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HOW TO BE YOUR OWN MENTOR

There are a handful of people in my life who I look up to as mentors for my career, marriage, and family. I appreciate them because:

1. They give me a different perspective on things.
2. They share their experiences with me, both victories and failures.
3. They aren't afraid to correct and challenge me.
4. They encourage me.
5. They guide my thought processes.

Mentors are great to have. Who wouldn’t want someone who cares about our personal and career development and who can guide us in our journey? But with seasons in life (such as relocating to different cities or countries) and general busyness, I find it can be very difficult to maintain regular contact.

So how can we function in the periods in between when mentors are not around? Can we replicate some dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship on our own? I believe we can, and these steps are applicable even for those who don’t currently have a mentor.

Here are a few practical things we can do to “self-mentor”:

1. Keep a journal — Mentors are fantastic because they are able to see things that we may not and point these out. Journaling is one way that we can examine ourselves from an “outside” perspective. I have kept a journal for 10 years now, and it’s very interesting what you can deduce when you look back on past entries.
2. Reflect regularly — Mentors will be able to identify what went well and what did not go so well, so regular self-reflection is essential so that we can see this ourselves. We shouldn’t do this entirely on our own and should appeal to people around us for feedback to ensure we eliminate blind spots.
3. Surround yourself with different people to get different ideas — Good mentors will have an ability to ask the right questions so that we will consider things we haven’t thought about before. They will also be able to encourage us to go beyond our zones of comfort. If we can surround ourselves with peers who do not think like us, we will be able to hear different ideas and see things from different perspectives.

Of course, the ideal would be for all of us to find a perfect mentor, but in the meantime, these steps we can all take. This week’s pages are all about the mentoring relationship.

How do you find a mentor? Are you ready to be a mentor? I think both of these questions are important. Before embarking on a mentoring relationship, it’s very important to understand that mentoring relationships require a significant amount of time and effort. You will also find value in this relationship once there is a clear purpose to it.

1. Take the next step and be proactive
   For some, the mentor-mentee relationship comes naturally. Certainly, people are able to click instantly and their mentoring relationship begins with minimal effort. Though some mentoring relationships develop easily, don’t just wait for it to happen. Take the initiative to find a suitable mentor. Be willing to take that step to build a good mentoring relationship right from the start.

2. Begin to know yourself
   “How do I know myself?”
   Many have asked themselves this question. Here are a few things to consider as you try to discover the real you.

3. Have an open mind
   Keep in mind that your mentor may not necessarily be a senior leader or even be in the same business.
   Mentors are people who empower you to grow in various areas, so they may not necessarily be a senior leader or business as you. “Look for someone who exemplifies the traits and skills that you want to adopt,” Walter explains.

4. Have goals for this relationship
   Set some objectives for this mentoring relationship.
   You will also find value in this relationship once there is a clear purpose to it.

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.
10 REASONS TO WORK FOR AmBank Group

NO. 1
AWARD-WINNING BANK
- Work for Bank of the Year 2013 (by the UK-based magazine The Banker)
- Asia’s Outstanding Company on Corporate Governance (9th Corporate Governance Asia Recognition Awards 2013)
- Malaysia’s Most Valuable Brands – Top 30 in 2012
- Best FX Bank for Corporates and Financial Institutions (7th Annual Alpha South-East Asia Best Financial Institution Awards)
AmBank Group has received both national and international recognition for ethical business principles applied to activities focused on employees and customers.

NO. 2
STABILITY AND WIDE REACH
Join a workforce of over 12,000 employees serving close to six million retail customers and a large base of business customers
AmBank Group has offices in Malaysia and across the region, with services ranging from retail, small business, commercial, wholesale banking, funds management, equity markets, general insurance, life insurance to family takaful.

NO. 3
(HUMAN) CAPITAL INVESTMENT
Excellent opportunity to build skills and grow your career
One of the four pillars of AmBank Group’s Employee Value Proposition (EVP) called “Growing Across AmBank Group” provides employees with an opportunity to be part of an ambitious and high performing organisation. Leaders support the achievement of professional and personal growth across the Group with structured and varied approaches to training and development and a focus on providing experiential learning.

NO. 4
INTERNATIONAL LINKS
AmBank Group is a partner of one of Australia’s leading banks, the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ). This partnership has resulted in the innovative offering of The AmBank-ANZ Get Set Solution, a service that enables students to lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle. The Group also supports the development of youth, sports, culture and services provider with a vibrant work culture with easy access to senior management, and practises knowledge sharing to enable quick development.

NO. 5
VIBRANT, ENERGETIC, COMPETITIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT
Be part of a great team
Employees describe AmBank Group as a vibrant and connected workplace. The Group provides an open and honest work culture with easy access to senior management, and practises knowledge sharing to enable quick development.

NO. 6
MALAYSIA’S BANK
Homegrown and proud of it
AmBank Group is proudly Malaysian and aims to stay that way even as it continues to support its customers across the region via its international partners. Its Malaysia’s Résumé website malaysiarestume.com houses many success stories of Malaysians showcasing the nation’s achievements in the world. From famous singer and songwriter Yuna, fashion designer Zang Toi to Genius Olympiad 2012 bronze medalist Sri Arivesh, many have their successes documented here.

NO. 7
RECOGNITION OF GOOD WORK
Much more than a smile and pat on the back for you (but you get that too!)
Hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed at the Group. It acknowledges employees who outperform and exceed expectations through the granting of awards, promotions and career mobility opportunities.

NO. 8
LOVE WHAT YOU DO. DO WHAT YOU LOVE
It’s not just about work
AmBank Group encourages its employees to lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle. The Group’s sports club Kelab AmBank Group plans an array of activities for its workers. Acknowledging that people are a lot more than just “employees”, the club promotes relationship building between staff outside of work and encourages them to maintain a healthy body and mind. The Group even has its own Toastmasters Club for employees who want to improve their public speaking skills.

NO. 9
OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU
The next step in your career
If you are a talented individual seeking a career in an established financial services provider with a vibrant work culture, AmBank Group may just be the right place for you. AmBank Group provides young ear-nest individuals, as well as experienced hires an opportunity to grow their career in the financial services industry. The Group is committed to providing a nurturing environment for continuous skill and experience development through various programmes for career growth.

NO. 10
DOING A DIFFERENCE
United at work, united in serving the community
AmBank Group believes in giving back to the community. Chairman of AmBank Group Tan Sri Azman Hashim is a strong advocate of employee participation in CSR initiatives. The Group lends a hand to the underprivileged and supports the development of youth, sports, culture and education through various activities under The AmKuash Programme. Employees of AmBank Group also take part in many volunteering initiatives, including the sharing of food with the homeless under the Kechara Soup Kitchen programme.

Since 2009, the Group has pledged to allocate RM1mil every year for the AmBank-MyKasih Community Programme which supports communities in 16 locations nationwide.
LIKE most optimists, I’m easily excited by the prospect of something good happening. This is a wonderful disposition for staying happy, but it can be treacherous in business.

If I get along with someone, I tend to trust them at their word. Call it naïveté if you want, but I don’t understand why anyone would lie or exaggerate their capabilities.

Unfortunately, like most naïve, overly-trusting optimists, this has burned me on more than one occasion in business.

A perfect, and frequent example, is the case when someone inspired by my work (or at least they say they are) approaches me with an offer to do something. Maybe they want to redesign the website, help boost sales, start a rebranding exercise, implement some better systems or figure out a social networking strategy.

They promise all the things I think I need, they say they are good at all the things I’m bad at, they have lots of time for all the things I have no time for and they have a list of wonderful clients and case studies that demonstrate how perfectly suited they are to help me “achieve my goals.”

On more than one occasion, I engaged in a business relationship with these well-intentioned souls and have found myself on the losing side of the equation. Often the results fall well short of what I expected or hoped for (which is often very different from what they expected). For example, when someone said they could completely redo my website, I thought that meant everything, including the store interface.

It turned out they didn’t have much experience with building a really good online store – so everything looked nice, but my store still didn’t work as I hoped. These relationships never end well and I end up shelling out a lot of money and not getting what I thought I was going to get. Since I learned the Bruder Principles, however, I’m proud to say this scenario no longer happens.

Named after Ron Bruder, entrepreneur, philanthropist and my mentor, Bruder taught me some simple techniques to ensure that the relationships I engage in offer true value and last for the long term.

1. **Do a background check**
   - Be it an individual or a company, it takes only a few minutes to Google them and do a background check. On more than one occasion I’ve discovered that a company was on shaky ground before we worked with them.

2. **Slow down**
   - So many deals, especially between small companies, are done with excitement and optimism driving them. Simply slowing down the process reveals so much. I slowed down a deal that was going too fast and it completely changed the dynamic of the relationship. The other party became more aggressive, more impatient with me. They seemed a little too keen to get the contract signed quickly. Good business relationships should not be built to go fast, they should be built to go far.

3. **Start small**
   - No deal needs to be comprehensive from the start. A new relationship should start small. Doing so often reveals true intentions and, more importantly, allows you to test the relationship with less on the line. Instead of a complete rebranding, for example, start with just a logo and see how it works out. I won’t do a big deal with new relationships anymore. They all start small.

4. **Don’t work with anyone in trouble**
   - Pay close attention to the kinds of things that are causing someone stress. If they seem to be under financial stress, either their business is not doing well or they are having personal money issues, do not engage with them. You cannot have a productive business relationship when someone is panicked about where their next pay cheque will come from.

(Note: There is a difference between not having a lot of money and being stressed about it). These four simple principles have worked so well to protect me and my interests and I won’t do a single deal now without employing all of them.

Simon Sinek is a trained ethnographer and author of Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action. An optimist, he believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together.

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**THE BRUDER PRINCIPLES**

**Customer Service Officers**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - Age 19-35 years old
  - Height 160cm
  - Weight below 60kg
  - SPM credit in English & Bahasa Melayu
  - Must be fluent in English & Bahasa Melayu
  - Willing to be based in Kuala Lumpur
  - Female only

**Front Desk Officer**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - Must be fluent in English & Bahasa Melayu
  - *Based at HQ, Oasis Ara Damansara, Petaling Jaya

**Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (LAME)**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - DCAM B1, B2
  - Attended B737-NG type course
  - Minimum 2 years Certification
  - Experience on B737-NG LAME (Cabin Interior Maintenance)
  - DCAM B1.1
  - Attended B737-NG type Course
  - Minimum 2 years Certification experience on B737-NG on cabin maintenance

**IT Officer /Assistant**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - Minimum Diploma in Information Technology
  - Fresh Graduates are encouraged to apply
  - Possess own transport
  - Leadership qualities are essential for this role
  - *Based at HQ, Oasis Ara Damansara, Petaling Jaya

**Aircraft Technician**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - DCAM/EASA, Cat A, B1B2
  - Minimum Diploma In Aviation studies will be an added advantage
  - Completed Basic Training from approved 147 organization
  - 0-3 years working experience

**Reservation & Ticketing Officers**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - SPM
  - Able to communicate in Malay & English (other language will be an added advantage)
  - Have good interpersonal skill.

**Aviation Security Officers**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - Minimum SPM or equivalent
  - Malaysian Citizen
  - Age 18-35 years
  - Male only
  - Height not less than 5’ 4”
  - Able to speak, read and write in Bahasa Melayu and English

**Ramp Agents**
- **Qualification & Experience**
  - Minimum SPM or equivalent
  - Malaysian Citizen
  - Age 18-35 years
  - Male only

*Operations, based at KLIA2, Subang Airport or other airports

Interested candidates, kindly send in your resume via email to: hr@malindoair.com
ENTHRALLING. A word that we hear pretty much from the beginning of our school lives, all the way to the end of our careers – and beyond that, at times. How do you make a mentor-mentee relationship work?

Well, it takes commitment from both sides – that’s for sure. Let’s have a look at the two sides of the relationship, and see how both the can prepare for the success of this relationship and build a solid relationship from the outset.

ARE YOU READY TO BE A MENTOR?
Most often, we become mentors simply because our management assigns us to the role. The commitment, however, if we are to take our role seriously, should be much more than merely someone assigning us a new employee that we have to guide. We need to want to be a mentor, and ensure we are well-prepared for this important role we embark upon. Many mentoring relationships fail, however, we should strive for a successful one, and it all starts from the commitment of the two parties, especially the mentor.

As a potential mentor, you need to not see this relationship as a strain on your time. You should see it as a development opportunity, and an avenue to achieve great personal satisfaction. Besides, you will also develop your leadership skills and allow you to learn to adapt different perspectives. It will make you more open to accept alternative ways of thinking and allow you to challenge yourself, but at the same time get inspired.

A mentor does not necessarily need to be someone at the top of his or her profession, as long as the person being mentored is at least a level below in terms of experience. That is, if we are talking about mentoring someone from the work environment. If, on the other hand, you are mentoring someone from a different career path, you should choose to mentor someone that is at the beginning of his or her career, or a few steps behind you at least. That way you can draw parallels with your development and provide the person with useful information and discussions.

There are a few questions you could ask yourself to determine whether you are ready to become a mentor to someone:

- Are you willing to help the person who has approached you, to develop and achieve success in their career and life?
- Are you prepared to invest time and effort?
- Are you a good listener and able to encourage others?
- Are you open to new ideas and perspectives?
- Are you interested in challenging and helping someone to reach further?

ARE YOU PREPARED TO HAVE A MENTOR?
It could be the case that someone at work has assigned a mentor to you. In this case, you probably do not have a choice or whether you wish to have a mentor. If that is the case, you might as well get the most out of the experience – it might, after all, turn out to be much better than you think.

Either way, there are a few things to consider in your journey towards finding the right mentor, and also managing the relationship in the best possible way so that you can reap the rewards. For a start, whether imposed or by invitation, you will need to find a way to indulge and attract the attention of your mentor. You should bear in mind that most mentors are looking for certain things from a mentoring relationship. These may include:

- A sense that they are helping someone achieve their goals and that they are making a difference in another person’s life.
- An occasional “thank you” or acknowledgement of the assistance they are providing.
- An enjoyable relationship.

As the mentee, there are a few ways to invite and sustain your mentor’s interest.

- Know what you need and want from the relationship.
- Have clearly-defined objectives.
- Identify problems you believe might be obstacles to you in reaching your objectives.

Give thought to and be able to articulate how you think a mentor can assist you.

Think about how you might reach your objectives with or without a mentor.

Be purposeful and pleasant, and have challenging goals.

Treat your mentor relationship with care; don’t abuse it by asking for inappropriate favours or information, and don’t take your mentor for granted.

Remember that in the end, you are the one responsible for your own development, in the end. As such, you should take initiative to determine your own needs, and also propose ways that your mentor could help you improve in certain aspects. There are a number of ways to determine your needs.

Review your last performance evaluation; were there areas in which your supervisor felt you needed more development and expertise?

Read job descriptions or advertisements for positions you aspire to hold in the next three to five years. What skills do you already have? What skills/experiences do you need to develop to be qualified for these positions?

List three basic needs that you have in your current position (e.g. less stress, more responsibility, more challenge, more respect).

Think about what you currently enjoy in your current situation. What’s missing?

These deliberations would be helpful in order to have a more targeted approach during your sessions with your mentor, and to even identify the right mentor for you, if you have the luxury of having choices.

DEVELOPING THE RIGHT SKILLS AS A MENTEE
As a mentor, there are certain skills you will need to develop to make the most out of your mentoring experience.

ASKING QUESTIONS
Since mentoring sessions aim to help the mentee more than the mentor, you should learn how to ask the right questions. If not, you will end up getting only the information the mentor is offering, which might not necessarily answer all your queries.

Make sure you learn the art of asking the right questions. It is not about simply coming up with a long list of thoughtless questions – make them really work for you by figuring out what you need to ask to get the information you want.

LISTENING SKILLS
To truly use listening to your advantage, you need to put in a bit more effort than usual. Aim to listen to – and understand – every word your mentor shares with you. Their time is valuable, and so is yours. Do not waste it by not really taking 100% from your sessions together.

Follow your mentor’s pace of speaking, and follow his/her thought process. Aim to analyse everything they say – how it all connects, it relates to you or the question you just asked.

Make sure you summarise and repeat thoughts to them, in order to ensure you truly understand their points, and come up with ways you could apply this in your situation (your career or dilemma at the moment or in the future).

Remember that this process may take some time. You may only be able to think of the applications after your session is over – but it would be great if at the beginning of your next session, or perhaps via email, you let your mentor know you have been thinking of what they said, and share your plan for execution with them. Reflection after your sessions and following up on those thoughts is perhaps the most powerful skill you could learn for mentoring relationships.

BUILDING TRUST
A mentoring relationship is based on trust. As such, you need to ensure you work hard towards gaining your mentor’s trust, just like you’ll take some time to trust them in return.

You need to show them that you are not taking advantage of the relationship by wasting their time, or spreading information they share with you around.

Be very wary, therefore, of what is important to your mentor, and respect their time and expertise. At the end of the day, if they are sharing some confidential information with you it’s for your own benefit, so repay them by keeping it to yourself.

RESOLVING DIFFERENCES
Even though your mentor is possibly older than yourself, and definitely of a higher rank in the organisation (or community), remember that you both have the right to express yourself, and that you have a right to shape the path that your relationship and the mentoring process are taking.

That being said, you need to ensure you do so professionally, in a manner that is appropriate and respectful. Find a way to address any differences diplomatically and politely, by not aggressively accusing them of doing something right.

I do hope this brief guide can give you some starting points for considering how you can enter, or if you are already in one, sustain, a mentor-mentee relationship.

Whatever your role in such a relationship, remember that you both need to work hard, be open to new ideas that may come your way, and make the most of it while respecting your counterpart. Happy connecting, and may you find a meaningful and nurturing relationship with your mentor/mentee.

Eva Christodoulou is part of Leaderonomics’ Corporate Services team. If your organisation is ready for mentoring relationships, we can help. For more information, contact people@leaderonomics.com
The former President Bill Clinton would also cite a teacher playing a huge role in encouraging him to go into politics. Along the way, he acknowledges how his high school shares. Whatever the plot lines, the movies are no less engaging than the real stories. There is no sole person you'd like them to have. Only someone who is relatively human to the eye. Sans perfection.

There is perhaps one of the most common mistakes we make when we seek out mentors: You are my one and only. Understanding that mentors are stop on a long road to learning. It's only natural for you to believe in a former President Bill Clinton acknowledging how his high school teacher played a huge role in encouraging him to go into politics.

The truth of the matter is that, whether you realize this or not, throughout your life, you would have met numerous people who have shaped and moulded you into the person you are today. Whether you recognized them as contributors in some official terminology or not. However, it is important to have all the advice you can get from a mentor you have a relationship with. And if you want to do that, you need to ask for advice from the person you trust and respect.

The choice of a mentor is often not as easy as it seems. Here are some helpful tips on your journey to find the mentor who will best help you.

**WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?** As with any healthy relationship, it should be mutual. If you think he has something to offer you, he is more likely to be invested in your development.

**HELPING HANDS ARE TIME-TRAVELERS** If you want to be inspired by a mentor, you need to be inspired by what you want to learn from them. If you are in a similar career standing as your mentor, you could benefit from the advice of someone who is more senior level. Peers can also help, especially when it comes to facing problems that only professional women have to face.

**INFORMAL TO FORMAL PROGRAMS** Today most companies have taken up the mantle of establishing mentorship programmes in their organizations. This means just about anyone can be a mentor to you, be it your current manager, a colleague, even your own family member. It’s about mutual guidance – you provide credibility to your mentor’s time. It can be as simple as asking guidance by providing you with suggestions that can help you improve your skills.

**PARTING THOUGHTS** Perhaps one of the most important factors in a successful mentorship is the open environment in which can open your eyes to learn.

In a professional setting, this could happen as you wait in line at the grocery store and start up a conversation with the person behind you or even during a moment in which you provide basic guidance to someone else. It can be as simple as asking guidance by providing you with suggestions that can help you improve your skills.

The idea of informal communication, the idea of asking for advice, even if the idea of asking for advice is something you’ve never done before, can help you improve your skills. It can be as simple as asking guidance by providing you with suggestions that can help you improve your skills.

The truth of the matter is that, whether you recognize this or not, throughout your life, you would have met numerous people who have shaped and moulded you into the person you are today. Whether you recognized them as contributors in some official terminology or not.
The Power of Question Thinking

Being inquisitive leads to results

“The important thing is to not stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.”
— Albert Einstein

By Cindy Yap
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No one expounds the significance of questions more effectively than Dr Marilee Adams, president and founder of the Inquiry Institute.

Adams, author of three books that focus on questions and mindsets, is also an executive coach, professional speaker and adjunct professor of leadership at the American University, teaching leadership in the School of Public Affairs.

With a degree in psychology, Adams was a therapist for many years during which she learnt a lot about thinking and relationships. She subsequently wrote her first book entitled The Art of the Question, a cognitive-behavioural psychology textbook.

“I then decided to take what I had learnt beyond psychology and to the world of organisations, businesses into teaching and coaching. My decision worked out very well,” she recalls.

Her second book Change Your Questions, Change Your Life, is an international best-selling leadership coaching business book which made its way also into education and is touted as a must-read for anyone wanting a path approach to crafting their present and future.

Subsequent to writing this book, Marilee started getting requests from colleges and universities to do work with teachers and contributing ideas to the school systems. “I had a lot of fun!” she quips.

Her latest book Teaching That Changes Lives is about cultivating a learner mindset for breakthroughs in schools.

The Power of Question Thinking

According to Adams, question thinking is a theory that suggests that thinking occurs as an internal question and answer process. It is a way of conceptualising and operationalising thinking, speaking, and listening.

“You realise that you’re asking yourself questions all the time and the questions you ask yourself pretty much shape how you feel, think, behave and relate,” she points out to The Leaderonomics Show.

She adds: “It therefore becomes very motivating to learn how to identify the questions that are already there. Then you can decide whether those are the ones that you would want to shape the future.”

Giving an example on why answers don’t change the world, questions do, she continues: “Right now, while we’re having a conversation, I’m guessing that you’re asking yourself questions such as: ‘What would be of interest to viewers? What do they want to learn? What questions should I ask that would bring out the most interesting and useful advice from Marilee?’

“And the way you answer those questions dictates the way you communicate with me,” she says.

When people understand the question-driven nature of their thinking and are able to alter their questions accordingly, it becomes a skill that anyone can learn and use. Not just in leadership, but in all aspects of your lives, she comments.

Importance of Managing Thinking and Mindset in Leadership

There is a difference between “asking” and “using” questions. Very few people understand the impact of questions they ask, and the importance of the structure and mindset from which the questions are asked, she says.

“The questions come alive with their impact. Questions are inherently relational, so when I understand all that, I will pay a lot of attention to the structure and impact of my questions and how that makes a relationship work,” she explains.

Adams elaborates that the definition of leaders does not only encompass senior leaders, and the whole concept of leadership should not only be by position, but also by influence.

Stressing the important role of leaders in empowering those around them, she says that the more leaders can manage their thinking and mindset, the better they’re going to be.

“Before I started mentoring leaders, I had individuals tell me they had been stuck in a situation for so long and had no idea how to move forward. But when I asked the right questions, I was able to plan together on how they can move forward and the superficial changes.”

“The life lessons were easily imported into the business or organisational space. I believe that what I’m able to do and see today is richer because of what I’ve been taught by so many people during my days in practice,” she pondered.

In her book Teaching That Changes Lives, Adams’ focus is on the mindset of teachers instead of students.

“So much of the work in the world of education focuses on students. I’m reversing that,” she says.

Acknowledging the role of teachers as “noble”, “incredibly important” and “difficult”, Marilee feels that teachers need the relevant tools to manage their own minds and maintain their own equilibrium in the classroom, not only for their own benefit but also in preparing themselves as role models for students.

“Teachers are models of patience, good thinking and collaboration. Research shows that professional development for teachers is one of the biggest factors that make a difference in the development of students. That’s the purpose I planned to achieve by writing this book,” she says, adding that the book also caters to parents in their role as teachers to their children.

Adams’ Nuggets of Wisdom

For a CEO, Adams has this advice: “This might sound funny, but I want you to be asking yourself: ‘Am I leading from ego or am I leading from service?’”

According to Adams, that question will tell a person a lot about what they are doing and the depth of it.

She points out that these days, many leaders worry about the short-term and apparent result. “Focusing on long-term goals, good communication, thinking systematically and really listening and empowering the people around you — these are the imperative skills for the 21st century leaders,” she stresses.

As for her advice to fresh graduates who have a degree tucked under the arm and the world under their feet, she sees the need for young leaders to have the necessary leadership and professional development.

“Sharing on a case on point, she says, “I started a foundation called the Berrett-Koehler (BK) Foundation together with my mission-driven publisher in San Francisco (whose published books were mainly about creating a world that works for all). Our main purpose is to empower emerging young leaders, especially in the non-profit world, who might otherwise get little or no training, development and mentoring experiences.”

With a small grant from the BK Foundation, Adams started working with an elementary school in Brooklyn, New York, specifically with two of their leaders — Camilla Lopez, the principal and Kevin Lohela, the academic dean, who are both below 35 years of age.

The leaders were given awards and attended workshops as the first step in a much larger process — to implement a bigger plan to bring the questioning mindset methodology into the classroom and begin a culture change initiative.

At the workshops, they learnt leadership concepts which were subsequently passed down to their employees in school, and both leaders and employees were able to plan together on how they can bring the methodology into the classroom to create culture change.

Through the process with the leaders and the staff, we encountered some difficult issues, but the leaders were able to turn the entire thing around and used those difficult situations to learn from, which was so exciting!”

To summarise her advice to young leaders, Adams urges young leaders to ask themselves these questions over and over again:

What can I learn from this?
What assumptions am I making?
How am I empowering the people around me?
How can I listen better?
What do people and circumstances have to teach me?
What is the best that I can offer to give my team the future that they want and deserve?

When asked about tips to craft, ask or think about questions, she admits that it would take a long time to speak on this, but concludes with two interesting quotes:

“Great results begin with great questions.
“Every question missed is a potential crisis waiting to happen.”

For the full interview and other Leaderonomics Show interviews, find us on YouTube at leaderonomicsmedia.
Doing Your Best

By VICTOR S. L. TAN
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Doing one’s best simply means doing something to the best of one’s ability. However, I would prefer to define it more specifically as the total engagement of one’s attention, knowledge, skills, experience, creativity, time and effort to the task at hand to achieve the best possible outcome one is capable of.

The world would be a much more productive and better place if only people did their best. However, the reality is that over 98% of the people do not give their best. Having consulted for over 500 Asian organisations and trained over 500,000 people in Asia to date, I have personally observed that there are many reasons why people do not give their best. The following are some of the main reasons:

- They have little confidence of their own talents and skills.
- They do not fully utilise the knowledge, skills and experience they have.
- They do not explore and stretch the potential possibilities within themselves.
- They are not motivated or inspired.
- They feel they will be punished with more work.
- The recognition and reward systems do not take their efforts into consideration.

Bringing Out the Best in People

According to recent Hay Group research findings, companies whose employees are highly engaged, outperform firms with the most disengaged staff by 54% in employee retention, by 83% in customer satisfaction and 400% in revenue growth.

These statistics should prove to top management the strategic importance of the role in bringing out the best in people in their organisations.

There are many things leaders can do to bring out the best in their people. For those who lack confidence in their own ability, leaders should inspire them to explore and apply their existing talent to achieve more.

For those with talent but without an outlet to utilise them, leaders can create opportunities to apply themselves better.

On the other hand, I know of very competent people in the workplace who try to keep their talent hidden because they are afraid that when their bosses are aware of their capabilities, they might overload them with more work and responsibilities.

Here lies the wisdom and restraint leaders must have to avoid creating such a situation. Of course it is convenient to give to those who are able and willing to do more and more work.

However, if this situation continues, the person overloaded with work will soon become demoralised and those who are competent will be afraid to come forward to show their talent.

The solution is to develop more people with the relevant skills so that work can be spread out fairly. In the haste and chase digital era of today, leaders often forget the basic fundamentals of creating an engaging workplace. Here are some of them:

- Provide meaningful work that people can relate to its significance to the organisation’s vision and mission.
- Allow autonomy for people to decide on the ways to get things done based on the desired outcome.
- Assign tasks with different complexity and responsibility, requiring different skills, knowledge and experience.
- Distribute work fairly.
- Give regular feedback on how people are doing in their work.
- Create a work environment for people to connect with their leaders, customers and other stakeholders.
- Encourage collaboration, teamwork and sharing of ideas.
- Develop staff through implementing career paths and succession planning.

The ultimate in getting the best out of people lies in recognising and rewarding talent and achievements.

The fastest way to dampen talent is when leaders reward everyone the same across the board irrespective of their contribution and results.

While it may be challenging to keep track of individual performances, it is well worth the effort as it is only through fair recognition and rewards, can best performance be sustained.

The Value of Doing Your Best

There is a common saying, “You cannot take the horse to a river but you cannot force it to drink.”

Well, the right approach is to take the horse for a ride out in the hot sun and then lead it to the river. Driven by its own thirst, it will then want to drink. Likewise, we cannot force people to do the things we want them to do. We need to find a way for people to want to do them.

The reason many people do not want to do their best is because they do not see its value for themselves except for what is good for their bosses or companies.

Leaders must persuade and convince the staff of the benefits that arise from doing one’s best. Here are some of them:

- Doing your best is therapeutic because you feel great and not guilty that you have performed less than your best.
- Doing your best gives you the sense of pride and personal satisfaction which increases your self-esteem and well-being.
- Doing your best justifies the talent, qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience you have.
- Doing your best resonates and fulfils the ultimate needs of human – self actualisation.

Often in the workplace, we face great challenges that call for more and more than the very best of us to resolve the problems of the day.

A lot of people spend a lot of time worrying about the problems they are going to face tomorrow. In fact, the best preparation one can do for tomorrow is to do your best today.

If we do our best to resolve the problems of today, there will be no bringing forward of today’s problems and tomorrow will take care of itself.

The great writer, Earl Nightingale said it best:

“We are at our very best, and we are happiest, when we are fully engaged in work we enjoy on the journey toward the goal we’ve established for ourselves. It gives meaning to our time off and comfort to our sleep. It makes everything else in life so wonderful, so worthwhile.”

Indeed we truly feel whole and complete when we do our best at work and in life. It is when we continuously do our best that we eventually reach the point of being the best in our area of work.

In this respect, allow me to share one of my favourite poems which I wrote and which appears in my book, The Secret of Change.
LEADING FROM THE BACK, MAKING AN IMPACT

By KHOO HSIEH PIAO

I f Yoda was such a wise guy, why couldn’t he defeat The Emperor? Why was Gandalf not the one who destroyed the One Ring, but he left it to a small hobbit called Frodo? If Nick Fury was such a great S.H.I.E.L.D agent, why was he not on the ground during the Battle of New York but “hiding” on the Helicarrier?

Today we look at “leading from the back”. Our conventional idea of leadership is someone in the front barking instructions and pulling the rest of the group with him. Leading from the back is akin to whispering choice words of wisdom into the ears of one or two “change makers”, and allowing them to set out and do the thrilling heroic job to get the job done.

To illustrate this, let’s take a look at how this principle has been portrayed on film.

THE ‘CHOSEN ONE’?

Let’s start with the grandaddy of modern sci-fi blockbusters – Star Wars. By the time of the events of The Empire Strikes Back, Darth Vader is rampaging through the galaxy hunting down the Rebel Alliance. Only two good jedis are left in the universe – Yoda and Luke. During a pivotal point of the film, it is discovered that Darth Vader is holding Luke’s best friends hostage.


Luke disobey’s and runs off only to get his arm chopped off by Darth Vader and became the one needing saving by his friends.

In Lord of the Rings, Gandalf is the only fellow ship of the Ring team member who knows the true power and capabilities of the One Ring. It’s arguable that with his wizardly skills he is also the most powerful member of the fellowship.

Yet his most important contribution to the group was convincing the Council of Eldorand Frodo that the Ring was a threat to the safety of the entire world, and worth sacrificing one’s life for.

Frodo in the end is the one who rides Middle Earth of the Ring by throwing it into the heart of a volcano, after surmounting great hardships along the way.

In The Avengers, Nick Fury is the most experienced warrior alive (having been in action since World War Two). Yet his most important part in saving the world was gathering the Avengers and inspiring them to work together to fight a common threat.

WISE OLD MEN

In these three examples, Yoda, Gandalf and Nick Fury are archetypes or symbols of the commonly seen ‘wise old men’ character that appears in tales and legends.

An early example is Merlin, the wizard in the legends of King Arthur. Like his modern counterparts, Merlin was known not for being the main driver of events but being the advisor and tutor to the hero, King Arthur.

As per Wikipedia, the “wise old man” is known for being a “profound philosopher distinguished for wisdom and sound judgment”. Their role is to firstly impart to the hero what needs to be done to right a wrong or save the day, and secondly to inspire the hero(s) to action.

So Yoda shows Luke the way of a Jedi and gives him wise counsel, Gandalf galvanises Frodo to risk life and limb (and finger) in the interest of good, Nick Fury rallies the Avengers to put aside their differences and work together to save the world.

These “wise old men” lead from the back, inspiring the course of events rather than actually engaging in them.

But wait, does this happen in the real world? Do we need “wise old men” and should we consider being “wise old men” ourselves?

There are a number of compelling reasons to do so, with a few listed below:

1. For some of us, it is past our time and season to be the active participant. Every job has a shelf life. Presidents, CEOs, directors or managers, even parents – they know that sooner or later, age catches up, and the people you lead should be stepping up to take the challenge.

2. We can’t do everything. Carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders? Ever thought it may be self-ish of you to do so, especially if the world comes crashing down because of you? We can and should share the load if it helps strengthen the shoulders of others.

3. Leading from the back allows the next generation space to grow. Taking up all the space in the frontlines? The next generation can only rise up and reach their full potential if we kindly step out of the way and stop trying to do everything on their behalf.

4. The next generation taking over could use some help. Rather than letting them do the same mistakes that we have done, why not help them learn from our painful experiences so they can avoid time wasting pitfalls.

But how do we do this in a practical way? How can one remain “out of the main picture” but influence what happens and the end results?

1. Firstly though… are we qualified? The qualifying statement – some people should NOT try to be “old wise men” unless they get the life experience to back it up! Else we could be giving the nice sounding but wrong advice to others.

Our three examples of Yoda, Gandalf and Nick Fury represent people who have done the leg work before, and have been on the frontlines. The world has enough armchair warriors and theoretical assumptions already.

2. Listen. Before beginning, we must know if our wise words are applicable to our chosen hero’s situation. Listening to them attentively helps us to help them diagnose the problem. Sometimes just being a listening ear for people to bounce off ideas is already a good way to help them find their way.

3. Start small. Leading from the back involves planting small seed ideas into the minds of others. A word of encouragement, a helpful observation, a gentle tip on how things can be approached - these are small things that can help someone get through a difficult period or correct their way of thinking. Remember, Obi Wan spent less than a week with Luke Skywalker - look at the results!

4. Timing. Sometimes the “Chosen One” is not ready for advice yet. Cue the old proverb “When the student is ready, the teacher appears”. The aforementioned example from The Empire Strikes Back is a famous example – Yoda may have been a Jedi Master giving Jedi Master level advice, but Luke was listening with all the maturity of an adolescent. Recognise some people are just not prepared to receive counsel, as good as it may be, and allow life and the school of hard knocks to do the teaching instead.

5. Nudge nudge. Accept that we can only nudge or point someone towards the right direction, but we cannot force or coerce them there. Doing so would make it our mission and cause but not theirs.

This can be scary. In the above examples, after the advice is given and the hero runs off the adviser has no idea what will happen next.

Gandalf didn’t see Frodo next until after the Ring was destroyed, Yoda passed away after his last piece of advice, and Nick Fury could only watch from the Helicarrier as the Avengers battled the Chitauri.

Could the hero(es) have failed in their mission? Could the world have ended? Theoretically, yes.

However, for them to continue with passion when the going gets tough or when we are gone, they need to be convinced in their own hearts that what they are doing is worth fighting for.

Every day, wherever we are, we can provide a listening ear or words of advice that may help galvanise the next world changer. Who can you inspire in their life adventure today?
How to Learn the Ropes

By Jason Lee
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1. Identify a mentor by finding something he or she has done which you admire.
2. Mentoring is a relationship where the mentor knows what you want to achieve and guides you to achieve it.
3. Have many mentors for different aspects of your life.
4. Mentoring does not need to be a long-term formal relationship.
5. You don’t need to meet a mentor face-to-face to be mentored.

Listed are a number of benefits of mentoring and how one can make the most of finding and developing a relationship with a mentor:

**Benefit No. 1: Clarity**
A mentor allows you to see things from a different angle, an independent voice. I studied law in university and was quite sure I would pursue a legal career, having done a legal internship every year of my student life.
I decided to take up a Masters degree and my strategic management lecturer had a conversation which changed my career trajectory by simply asking, “Have you considered management or consultancy?”
That opened the door to a journey of self-discovery which led to my passion in management and talent development to grow an organisation which adds value to the economy.
Make the most of mentoring by seeking your mentor’s perspective on your direction in life. If you are still in this path of self-discovery, I would recommend the book Mastery by Robert Greene who says that “you can learn a masterful way of thinking [developing a perspective] that takes a lifetime to develop in a fraction of the time”, with a mentor.

“Mentor’s pride can be his downfall, a Hypercompetitive World’s”

**Benefit No. 2: Accountability**
Accountability provides a string of benefits especially when the mentor needs to be goal-driven in his or her approach. With the help of a mentor, you will be able to:
1. Set clear goals.
2. Measure progress.
3. Monitor results.
4. Solicit feedback.
5. Use feedback to improve further

It does not mean that your mentor will develop a roadmap of success for you, but by having a “go to” person, you will be able to understand quickly, be more productive and take the path traced by your mentor.

**Benefit No. 3: Opportunity**
In the workplace, there are two opportunities from a mentoring relationship you can benefit from:

**Job opportunity:** A mentor can be invaluable to open doors to a new path in life. Recently, someone I was mentoring found his ideal job based on an acquaintance I introduced him to, because I knew that both my mentee and the acquaintance had similar objectives in their careers.
Career opportunity: If you absolutely love your job and you have a mentor at your workplace, your mentor may be able to link you to the right opportunities in the form of special projects, building a connection with someone you may otherwise think is inaccessible or a promising promotion one day!

Both mentors and mentees were approximately 20% more likely to get a raise than people who did not participate in the mentoring programme.
25% of mentees and 28% of mentors received a raise – versus only 5% of managers who were not mentees.
Employees who received mentoring were promoted five times more often than people who didn’t have mentors.
Mentors were six times more likely to be promoted to a higher job.

“...solicit feedback. It does not mean that your mentor will develop a roadmap of success for you…”
Benjamin Franklin

In conclusion, build and surround yourself with a group of mentors whom you can turn to for advice when needed. It can be long-term or one-off but it is important that your mentors know where you want to go and help you achieve that particular goal.

Tim Ferris, author of The 4-Hour Workweek which made best seller list for seven years consecutively between 2007 to 2013 mentioned that he has been asked many times, “How do I find a mentor?” His answer was simple but profound. Change the question and ask “How do I become an ideal apprentice (mentee)”?

Jason Lee is part of Standard Chartered’s Internship Programme in Kuala Lumpur. He believes that there are many benefits to finding a mentor and when you do that, it can make a huge difference.

Sunny’s Blog: A mentor can be invaluable to your growth and development in your career.
In HR Talk, we pick one human resources (HR) related topic each week, and gather a few HR experts to share their opinions on it. If you have any questions about the HR industry, send them to us at mystarjob@leaderonomics.com and we will get our panel of experts to answer them.

**TOPIC OF THE WEEK**

**HOW WILL RECRUITMENT CHANGE IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?**

**SHAZMI ALI**
Director of Human Resources
Pfizer Malaysia

Hiring of talent is more art than science. Has it always been so? Recruitment or talent acquisition has evolved more in the last 10 years than the previous 50 years. Social media, psychometric tools and job postings have changed the face of recruiting.

I personally feel recruitment is the key game changer for an organisation trying to make the leap from good to great. Getting the right people in is always 50% of the battle and many organisations fail at that stage and then try to focus on the development of their employees. Some gaps cannot be closed once a wrong hire has been made.

If I am going to be a clairvoyant and look thru the crystal ball, these are some of the key areas that will be evolving in the next 20 years.

1. **Individual and organisational values**
A candidate’s ability to match his/her values to the organisation will be the most important element in future recruitment. A candidate who has an “all win mentality” will not be suitable for a regulated industry while another one who has a “1 must be nice to succeed” attitude will not survive the Wall Street environment. Obtaining a first class honours, although something to be proud of, will not get you the job if your values do not match to your employers.

2. **Adaptability**
There is already an array of tools that assess psychometric behaviours. I am predicting that in the future, tools will be used to assess someone’s adaptability to get out of their comfort zone. The business landscape will be changing every six to 18 months, thus employees who can’t shed their skin to the needs of the business will be left behind. Recruiters will be searching for candidates who are adaptable and flexible. The future awaits the Jack of all Trades...

3. **Networking**
In the future, I predict who you know will be more important than what you know. With social media, connectivity across various social relationships will only heighten the chances of someone getting a job.

4. **Online resumes and recruitment**
Jobseekers today are mobile and energised by the opportunities that social media avails them.

There is a need to strike a balance and also what their firms are currently engaged in. Too much disclosure could gilded by the opportunities that social media offers recruitment consultants who are more exclusive domain of traditionalist HR practitioners, and instead rest more with a robust market of recruitment consultants who are more skilled than your in-house pool. This is an immediate benefit of outsourcing - the world can literally be brought to your doorstep.

Or rather, in the digital era, to our fingertips. We can even do our manpower ‘search’ more intelligently – for instance, rather than doing a simple search with a search engine, carrying out an ‘advanced search’ can help to filter out and target better-fit candidates.

5. **Outsourcing**
As we advance further into the technological age, outsourcing through the use of technology brings globalisation into sharp, yet strangely disparate, focus. All at once, we reach further and are much closer to the labour market yet interestingly, more impersonal.

The opportunity that outsourcing avails to firms is that one can now embark on multi-channel sourcing. For instance, head to India for software programmers, off to Manila for call centre experts, on to Pakistan for doctors, etc. The other advantage is, with a robust market of recruitment consultants, you can also tap into hiring top talents and may come across recruitment consultants who are more skilled than your in-house pool. This is an immediate benefit of outsourcing - the world can literally be brought to your doorstep.

Also next week

- **Micromanagement**
- **What does cutting edge leadership look like?**
- **How to hold employees accountable**
- **Lessons on transformation from biological evolution**

**Also next week**

**HR TALK**

**SHAZMI ALI**
Director of Human Resources
Pfizer Malaysia

The future will no longer be the exclusive domain of traditionalist HR practitioners, and instead rest more with the business. Recruiters would therefore need to adapt to the market and source talent differently whilst thinking outside of the box.

Looking ahead, recruiters must work even closer on retention and job redesign, and the pressure will be there to deliver applicants faster at lower costs.

The war of talent remains thin especially with the retirement of the baby boomers from Year 2020.