desk and a fatter paycheck, the company now expects you to deliver more by leading a team of workers who also aspire to become like you in the future. Or do they?

By now, you should know that a bigger role also means bigger responsibilities and that includes managing and developing the people who report to you. At the end of the day, their success is your victory too and their mistakes are also your failures.

So, are you a good boss, or will you eventually turn into a bad boss whom everyone wishes to leave?

Before you grow some sharp fangs thanks to all the work stress, here's a helpful list of what to look out for the moment you start managing a group of people.

1 Pass on too much work

Sure, you've got tonnes of work to do because your company wants to achieve so much for the year. But that doesn't give you the license to simply pass them on to your team.

Overworking your people – especially the good ones – puts your team performance at risk: it diminishes productivity and makes star performers feel like they're getting punished for being good at what they do.

Bad bosses easily pass on work because it's convenient and simply because they can. Good bosses believe otherwise. They take the bullet for the team, serving as the cushion that softens the blow to their people so they can keep on getting the best out of them.

Good bosses identify which tasks to prioritise and are brave enough to say 'no' to projects that don't contribute significantly to the bottom line even if it means saying 'no' to their own bosses at times.

Good bosses own the responsibility of serving as a 'traffic enforcer': delegating which tasks must be done by whom and assigning these tasks strategically based on their people's strengths.

2 Be the 'know it all'

It is frustrating and uninspiring to work for a boss whom you feel doesn't deserve the position, especially when he arrogantly thinks he knows everything even if everyone else thinks otherwise.

Bad bosses refuse to accept that learning is a two-way street. They refrain from consulting people below them, thinking it's a sign of submitting power to subordinates. What they fail to realise is that consulting isn't only a trait of open-mindedness; it is also a way to engage teams.

People are more engaged and inspired when they take part in delivering an output, and soliciting their opinions before you make a decision is one of them.

Good bosses are curious learners who remain like a sponge no matter how high their position is. To become better leaders, they ask feedback from operations teams on how they can manufacture products cheaper. They ask finance teams what are better ways to send budget reports faster. They take their sales teams out for lunch to understand if they're pricing their products right. When they don't have the right answers, they are humble enough to ask.

3 Don't care about personal lives

At work, we're all expected to draw a clear line between office and personal life. But that doesn't mean that our ability to genuinely care for someone becomes impossible too.

Bad bosses simply don't care. They think it's too personal to ask how your weekend went. They suspect your recent filing of sick leave last Monday was because you were too lazy to go to work.

Good bosses act otherwise. They try to understand personal situations so they can get a bigger picture of whom they're dealing with – why we come to work late, why we fear public speaking, or why we don't get along with a colleague.

A good boss takes the time to know your life story so he can help you become a better person regardless if you're staying long in the company or not.

We love a good boss who invites us for a coffee

5 Reasons Employees Quit Their Boss

Which one will you be – a good boss or a bad one?



break during a rough day at work but knows when to distance himself without getting too close for comfort.

When we know that a boss genuinely cares, we feel more secure and safe. We feel we're not just empty robots making money for the business. We feel as important as everyone else.

4 Deny them the praise or reward when they deserve it

After meeting the needs of food and shelter, psychologist Abraham Maslow reminds us that humanity yearns for acceptance and love.

We all desire to be valued by our families, societies, and companies. Good bosses know this well. It's in their nature to give talented employees a pat on their back. Over time, they reward accordingly: a salary raise, promotion, or a new exciting project.

Bad bosses would rather believe that great performance is what you're being paid for anyway and is only expected. They make excuses not to promote you: "This year is too early, perhaps next year," or "He's going to leave soon anyway." He defers until it is too late and the star employee hands over his resignation letter.

To keep on inspiring a workforce that will stay for the long run, an organisation must clearly demonstrate a culture of meritocracy. Company rock stars will always be willing to take on a bigger challenge, but beware that they also know their worth.

Remember that every recruiter in today's world is just a click away on LinkedIn. The moment your star employee senses that the grass is greener on the other side, he will easily jump ship.

5 Forget that mentorship and career development are your duties

The company isn't just giving you people so you can accomplish more work. As a boss, you're also

expected to groom and sharpen your people's skills so that they can become like you. One of them should be ready to replace you in the future should you move up or move out.

Good bosses ask about your plans for the company for the next three to five years and map out a career plan that can help you climb the corporate ladder fast.

"Your strength is X, but to become a senior manager, you also need to work on your Y. I think you should do more of Z," says a good boss who observes your performance regularly.

A bad boss is clearly the opposite. He sees mentorship as an extra workload. He thinks employees should be looking out for themselves. He thinks your failure is your own fault, and there's nothing he can do about it.

Yes, he does worry if you're not performing well not because he cares for you, but because he thinks you'll simply add to his headache. He's the ultimate boss you just want to leave.

Becoming a good boss is a choice

Like any teacher who becomes happy when he sees his students conquer the real world, good bosses live up to the sincerest intention of making their people successful. They believe that the ultimate role of good leaders is to make more leaders out of themselves.

Good bosses clear the path, bad bosses dictate it. Bad bosses say "Go!"; the good ones say "Let's go!" In this age and time when people easily come and go, what type of boss do you want to be remembered as?

■ This article was previously published in print.



Jonathan is a much sought-after speaker on leadership, career management, and Gen-Y topics. Share your experiences with us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

Body Language for Collaboration

Are you acing or messing it up?

By **DR CAROL KINSEY GOMAN**
editor@leaderonomics.com

DURING my seminar on collaborative leadership, a man from the audience told this story: “My wife is an attorney, and I have always been a supporter of women in the workplace. I also believe in collaboration and try to make everyone feel included and appreciated. So, I was totally taken aback when a woman on my management team said that I didn’t value her opinion. I assured her that I valued and relied on her insights and had often told her so. But then I got curious and asked her what I was doing that made the opposite impression. She said, ‘In meetings, you don’t look at me when I speak.’”

Then, he said, “My question to you is, how could this one small non-verbal cue have had such a powerful impact?”

His inquiry was well-timed because the topic I was about to cover next was on the body language of collaborative leaders.

We are wired to pick up non-verbal cues

Our brains are hardwired to respond instantly to certain non-verbal cues, and that circuitry was put in place a long time ago – when our ancient ancestors faced threats and challenges very different from those we face in today’s modern society.

For example, in our prehistory, it may have been vitally important to see an approaching person’s hands in order to evaluate his intent.

If hands were concealed, they could very well be holding a rock, a club, or other means of doing harm. In interactions today, with no logical reason to do so, you will instinctively mistrust me if my hands stay out of sight – either shoved in my pockets or clasped behind my back.

The world has changed, but our body-reading processes are still based on a primitive emotional reaction.

Do your words and actions line up?

Today, the potential threats (our brains are always on the alert for potential threats) are to our ego, our self-esteem, and our identity. We are especially vulnerable in our desire to be included, to feel valued, and to belong. This is why collaborative leaders need to be aware of their body language.

Think of it this way: In any interaction, you are communicating over two channels – verbal and non-verbal – resulting in two distinct conversations going on at the same time.

What my audience member underestimated was the power of alignment – that is, the spoken word needs to be aligned with body language that supports it.

When this alignment doesn’t occur, the other person has to choose between the words and the body language. Almost always, they will believe the non-verbal message.

What cues are you projecting?

There are two sets of body-language cues that people instinctively look for in leaders. One set projects warmth and caring, and the other signals power and status.

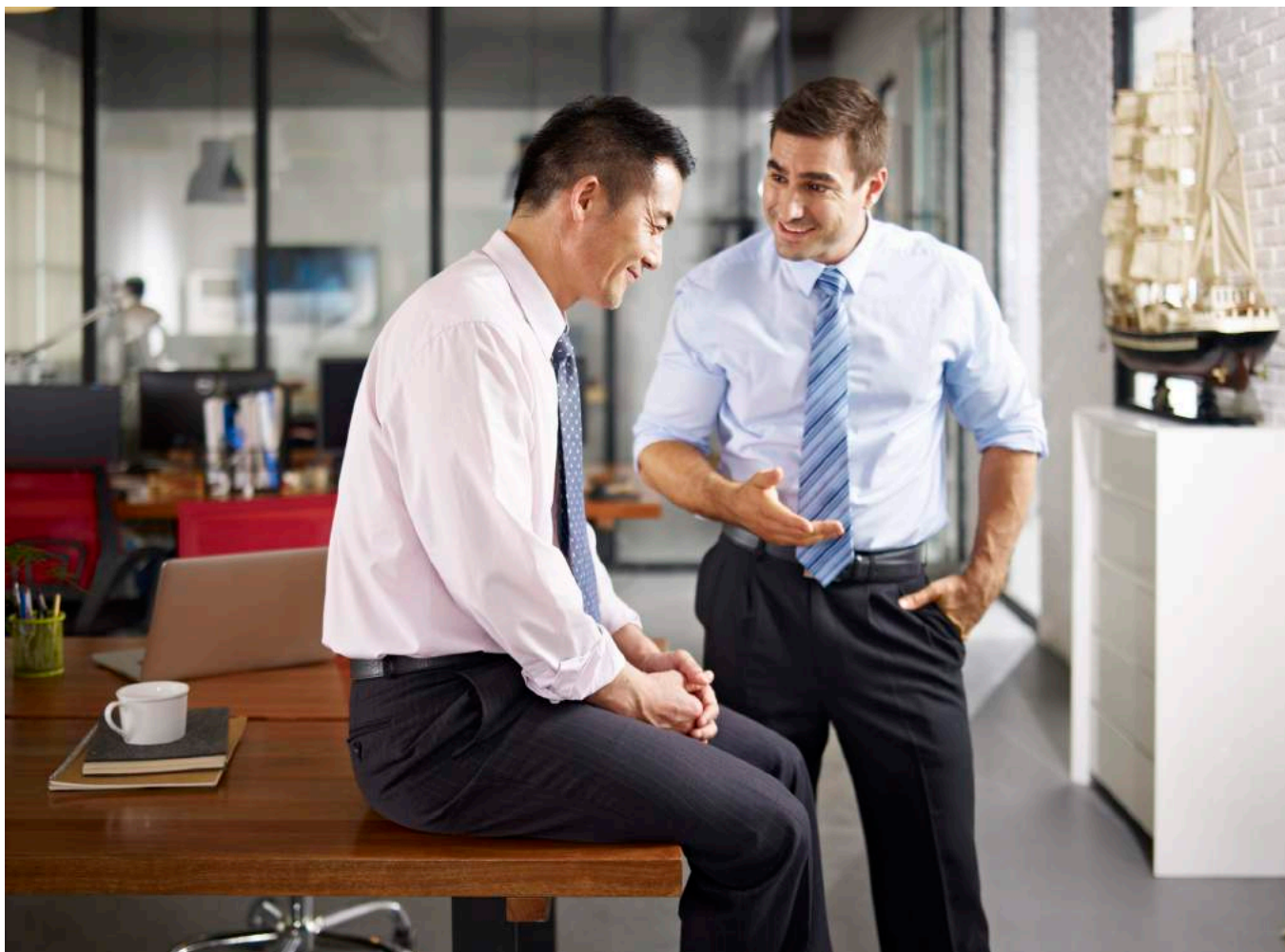
Both are necessary for leaders today but, for a Chief Collaborator, the ‘warmer side’ of non-verbal communication (which has been undervalued and underutilised by leaders more concerned with projecting strength, status, and authority), becomes central to creating the most collaborative workforce relationships.

When you use warm, ‘pro-social’ body language with all team members, you create an emotionally rich environment that supports collaboration and high performance.

What is ‘pro-social’ body language?

Here are some examples of what I mean:

- A genuine smile not only stimulates your own sense of well-being, it also tells those around you that you are approachable, cooperative, and



trustworthy. A genuine smile comes on slowly, crinkles the eyes, lights up the face, and fades away slowly. By way of contrast, a counterfeit or ‘polite’ smile comes on quickly and never reaches the eyes.

- Since collaboration depends on participants’ willingness to speak up and share ideas and insights, try using your head – literally. Research shows that you can increase participation by nodding your head with clusters of three nods at regular intervals.
- Head tilting is also a signal that you are interested, curious, and involved. The head tilt is a universal gesture of *giving the other person an ear*. As such, head tilts can be very positive cues when you want to encourage people to expand on their comments.
- As the man in my audience found out, one of the most powerful motivators to encourage participation is eye contact, because people feel that they have your attention and interest as long as you are looking at them. As a leader, you set the tone for the meeting. If you want people to speak up, focus on whomever is talking to make sure that he or she feels you are listening.
- When talking with someone we like or are interested in, we subconsciously switch our body posture to match that of the other person – mirroring his or her non-verbal behaviour. When you synchronise your body language with members of your team, you signal that you are connected and engaged.
- You look more receptive when you uncross your legs and hold your arms comfortably away from your body (not folded across your chest or tight into your waist) with palms exposed or hands resting on the desk or conference table.
- Positive attitudes toward others tend to be accompanied by leaning forward – especially when sitting down. When two people like each other, you’ll see them both lean in. Research also shows that individuals who lean forward tend to increase the verbal output of the person they’re speaking with.
- Also, face people directly. Even a quarter turn away creates a barrier (the ‘cold shoulder’), signalling a lack of interest and causing the speaker to shut down.

Stop fiddling with your phone

Physical obstructions are especially detrimental to the effective exchange of ideas. Take away anything that blocks your view or forms a barrier between you and the rest of the team. Close your laptop, turn off your cell phone, put your purse or briefcase to the side.

If you think it makes you look more efficient (or important) to be continually checking a laptop or cell phone for messages, I’d advise you to think again.

As one member of a management team once told me, “There’s this senior exec in our department who has a reputation of being totally addicted to his smart-phone, which is especially distracting during internal meetings. When he finally focuses on others, peers make jokes about his ‘coming back to earth’. The result is that when he does contribute, he has little credibility.”

The bottom line is: If you really want to foster collaboration, make sure you look and act like you do!



Dr Carol Kinsey Goman is an international keynote speaker at business meetings, association conferences, and for government agencies and universities. She specialises in helping leaders align their verbal and non-verbal messages when managing change, fostering collaboration, building trust in cross-cultural teams, and projecting that illusive quality called ‘leadership presence’. She is the author of The Silent Language of Leaders: How Body Language Helps – or Hurts – How You Lead and the creator of LinkedIn Learning’s most popular 2017 video course, Body Language for Leaders. If you want to connect with her, send an email to editor@leaderonomics.com.



Language is not confined to literal words, phrases and sentences. Language encompasses the non-verbal ones, i.e. your body language. Author Gary Chapman has extended the meaning of ‘language’ to how we communicate our love for others. Check out these five languages of appreciation, particularly in the workplace at this link: bit.ly/STappreciation



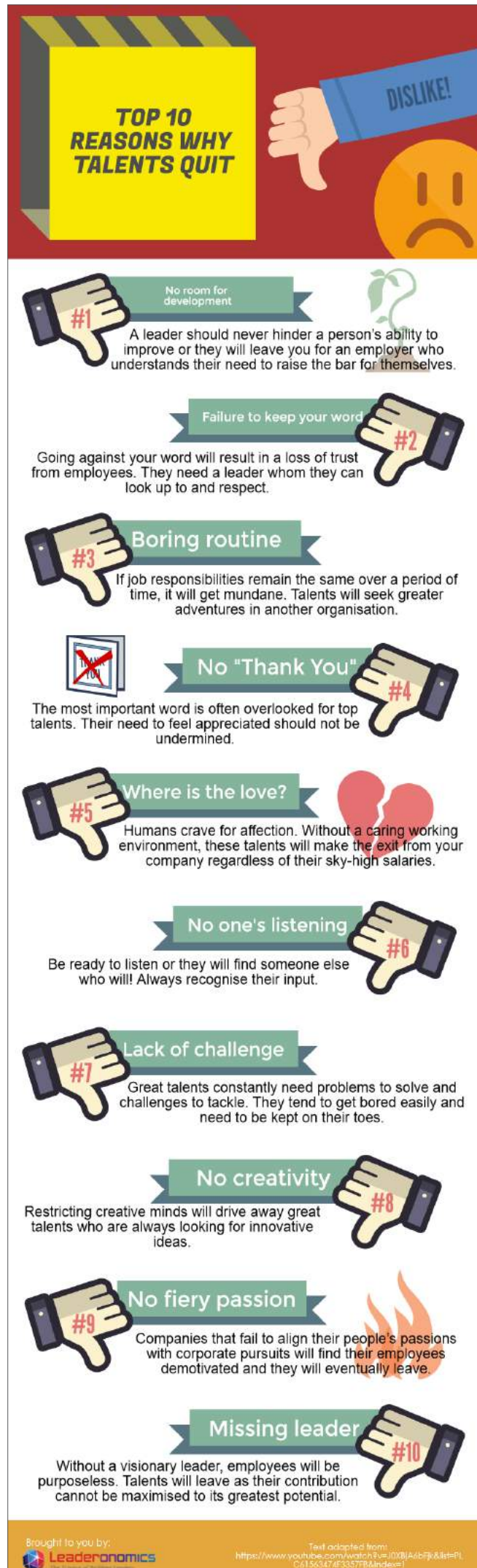
Our body language plays a very important role in how people perceive us. It is also a very useful communication tool. Here are a few tips on how to make the best out of any situation. Check out: bit.ly/HPbodylanguage

By LIM LAY HSUAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

THERE is a saying that people leave managers, not companies. Employees don't just turn up for work one day and decide to quit.

By the time they have decided to do so, it's usually after a substantial amount of buffer time to consider, re-consider and answer some very hard questions for themselves.

Here are our top 10 reasons why talents call it quits.



Lay Hsuan was part of the content curation team for Leaderonomics.com, playing the role of a content gatekeeper as well as ensuring the integrity of stories that came in. She was an occasional writer for the team and was previously the caretaker for Leaderonomics social media channels. Write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com and share with us which reason might resonate with you the most.

Announcing Our Brand New Podcast!



As promised, we have a brand new podcast and there's something for everyone. Kicking off this month, join us on Leaderonomics FM as we discuss some of the pertinent topics in leadership, finance, human resources and even technology! Here are some of the highlights.

Find us – **Leaderonomics FM** – on Spotify.



1 Be A Leader

Roshan Thiran studies the life of individuals who have made profound impact on communities, society and thought. Listen to leadership lessons derived from the lives of Mother Teresa, Rosa Parks, Genghis Khan, and many more.

This week: Lessons from Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson

How did Dwayne Johnson – also known as 'The Rock' – go from being a failed football player to a wrestling sensation and then, one of Hollywood's hottest stars? One theme that stands out throughout Johnson's life is having the self-belief that we are not bound by our circumstances. Join Roshan as he explores the 'growth mindset' concept.



2 Governance Wednesday

Here, you can find everything to do with compliance, corporate integrity and corporate governance in organisations and the workplace.

This week: Predictions for this year

What's in store for corporate governance this year, and what are the pressing issues for corporations to pay attention to in 2019? Join Roshan and Leaderonomics faculty trainer Dr Mark Lovatt, also the CEO of Trident Integrity Solutions, in this informative and lively discussion.



3 HR Documentation by Heera Singh

In this special series with author Heera Singh, we chat with him about his book and some of the ideas behind it.

This week: Overview of Heera Singh's book on HR management

Looking for a guide for your HR management? Listen to Heera Singh, author of *Human Resources Documentation* as he discusses some of the best practices for Malaysian companies.



4 The PennyWise Show

Financially-savvy individuals share their tips and tricks for managing money in this series – tune in to improve your financial acumen.

This week: Personal Finance with Mr Stingy

Overspending and unnecessary loans are some of the common issues associated with poor financial management. How does one get to achieve quality living without worrying about finances? Find out from former Leaderonomer Aaron Tang – founder of *mr-stingy.com* and expert in personal finance, money management and cryptocurrency – as he explores these topics.



5 Tech Talk

If you have been following Roshan Thiran's videos on LinkedIn, you would have seen Karamjit Singh in the TechTalk Friday videos. Follow this series and find out all you need to know about what's going on in today's digital space.

This week: Utilising digital data

Join Karamjit Singh of Digital News Asia as he looks back at 2018 and how popular crowdfunding platform pitchIN performed.



By **AVA DIAMOND**
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHEN we are in a conversation with another person, what are most of us generally doing while they are talking? If we were honest, we would have to admit that we're usually thinking of how we will respond. There are very few of us who are fully engaged and deeply listening to the other person's message.

The people we lead want to know that we care about them as individuals. They want to know that they matter. They want to know that we are listening to them.

That means listening intently. That means being fully present with what they are saying. That means getting behind their eyes and trying to see the world from their perspective.

The listening spirit

The Chinese character for listen, *ting*, captures this spirit of listening.

The upper left part of the symbol stands for ear. We use our ears to hear the words the speaker is saying. The lower left-hand part of the symbol is for 'king' or 'dominant one', indicating that hearing the words through our ear is the most important part of the listening process.

In the upper right-hand part of the symbol, we see mind. Our minds help us understand the words the speaker is saying and the message they contain.

Below that is eye. Our eyes allow us to see any non-verbal messages the speaker might be sending.

In the bottom right hand side is heart, and above that, the almost horizontal line translates to 'one' or 'to become of one'. This tells us that if we listen in this way, with our ears, mind, eyes, and heart, we can become of one heart.

To Be a Better Leader, Listen With *Ting*



Deeply listening

I don't know about you, but this is not the way I was brought up to listen. I'm from New York.

Where I grew up, people listened and talked at the same time. So, if you began a sentence, and I was excited by what you said, I'd jump right into the middle of your sentence with my addition or response. And, you'd feel free to do the same.

We'd both be talking and listening and interrupting all at the same time. I did not learn to listen with *ting* until much later in my life.

Listening with *ting* enables us to have a much higher quality of conversation and communication. We are

engaged in what the other person is telling us. We are deeply listening for their meaning. We bring our hearts, minds, ears, and eyes into the exchange. And we get a much better result.

■ *This article was previously published in print.*



Ava Diamond is an international business and motivational speaker who brings current and relevant insights to increase individual and organisational performance through her practical information and high-energy delivery. To connect with her, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

**GROW,
BUILD,
TRANSFORM.**

AT LEADERONOMICS, we believe leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of communities they belong to. And we believe that all human beings have the potential for leadership. No matter who you are, what you do and whatever challenges are hampering your progress, Leaderonomics can help you and your organisation achieve maximum potential.

For tools, tips, tutorials, inspiring stories and knowledge to help you grow in your leadership, visit www.leaderonomics.com