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KAREN SAYS

MY PLATE OVERFLOWETH

WITH all the discussion on sleeping and eating right, and energy management, you might think that this week’s instalment of our career pullout still has thoughts of “the beautiful game” lingering.

Somehow though, some of us manage to maintain terribly wrong time-zone sleeping patterns, working (or just fretting over work) till the wee hours, long after the World Cup finals.

On an individual and organisational level, we bring you the importance of rejuvenation, and at times the pitfalls we may need to consider.

We learn that an avocado is not a salad ingredient at all! But nature’s own management guru demonstrating, in its own quiet way, that preserving company core values is paramount even as organisations embrace change and stimulate progress. And Jack Chua talks about the lasting legacy of Cambodia helped me ground myself; reminding me to breathe in and immerse myself in the wonders and troubles of Cambodia helped me ground myself; reminding me that sticking to my life goal of helping people will always be enriched and rejuvenated beyond all expectations.

On my part, I believe that taking a year out to live, breathe in and immerse myself in the wonders and troubles of Cambodia helped me ground myself; reminding me that sticking to my life goal of helping people will always take precedence on my “plate” and that in doing so, my life would be enriched and rejuvenated beyond all expectations.

This Saturday, do enjoy the reflections and practical tips shared by our esteemed writers and contributors. And if staring reverently at your avocado draws quizzical looks from your breakfast buddies, invite them to read along and join us on our quest to grow leaders and transform the nation.

Have a fantastic weekend all!

KAREN NEOH
Editor
leaderonomics.com

TUNE IN

Want practical tips for success on your way home? We’re on every Tuesday from 6pm to 7pm.

Try This!

Do you have an opinion you’d like to share with us? Visit leaderonomics.com or write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com
Please provide your full name, occupation (designation and employer) and telephone number.

BODY, MIND, SOUL

BY SARAH TAN
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ALBERT Einstein once said the only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once. This serves as a good reminder that everything is not meant to occur in one go, but in moderation.

As important as it is to view time as something precious, getting ahead of it may be overwhelming. Thus, the team at Leaderonomics thought we would step in and suggest how you might re-energise yourself and avoid burning out.

Here are three essential parts of your life to refuel:

BODY
Are you taking care of your physical health? Amid the heap of work piled up on our tables, we tend to forget to feed our bodies proper nutrition or sleep.

Remember to eat a healthy diet, exercise and get at least seven hours of sleep a night. If you do not get enough sleep on a regular basis, taking power naps are proven to be a helpful boost to your health, energy and alertness.

MIND
Over-committing is a commonly made mistake that we fall into. Avoid biting off more than you can chew. This ensures a better focus on the tasks at hand, allowing you to carry them out effectively.

We have all heard of the term, “a lot on my plate” before. All of us have differently-sized plates – know your plate size and learn to say “no” before too many responsibilities pile up.

When doing the work you have already committed to, remember to take breaks. Taking short breaks regularly in between work has been proven to improve productivity. Know your limits and don’t allow yourself to go berserk!

SOUL
In the midst of all our work, emotions may be neglected. Working in a high stress environment? Take at least a day off every week to spend time with family and friends. Don’t turn weekends into weekdays.

Working with difficult people? We may try to avoid dealing with negative people as it can be a waste of time and emotions, when in reality, it feeds our stress. Speak to someone you respect about what you are going through, and make sure your feelings are prioritised as well.

If you have noticed, the common factor that causes us to ignore our mental, emotional and physical health is being too busy.

While it is great to desire to do your work with a spirit of excellence, we will not be able to do so well if we neglect taking care of ourselves. Bearing that in mind, here’s to practicing a moderate and balanced life for the second half of the year!

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily of Leaderonomics.
NE of the best classes I ever took was on public speaking. Learning, researching and analysing a topic in depth but being unable to communicate the value of the findings is simply doing yourself a disservice.

Not having the energy to close a project well – because the energy level just dissipated over time – is an unfortunate outcome as well. So given the opportunity to attend the Corporate Athlete programme three years ago was a great chance to learn how small deliberate changes in daily habits can play a major role in energy management which in turn impact the ability to focus and deliver.

Jack Groppel, PhD authored The Corporate Athlete, a book on achieving the pinnacle of corporate performance and co-authored The Corporate Athlete Advantage. Groppel developed the Corporate Athlete® concept for his training programme, helping both business executives and athletes increase performance levels.

He combined his programme with Jim Loehr to form the Human Performance Institute, part of Wellness & Prevention Inc, a Johnson & Johnson company.

The Corporate Athlete programme was a unique and eye-opening (both metaphorically and physiologically) experience for me. I asked Groppel about the moment of revelation that prompted him and Loehr to develop a programme for corporate executives.

They met in 1977, when both were heavily involved in sport sciences.

-Jim’s doctorate is in psychology and he was a practising sport psychologist. My doctorate is in exercise physiology and I was a professor in kinesiology and bioengineering at the University of Illinois,” explains Groppel.

They realised that although they came from very different back-grounds, they were speaking the same language about how to help someone who was already an elite performer improve his or her skills to grow and progress.

About four years later, Groppel attended an event where the former No. 1 world tennis player, Stan Smith was asked, “Now that you’re nearing the end of your playing career, what do you want to do?”

His answer: “I want to take all the skills I’ve learned as an athlete and use those skills in business.”

Smith’s response was riveting to Groppel. It was an “aha” moment, and the genesis of the term “Corporate Athlete”.

ON ENERGY MANAGEMENT

“First things first, without energy, nothing happens. From a physics perspective, Newton’s First Law says that ‘a body will stay at rest (or in motion) until acted upon by an outside force’.

From a biological perspective, energy causes life to abound, from the basics of energy one receives from a calorie of food, to the focus of one’s attention on something that’s important, to the feelings we might have surrounding a situation, and the purpose one attains when connecting to something that truly matters (e.g. one’s child),” says Groppel.

In the past, the focus was on developing people mostly in the mental dimension; learning new skills for performance excellence in an organisation. But, according to Groppel, that all changed.

The life of a business person has changed radically since the 1980s where there seemed to be a clearer delineation between work and free time.

Today it is EASY to find you, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We are inundated daily with over 200 emails, text messages, etc. But, what has this caused?

Disengagement!” exclaims Groppel.

“Business leaders are realising that they must provide ways of energising their people, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. This ‘new think’ paradigm is catching on quickly and it is going to change the very face of how we go, to school and on from there,” he adds.

Past participants:

“It really gave us a new perspective on managing our day-to-day energy so we can consistently perform at our best.” — Samuel R. Allen, CEO, Deere & Company

“A very compelling, pragmatic, and uni-versal model for how change occurs. The Corporate Athlete training transformed the way that I and many of my executives look at our lives, not only at work but at home.” — Steve Trang, former chairman and CEO, Pepsico

MESSAGE TO MALAYSIANS

1 Life is about purpose. Be sure to connect to what matters most and use that as your North Star in guiding your decisions.

It’s interesting to me that when you read the really great books on leadership, they involve words like courage, heart, passion and honour. These are spiritual words that connect us to something greater than ourselves.

2 Remember that you are a biologi-cal and behavioural being. As such, you must get recovery in your life. Come see the days when we can just go, go, go, until we drop. Every day “could” look like that. But, if it does, we will get sick, our relationships will fall apart and we will go into a downward spiral.

This doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t work hard, but it does mean that you should continually seek to refresh and rejuvenate yourself. This is the key to sus-tainable high performance. I wish you well on your journey!

Karen is editor of leaderononics.com and hesitant about sharing with Jack Groppel how she has fallen from the Corporate Athlete ideal. Apples, nuts, breaks every 90 minutes… and more to be revised!
REINVENT YOURSELF

COMPLETING YOUR MID-YEAR KPI

By CINDY YAP
editor@leaderonomics.com

Are you suddenly jolted by the fact that we are already in the second half of 2014? Are you hit by the realisation that the fervour of creating your New Year resolutions to-do list has either completely worn off or stagnated?

As we enter Q3, doing a self-check and reflection on how far you have come in terms of self-development, building your personal brand, career growth and other aspects are necessary, followed by steps to re-energise, recommit and be inspired to finish the year strong.

PERSONAL BRAND CONSIDERATIONS

“Personal brand”, which can be summed up as your reputation, is a concept popularised in 1989 by Tom Peters, an American writer on business management practices credited with inventing the modern management guru industry. Peters is best known for his book in Search of Excellence.

Your personal brand is the image you portray to others and how you are perceived by those around you. It is what sets you apart; be it as an entrepreneur, leader, team player or representative of an organisation, project, idea or activity.

The concept of personal branding, also known as self-positioning, suggests that how you package yourself leads you to optimise these strengths to your advantage. By differentiating yourself, you seek to position yourself as a niche expert. A comprehensive personal brand helps you stand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me 2.0.

Regardless of age, regardless of position, there is no greater reminder of the importance of self-belief than Steve Jobs. Although given up for adoption at birth, Jobs turned the impossible into reality and became a big hurdle in self-confidence to become the architect of many successful Apple products. As far as branding is concerned, the brand positioning of the Apple market was almost an extension of jobs’ personal branding, i.e. cool, progressive, sleek, intelligent and unconventional, which he embraced down to his business wardrobe.

ME 2.0

Your personal brand is one of your most valuable assets in an ever-evolving and competitive workplace. Therefore, investing some of your precious time on it can never go wrong. The result is something you can bring along wherever you decide to venture to, anytime during the course of your career. Before embarking on the next six months, spend some time on the following:

1. Consider if your personal brand is sufficient.
   Ascertaining whether the personal brand you currently own is enough for you to be able to quickly differentiate yourself from many others who are the same, if not better, in branding.

2. Be self-aware.
   The process of building your own personal brand is also a process of self-discovery of your personality traits, which makes you unique and valuable. It helps you understand your own strengths, skills, passion and values and thereafter, enable you to optimise these strengths to your advantage.

   Self-belief, coupled with a strong sense of self-worth, is a necessary element and a key component in building your personal brand successfully. What you think and envision plays a large role in determining the outcome as you will find yourself taking action to achieve your vision, whether in becoming who you wish to become and achieving what you desire. Always believe that what you can achieve is as limitless as your imagination.

4. Differentiate yourself.
   Marketing is all about differentiation, and it is the same when it comes to marketing yourself. Personal branding helps you differentiate yourself from your peers. The differentiating factor could be in the form of your personality, dressing style, passion for work, working style, work ethic or customer service.

5. Be proactive.
   Once you have ascertained your unique attributes, communicate this information on what makes you unique and relevant to your target audience by networking and reaching out.

   Spend some time to assess and define your personal brand, as well as to seriously ponder who you are, what you represent and how you should create interest, visibility and presence in order to achieve your goals.

7. Leverage social media platforms.
   Studies suggest that a person’s Facebook page can predict job performance and academic success. Social media has been perceived to be a fairly accurate reflection of how good a person is, both personally and professionally.

Through one’s personal profile, we may be able to gauge qualities such as one’s degree of emotional stability, conscientiousness, extraversion, intellectual curiosity and agreeableness.

If social media is where your ideal audience hangs out, capitalise on it to boost your personal brand. Be alert of your personal settings and red flags: you may reveal to your friends and followers.

8. Be yourself.
   Your personal brand has to be a true reflection of who you really are. Only then are you able to reflect and brand in everything you do, including your personal network, office environment, social networking appearance and extra-curricular activities.

9. Take time off to rejuvenate your mind, body and soul.
   Taking vacations will benefit your personal brand in many ways. It not only helps broaden your horizons, but allows you to rest, renew, regroup, re-evaluate and redefine who you are.

Time away from the norm and exposure to new ideas, activities and people out of your usual circle will stimulate your brain, and provide you with new perspectives and opportunities to learn and grow to keep your personal brand fresh.

Meeting new people also gives you the opportunity to try out new ways of expressing your personal brand and possibly exploring another side of it.

Our mind, body and soul work in unison for our health and well-being. Therefore, taking care of the mind, body and soul aligns us with positive thoughts and energy. Aim to eat healthily and exercise regularly to gain added energy and a renewed spirit to achieve your desired goals.

CONCLUSION

“Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called YOU.” – Tom Peters

Therefore, let us refresh our enthusiasm, get our personal brand rejuvenated and target to complete this year according to how we had originally aimed.

To send your feedback on this article, email Cindy Yap at editor@leaderonomics.com.
INVESTING IN PEOPLE

MALAKOFF BELIEVES IN TRAINING POTENTIAL LEADERS

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

INDEPENDENT power producer Malakoff Corp Bhd is firm on developing its people and enhancing their skills. It believes that attaining optimum organisational performance can only become a reality with good human capital development. The group has committed to investing significantly in training focused on developing the technical and functional skills of employees.

“We believe in human capital investment where we can continue to groom our potential future leaders, and provide opportunity for new knowledge, skills and character development. “We aim to provide the resources our employees need to continually upgrade their competencies and performance. Our workers’ ambitions are our aspiration,” says Siti Hajar Mohd Dahlan, vice-president, human resources department.

The company’s human development initiatives focus on enhancing the soft skills of participants, with coaching and mentoring sessions to further develop leadership skills of the participants. The four programmes cater to the main segments of Malakoff employees, from entry-level workers to senior leaders.

MAX was established with the idea of providing a one-stop central avenue for all of Malakoff’s training and development programmes. It also doubles as a recreational space equipped with pool and foosball tables. Health, safety, spiritual and hobbies-related talks and activities are conducted on a monthly basis for Malakoff employees.

Located at LG2 of Plaza Sentral in Kuala Lumpur, the academy has a wide space of 12,000 sq ft. Since March 2013, Malakoff has offered this facility to the MMC group and the public for training purposes. Malakoff also provides soft skills training and development to the MMC group.

Malakoff Leadership Development Framework

The company’s human development initiatives focus on enhancing the soft skills of participants, with coaching and mentoring sessions to further develop leadership skills of the participants. The four programmes cater to the main segments of Malakoff employees, from entry-level workers to senior leaders.

Malakoff Leadership Development Framework

1. Technical/engineering skills

Technical Development Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURED TRAINING PROGRAMMES (STP)</th>
<th>ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAMMES (OJT)</th>
<th>PLANT COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMMES</th>
<th>SIMULATOR TRAINING PROGRAMMES</th>
<th>STATUTORY CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate programme</td>
<td>For experienced engineers and technicians</td>
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- **ENGINEER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (EDP)**
  - Open for all degree holders
  - Programme runs for nine months
  - Classroom lessons and on-the-job training
  - Exposure to the business nature and working culture in Malakoff

- **TECHNICIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (TDP)**
  - Open for all diploma holders
  - Programme runs for six months
  - On-the-job training
  - Provides an enriching experience of working in technical and project management areas

2. Soft skills

Human Development Programmes

- **LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES**
- **MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**
- **EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**
- **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**
- **FUNCTIONAL/ SPECIALISED SKILLS PROGRAMMES**

Refer below for the framework:

- **For EDP and TDP**
- **For non-executive staff**
- **For the specific divisions competency-based i.e. legal, accounts, IT, HR/admin**

Malakoff runs two internal programmes that focus on:

- **ENGINEER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (EDP)**
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  - Programme runs for nine months
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Malakoff Academy of X-Cellence (MAX)

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Malakoff also provides soft skills training and development to the MMC group.
THE DUALITY OF COMPANY VITALITY

By LILY CHEAH

When the stem has grown to 12cm or more, the final positioning and anchoring of the avocado can be done. The stem should be cut to the desired length and inserted into a glass filled with water where it will continue to grow. Nature, as we see, is a wonderful teacher.

E ADOPTING THE image of an avocado tree growing, we can understand that companies also grow and develop. By LILY CHEAH

- Core business
- Core people

CHANGE
- Cultural change
- Leadership transition
- Specific goals and strategies

AVOCADO TREE-GROWING

AVOCADO TREE-GROWING

Here are two things I note about the avocado tree-growing process:

1. It is as important for the avocado seed to grow a stem, as it is to grow roots. This point is worth remembering. At times we can be overly concerned with the need to grow strong roots, while at other times, we can be too focused on the need to see visible signs of upward growth. Nature, as we see, is a wonderful teacher.

2. The avocado tree is adaptable to change. The stem on the other hand may be pruned for the sake of more bounteous future growth.

For those familiar with the principles of Good to Great by Jim Collins, the avocado seed brings to life Collins’ “preserve the core/strategically change” duality, a concept which he observed in successful companies like Disney, Johnson & Johnson and Walmart that have endured the test of time.

He explains: “Enduring companies preserve their core values and purpose while their business strategies and operating practices adaptively evolve to a changing world. This is the magical combination of preserving the core and dynamic progress.”

While the roots of the avocado seed echo the core values and purpose of a company, the stem reflects new business strategies and operating practices.

Avoid the avocado tree-growing method illustrated, the farmer must maintain, that the latter must readily change according to the demands of the company’s future growth.

Real companies keep their values, don’t change the name of their company, don’t rebrand, but maintain their core values and core purpose.

It is interesting to note that Jim Collins, in his book “Good to Great,” used the metaphor of an avocado plant to illustrate the concept of “enduring companies” and their ability to maintain a stable core while simultaneously adapting to changing circumstances.

In a world where companies are constantly being disrupted and challenged, the concept of preserving the core while adapting to change is more relevant than ever.

1. DEFINE, SOLIDIFY AND PRESERVE THE CORE

According to Collins, the “core” that endures great companies successfully preserve core values of the company and the core purpose of a company.

In a world you wondering whether values like “innovation” are present in all successful business companies, Collins points out that there is no single magic core value companies are supposed to have.

The point is not what core values you have, but whether you have core values at all. 

Collins observes that you build them explicity into the company’s form and structure. This is reflected in how you structure your business, the processes you use to make decisions, and the way you communicate and make things happen.

2. EMBRACE CHANGE, STEADFASTLY PERSISTING PROGRESS

The second part of the study duality involves strategies and operational processes typically adapting to a changing world.

While the core “size” are steadfast in nature and operate as an anchor and compass for the company, the “trees” or strategies and practices, must continuously and proactively adapt to the changing world.

In this manner, companies can be seen as a tree, the trunk representing the core values and purpose, the branches representing the strategies and practices, and the leaves representing the operational processes.

To succeed, it is important to strike a balance between preserving the core and adapting to change, as Collins observes in successful companies like Disney and Walmart.
was due to a poor diversification strategy at growth which lasted till the late 1990s. This the uPhill battle rejuvenating avon – women, this was the first time in 113 years of marketing. Her charisma and eloquence in financial independence. sell products for a small compensation, Avon i.e. the “Avon Ladies” who make up the direct rent as retailers do, Avon’s revolutionary door- frowned upon. 34 years before women could vote, and travel States (US) selling perfume. The first Avon sales representative or “Avon Lady” was Mrs P. F. E. Albee, handpicked by a door-to-door book salesman. in 1886 by David H. McConnell who used to be vice-president of Neiman Marcus and later, in charge of selling women’s luxury clothing her Nonetheless. Her success culminated in her being included in Fortune magazine’s list of the “50 Most Powerful Women in Business” in 2004. THE PATH DOWNHILL – PITFALLS OF AVON’S REJUVENATION After the retirement of Kropf, Jung found herself treading on unfamiliar ground as managing the details of operations was not her primary strength. Avon’s fortunes began to decline during the second half of her tenure. On hindsight, analysts blamed it on her inexperience with the business, citing her overemphasis on rebuilding the brand to compete with luxury brands while neglecting the direct-selling branch. Several other missteps drove the company towards a crisis that led to her resignation in 2011. Several restructuring plans to cut down the number of managers left employees in doubt of their roles in Avon. They were also uncertain about the direction the company was aiming for as Jung’s policy of turning Avon into a luxury brand contradicted with its tendency to attract sales by discounting products. Luxury products are, in essence, valuable because of their high prices. Jung also acquired Silpada, a direct sales company specialising in silver jewellry, for an overpriced US$650mil, which ended up as a financial flop. At the time, 80% of Avon’s direct-selling revenue came from outside its home country such as Brazil, which had overtaken the US as the top market for Avon products. Jung was blamed for failing to react decisively to a demand for better information-management systems across Brazil. This was costly to sales as products arrived late to customers’ doorsteps. Her reputation was further tarnished with allegations that Avon violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act due to corrupt practices by Avon employees to bribe government officials in China.

LESSONS LEARNT AND THE WAY FORWARD Despite her mistakes, Jung left a lasting legacy on how Avon was to carry out its business. She breathed new life into a company that was fast becoming increasingly seen as out-of-fashion in the US. Coming into the scene at the age of 43, Jung pioneered a move away from the direct selling model and the entry into luxury retail. She made huge overhauls in the way Avon marketed and sold its products. After years of decline, Avon under its new CEO, was providing products that were on par with Lancôme or Estée Lauder, at prices that were affordable to middle-class women and product lines that appealed to a new generation of women. The success of Avon’s meta-morphosis into a high-end luxury retailer was due in large part to a time when direct-selling was increasingly seen as out-of-fashion in the US. Despite her mistakes, Jung left a lasting legacy on how Avon was to carry out its business. She breathed new life into a company that was fast becoming increasingly seen as out-of-fashion in the US. Coming into the scene at the age of 43, Jung pioneered a move away from the direct selling model and the entry into luxury retail. She made huge overhauls in the way Avon marketed and sold its products. After years of decline, Avon under its new CEO, was providing products that were on par with Lancôme or Estée Lauder, at prices that were affordable to middle-class women and product lines that appealed to a new generation of women. The success of Avon’s metamorphosis into a high-end luxury retailer was due in large part to

By JACK CHUA
editor@leaderonomics.com

T o many who have heard of her, Andrea Jung is a controversial figure. On the one hand, she is admired for being the first woman chief executive officer (CEO) of Avon, inspiring women around the world with her ability to reach great heights in the corporate world. To others – from business analysts to journalists devoting attention to the beauty industry – she is a fallen leader who brought about Avon’s decline. For better or for worse, Jung has left a legacy by reviving a company that was suffering from its outmoded business model. Because of this, her biography serves as an excellent case study on the triumphs and pitfalls of rejuvenating a business.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND Jung was born in Toronto, Canada and raised in Massachusetts by her Hong Kong-born father and her Shanghainese mother. She was raised in a strict Asian household that valued hard work and academic achievement. She graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University, where she studied English literature. After graduation, she aspired to join the Peace Corps but was dissuaded by her parents who wanted her to have a paying job as the family could not afford to fund her voluntary work. Consequently, she chose to enter the retail business on the belief that her interpersonal interactions with people in the industry would better prepare her for law school – the career path chosen by her parents.

When she decided not to further her studies, her parents were displeased but supported her nonetheless. After years of being in the retail business in charge of selling women’s luxury clothing and makeup, Jung was appointed executive vice-president of Neiman Marcus and later, senior VP of I. Magnin. She was fast becoming a superstar in the high-end retail industry.

MAKING A NAME FOR THE 108-YEAR-OLD GIANT Jung’s impressive credentials finally won her a place in Avon in 1994. Avon was founded in 1886 by David H. McConnell who used to be a door-to-door book salesman. The first Avon sales representative or “Avon Lady” was Mrs. P.F.E. Albee, handpicked by McConnell to travel throughout the United States (US) selling perfume. It was revolutionary at the time as this was 34 years before women could vote, and travel out of their houses to earn a living was frowned upon. As opposed to spending on advertising and rent as retailers do, Avon’s revolutionary door-to-door selling focuses on the sales channel, i.e. the “Avon Ladies” who make up the direct sales workforce.

In recruiting part-time representatives to sell products for a small compensation, Avon empowered women by giving them some financial independence. Jung was initially Avon’s president in charge of marketing. Her charisma and eloquence in passing messages for Avon persuaded former CEO James Preston to appoint her as successor in November 1999.

Despite being a cosmetic company for women, this was the first time in 113 years that Avon had a female CEO.

REJUVENATING AVON – THE UPHILL BATTLE In the 1990s, there was a decline in Avon’s growth which lasted till the late 1990s. This was due to a poor diversification strategy at the height of chief operating officer Susan Kropf. Kropf’s practicality and attention to detail complemented Jung’s idealism. Kropf helped transform the vision into reality by diligently overseeing the implementation and execution of new company policies. Jung launched several advertising campaigns to revamp the brand such as the “Let’s Talk” campaign in 2000, with Venus and Serena Williams as spokespersons for the brand. Jung opened high-end Avon retail outlets equipped with spa and salon. She also launched the “Mark” line of products for college-aged women. Another important trait that Jung had was humility. She led by following. Becoming an “Avon Lady” herself, she went from door to door selling cosmetics to women at New York’s Upper East Side.

Due to her efforts in rejuvenating Avon, the company’s revenue began picking up speed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with stock prices increasing 70% in 2001 since her arrival. Avon also witnessed a 45% increase in sales to US$5.7bil in 2004, from US$3.5bil in 1999. Her success culminated in her being included in Fortune magazine’s list of the “50 Most Powerful Women in Business” in 2004.

The PATH DOWNHILL – PITFALLS OF AVON’S REJUVENATION After the retirement of Kropf, Jung found herself treading on unfamiliar ground as managing the details of operations was not her primary strength. Avon’s fortunes began to decline during the second half of her tenure. On hindsight, analysts blamed it on her inexperience with the business, citing her overemphasis on rebuilding the brand to compete with luxury brands while neglecting the direct-selling branch. Several other missteps drove the company towards a crisis that led to her resignation in 2011. Several restructuring plans to cut down the number of managers left employees in doubt of their roles in Avon. They were also uncertain about the direction the company was aiming for as Jung’s policy of turning Avon into a luxury brand contradicted with its tendency to attract sales by discounting products. Luxury products are, in essence, valuable because of their high prices. Jung also acquired Silpada, a direct sales company specialising in silver jewellery, for an overpriced US$650mil, which ended up as a financial flop. At the time, 80% of Avon’s direct-selling revenue came from outside its home country such as Brazil, which had overtaken the US as the top market for Avon products. Jung was blamed for failing to react decisively to a demand for better information-management systems across Brazil. This was costly to sales as products arrived late to customers’ doorsteps. Her reputation was further tarnished with allegations that Avon violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act due to corrupt practices by Avon employees to bribe government officials in China.

LESSONS LEARNT AND THE WAY FORWARD Despite her mistakes, Jung left a lasting legacy on how Avon was to carry out its business. She breathed new life into a company that was fast becoming ancient history among American consumers and improved Avon’s outreach to new markets. Her departure from Avon left the company with hard-learned lessons. As Deborah Himself the former VP at Avon noted in her book, Beauty Queen: Inside the Reign of Avon’s Andrea Jung, the fundamental lesson learnt was that in order to implement big dreams to reinigorate a company, a strong practical-minded second-in-command (like Kropf) was needed to complement the leader’s strategic idealism.

However, it is not to be forgotten that Jung’s idealism has had other lasting effects on the world, namely her philanthropic work. During her tenure as CEO, she directed the Avon Foundation which had contributed millions of dollars to tackling women’s issues such as breast cancer and domestic violence. In April 2014, she was appointed president of Grameen America—a microfinance bank set up by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, that provides loans to women in poverty to start small businesses.

Jung would once again be devoting her life to empowering women in need – except this time, the trials and tribulations she had faced had made her a stronger woman.

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NEED SOME SPACE?

HOW TO CONNECT BACK TO YOURSELF

BY LIM LAY HSIUAN
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ODAY’S world landscape is a widely interconnected one. Such complexity and connectivity have distracted us so that what is important and impacted our ability to lead with excellence. But, what are the marks of an excellent leader?

In the Space to Lead by Janice Marturano, published this year, an excellent leader is a leader who can connect to self, others and larger communities, and someone who can skillfully initiate or guide change.

These traits are deeply rooted in four fundamentals of leadership excellence, but compounded with the challenges we often face in this modern age:

1. Meditations

According to Marturano, a mindful leader embodies leadership presence by cultivating focus, clarity, creativity and compassion in the service of others.

Mindfulness training is a method of developing our mind’s natural capabilities to help us find the very thing we need most in our lives today: space, i.e. mental and emotional space.

When our minds are trained to be fully attentive, even in the midst of chaos, we have the space to make wiser and more conscious choices wherever we are placed.

The three practical methods to mindful leadership mentioned in the book:

1. MEDITATIONS

Breath and sound meditation

We live in a state of continuous partial attention. As a result, the mind is constantly pulled in different directions, making us never fully attend to anything anymore.

By practising this basic meditation to listen to our own sensations of breath, we cultivate and strengthen our innate capability to sustain attention.

Desk chair meditation

This practice is another way to cultivate our ability to pay attention. It is valuable to pick up important messages from our bodies that we often ignore or do not fully understand.

With the information gathered, we can make simple choices to care for ourselves, such as doing a few more stretches to alleviate a sore back.

Thoughts and emotions meditation

The next step in training the mind is to use thoughts and emotions as objects of attention. This meditation exercise helps us understand the process of thinking.

For thoughts as objects of attention, it allows our minds to rest in the awareness of thinking so that there is room for us to see things more clearly. On the other hand, for emotions as objects of attention, we allow ourselves to honestly experience a wide range of emotions we are capable of feeling.

Kindness meditation

It is vital to understand that we all aspire to the states of being safe, strong, happy and living with ease. This practice opens our hearts and can put us in touch with our own needs and the needs of others at a very basic level.

Kindness comes from compassion, an authentic connection to others and the pain and joy people feel. Compassion opens the door to the connection between our minds and hearts. As Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, a Sufi teacher, once said, “The mind is the surface of the heart, and the heart is the depth of the mind.”

2. REFLECTIONS

Reflection on leadership excellence

When we allow ourselves time to reflect on the qualities of a person whom we believe embodies leadership excellence, our list will most likely be “respectful,” “kind,” “patient,” “inspirational” and “great listener”, instead of “consistently meets quarterly numbers”.

This goes to show that what sets people apart as excellent leaders is something much more than quantitative metrics.

Reflection on leadership principles

An important element within the practice of mindful leadership is coming to a deeper understanding of ourselves. With that, understanding our own leadership principles is a key part of that self-awareness.

Knowing how these principles define us is a compass that will guide us when faced with difficult choices. Similarly, the leadership principles identified by an organisation are guidelines for how the senior leadership will steer the company to success.

Reflection on inspiration

People generally thrive on what inspires them, not merely what is expected of them. Mindful leadership training helps us discover the deeper inspirations that drive us, so that we too can inspire others with our passion.

In the example of Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s leadership, the then mayor of New York City (NYC) has always prioritised the need to show up in tough times to offer comfort. To him, being present when people were in pain was the true measure of a person.

As a result, his principle has inspired his administrative team to attend every funeral for an NYC employee who died in the line of duty following the Sept 11, 2001 attacks.

3. PURPOSEFUL PAUSES

Basic purposes pause

Our lives are unlikely to lose complexity anytime soon but we can create moments of space to breathe by regularly taking a purposeful pause. As we take this purposeful pause, we might notice our minds returning to the present and letting go of thoughts that were crowding out our capacity. When distractions of the past and present are reduced, we can see more clearly at that moment and then with greater awareness, choose what to pursue next.

Mindful meeting

Mindful meeting involves mindful communication that concerns listening to ourselves and listening to others. The way to learn mindful communication is by consciously applying it to the everyday situations encountered in our work and personal lives.

Keep in mind that we lose something important when we are not fully present for an encounter with people who are close to, thus losing the precious opportunity to understand and to be understood.

Letting go of expectations

This method invites us to pay attention to the thoughts and emotions that arise as we take a few moments to look at the substance of our day’s meetings.

With such purposeful pause, we become open and curious about new possibilities rather than going through the motions of moving immediately into the planning, executing, taking charge and assigning of tasks.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Everyone has the capacity to lead with excellence. Just as we throw a pebble into a still pond to create ripples throughout the whole pond, so can leadership presence go beyond the effect it has on us alone. It can influence families, friends, the organisation we work within, the community we live in and potentially the world at large.

Essentially, we need mindful leaders who not only understand themselves but who are unafraid to be open-hearted and make ethical choices even in a crisis.

We just need to start finding that space through mindful leadership to be fully there (body, mind and soul) at that present moment.

MY THOUGHTS

This is a practical book for those who constantly have their plates full, resulting in you finding it a challenge to do something that matters most in your life.

You may be an executive who is working hard to achieve work-life balance but have been unable to do so. Instead, you find yourself on the verge of a burnout.

Or, you may be a parent who is trying to do the best you can to nurture your children but find it hard to be kind to your own emotional and spiritual needs.

In the chaos of life, when you forget how to become human beings again because of our obsession with the “doings”, then I would highly recommend you to take a step back and read this book to connect to your inner self again.

Finding the Space to Lead: A Practical Guide to Mindful Leadership by Janice Marturano is distributed by Penguin Books Malaysia and is available in all leading bookstores.
Lesson from my Century Tuna 5150 Triathlon

By JOHN WALTER BAYBAY
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Here are many similarities between career and sports. As a matter of fact, the Spanish word carrera could mean a number of things which include: a chosen course of study, career or even a literal race.

From a life management perspective, all the definitions seem to add up very well, where a career necessitates constant training, work performance and competition.

There are these elements in a successful life and while one definition seems analogous to another whereby the final output is measured by performance, it pays to know what actually gets you there. How do you increase life performance and impact?

Just as competitive sports can provide insights on how performance is achieved, we must also realise that these tested principles can be applied to everything in life. This is a timely article as I just finished a Century Tuna 5150 triathlon in June.

On my way back from the event, I reflected on how the preparation and training that helped me perform during the actual event could be used to provide an understanding on performance in other aspects of my life.

High Performance Formula

There are three elements that form the equation of performance, namely nutrition, progressive overload (or training) and recovery. The same equation applies to life and career.

Here is a simple diagram of the system I am describing.

- **Overload or Training**: This is when you are stretching yourself beyond your usual performance.
- **Recovery**: This is when you give yourself time to recover from stretching beyond your usual bounds.

It is easy to surmise that the quest for performance could often be trying. Without balancing the three, one could easily burn out.

The old paradigm of “work hard/play hard” is overly simplistic as it lacks the element of recovery and rejuvenation.

It might come as a surprise, but most performance athletes know that one actually becomes stronger when one is recovering or resting. In other words, you do not get stronger when you are training.

Eating and training alone negate any performance sought as the body needs time to repair torn muscles during an overloaded training session.

While you are sleeping, the body synthesises protein and releases growth hormones that build even stronger muscles to help you cope with the previous training overload.

You bounce back even stronger each time you finish a recovery cycle and this in turn allows you to take on an added load every time you train. Repeating the cycle over time produces measurable performance gains.

Work and life performance work exactly the same way. The most neglected aspect of performance is usually recovery and rejuvenation.

Total Recoil

There is too much emphasis on actual work performance and on-the-job training and coaching that we usually fail to recognise that people tend to regenerate and rejuvenate outside of work.

Rejuvenation helps people spring back into better performance at work and life, just as a spa treatment does wonders to tired muscles.

In my own racing experience, pre-racing jitters felt the night before could have led to sleeplessness and drastically decreased race performance even after months of structured training.

Recovery and rejuvenation should be given the proper place within the context of managing performance.

Why shouldn’t the same apply to work and life performance? We are, after all human beings.

The same paradigm of training, nutrition and recovery carries over to work and life performance.

In one of my previous articles entitled When sleeping on the job is a good thing, I explained that time management is not as important as “energy management” and that taking some time to take a break and even sleep helps you recover for greater applied energy and performance at work.

In Japan, napping at work is looked upon more positively as a result of the belief that people deserve it after working so hard. In fact, some even go to the point of faking it to look committed.

Not that faking anything could ever be positive but perhaps a proper perspective on the need to recover as part of managing performance deserves to be given serious attention.

Recovery and performance are directly correlated with scientific evidence to prove that recovery helps us bounce back better each time.

**Turn Over a New “Leave”**

In a bigger scale, people ought to take their annual leave more seriously with the purpose of using this as an opportunity to bounce back stronger. Using available holidays to properly rejuvenate should be a purposeful undertaking.

Using some of the principles I have learned from athletic training combined with those I practise in my profession, here are a few helpful tips.

1. **Tapering**: Make sure that your boss and teammates know you are about to take leave at least a few weeks earlier. Try to finish pending tasks and start tapering off on your succeeding commitments.

2. **Realignment**: Resting does not mean vegetating into oblivion. Use the opportunity to improve yourself by getting in touch with the things and activities that give you the most joy. Review your bucket list or perhaps set some learning objectives for yourself. Realign your activities with your values and life purpose. Plan your activities during your leave according to your life’s purpose and passion.

3. **Explore and discover yourself**: Use your leave to engage in activities that develop a greater understanding of who you are – your strengths, limitations and talents. Get a clear definition of who you are.

4. **Strategise**: Knowing who you are and what you have to offer, develop a personal strategy for yourself. Perhaps you need to be positioned in a better place to receive opportunities that give you personal and professional growth.

5. **Renewal**: Make sure that you are coming out of your leave with a renewed positive outlook on life. By then, you should have already processed, resolved and flushed out any negative issues you took in before your leave.

   Your mind, body and spirit must be renewed and rejuvenated before your return to work. If you do not come back stronger, then you might have just wasted your holiday.

Just as athletes are familiar with the process of training, nutrition and recovery, use the same principles in life and work.

Continue to learn, train and push the envelope at work, and recover whenever you have the chance.

Use opportunities for renewal as a tune-up or possibly an overhaul towards a meaningful and purposeful high performance life that you were meant to accomplish.
“THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING.”
-Socrates

REJUVENATED?
TIME FOR A REVIEW – HALF WAY THROUGH!

BY JASON LEE
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OFFICIALLY, half a year has passed. Are you rejuvenated from a short break and back on track in fulfilling your new year’s resolutions, or have you fallen into a sluggish mood? Now is a great time for a personal mid-year review to decide if you need to pick yourself up from a slow season or keep up the momentum in achieving what you have set yourself to do.

A good start would be to think about what you would like to maintain, improve or change in the seven areas in life, remembering to identify, evaluate and set an action plan.

I invite you to read on and apply these few simple ideas, as I share my own journey in doing my mid-year review.

1 CAREER
Are you satisfied with your career? Do you understand your job description and objectives?

A survey by JobStreet.com found that 78% of 1,142 respondents in Malaysia were unhappy in their current jobs due to their work being predictable, boring or sometimes having too much work.

Personal review: Maintain – I recently decided to take on additional responsibilities at work and the challenge has helped me remain satisfied. I would like to maintain the scope and workload at all work and no play may make Jason a dull boy!

Action: Take a look at your job and speak to someone if you find yourself dragging your feet to work. Some employers would rather do this than lose a good employee.

2 FINANCIAL
If you are working, are you earning, saving and investing? What is your budget like? Do you even have a budget?

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett has a few great tips and here are some key points:

- Earning: Never depend on a single income. Make investments to create a second source of income.
- Saving: Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving.
- Spending: If you buy things you do not need, soon you will have to sell things you need
- Investing: Do not put all eggs in one basket. Invest within your circle of competence.

Personal review: Change – drawing a stable salary, I used to put all my money into savings. I have decided to actively invest my money in mutual funds, the stock market and, maybe one day, real estate.

I have set aside some money in an investment-linked insurance plan and have developed my own financial allocation – expenses (40%), investments (20%), savings (20%), continuing professional development (10%) and giving back (10%).

Action: Be disciplined in the way you manage your money, have a personal financial allocation ratio and stick to it. If you need to, engage a financial planner.

3 RELATIONSHIPS
One of the top five regrets of a dying person is not having the courage to express one’s feelings and staying in touch with family and friends.

Are you spending a “healthy” amount of time with your loved ones? Are you being supportive, forgiving and respectful in your relationships?

Personal review: Maintain – being an ambitious young professional, it is easy to lose touch with people.

Thankfully, I have been intention-ally in being part of the weekly family dinners and have recently suggest-ed an interstate trip during the Hari Raya holidays. My brother is working in Penang and it would be great to catch up. I am also in a long distance relationship with someone and have committed to allocat-ing time to communicate via FaceTime and WhatsApp.

Action: Take some time to think about family members and friends who matter to you and make the effort to catch up with them.

4 MENTAL
Have you been learning something new recently? Are you having a curious and imaginative mind?

HAPPYneuron is a personalised brain fitness programme designed to improve cognitive ability. It states that our minds are made up of five major cognitive functions: 1. Memory 2. Attention 3. Language 4. Visual-spatial skills 5. Executive function

The brain is like a muscle too and as the saying goes, “if you don’t use it, you lose it.”

Personal review: Improve – I used to read a lot, enjoy learning a new skill or attending a seminar. Of late, most of my time has been spent in the office due to additional responsibilities. I have now decided to read something new more consistently and use an iPhone app that “trains the brain”.

Action: Put yourself in mentally challenging activities. The Japanese have a saying, Kaizen, which means “improvement” or “self-changing for the best of all”. Apply it to your everyday life.

5 SOCIAL
Have you been building up your self-confidence, listening habits and maybe just being humour-ous?

Interestingly, in a survey by Men’s Health of 1,000 women, 77% ranked the No. 1. I must have a man is humour — surpassing intelligence, passion and gen-irosity. Humour is a sign of being confident and smart.

Personal review: Maintain – just as there are people who enjoy playing musical instruments or learning a new language, I enjoy meeting people and making connections.

I hope to continue this and achieve my goal of having lunch with a different person every other week.

Action: Have you thought of improving your social skills? In a Harvard Business Review survey of 6,000 employees, social skills were described as a great multiplier, as leaders with strong social skills can leverage the abilities of individual team members more efficiently and effectively.

6 PHYSICAL
Are you just managing or in control of your weight?

Have you signed up for an exercise pro-gramme or did a medical check-up recently?

Have you been eating nutritious-ly? Malaysians love char kuey teow, nasi lemak and roti canai but loving it too much may be unhealthy for you!

Personal review: Improve – After a sluggish start, I decided to enrol in boot camp, a military inspired outdoor fitness pro-gramme. Every alternate day (excluding weekends), I wake up at 5.30am to participate in an hour-long exercise. This has helped me to keep in shape, or at least not be out of shape! It has been three months since and I may have missed a few sessions. However, my goal is to consistently go for the boot camp. I also want to commit to eating healthy.

Action: This is probably the most committed resolution but the least fulfilled one every year. The best way is to take part in an exercise programme. I also heard that your six-pack abs are created in the kitchen not the gym.

7 SPIRITUAL
What are your views in finding a sense of purpose in your life?

Are you committed to prayers or engaged with a community of like-minded believers?

If you are not religious, spiritual-ity could mean having a life from success to significance. There is no point having what was used to be the popular five Cs (cash, car, credit card, condominium and country club) to the five Bs (BMW, body, brain, billionaire and bunga-low) when deep down we feel so empty.

Personal review: Change – Although I am involved in a young adult’s spiritual group, it has been difficult for me to commit to spend some time in prayer consistently. I have decided to change that and have a routine in my rela-tionship with God.

Action: Get involved in a form of devotion to something you feel as significant in life. Volunteer more, practise mindfulness and develop a relationship with your God and like-minded people.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS
I hope that you would be encouraged to examine your life and look into areas which you would like to improve, maintain or change.

Whatever it is, do not forget to reflect, count your blessings and move forward with confidence.

Jason is looking forward to a mid-year Raya break with his fam-ily and is finally graduating from his two-year Standard Chartered Bank International Graduate programme. If you would like to engage with Jason, you can connect with him via editor@leaderonomics.com
I was once asked this while presenting at a conference, “Can an individual's gaps be closed by attending training?”

There are two elements to this. First is the individual and second the methodology.

- **The individual**
  I believe that almost all gaps can be closed if the individual wants to address it. Many a time, an individual is sent for training because the organisation felt this was an important part of the person’s development. Unfortunately, in many cases, the individual does not affirm that thought. Thus the key is to ensure the individual is well aware of why he/she is being sent for a programme. Also, provide a choice to the individual to attend such programme.

- **The methodology**
  The second element is the methodology. I am not a strong proponent of training programmes only. Development should be a combination of on-the-job (OTJ) experiences (new roles, stretch assignments, mentoring and training programmes).

  The most common combo is the 70:20:10 rule where 70% of development should be based on OTJ experiences (new roles, stretch assignments, projects, cross-functional teams, etc.). This develops the individual based on actual experiences and real life scenarios. There is no substitute to experiences in life and this is how you should develop yourself.

  Next is to get a good mentor, someone not from your reporting line who will give you candid and transparent feedback. The need for a mentor is to leverage on another person’s valuable and rich experiences. Finally, the training programmes which for me are only meant to complement the two elements. Guess, I won’t be popular among the training providers now.

Some things can be learnt, some you can only learn from practical experience or from the experiences of others. I don’t believe there is a one-size-fits-all approach to training and developing people.

In an organisation, however, it may not be financially viable to customise/personalise everyone’s training and development.

In its best form, I believe that training and development is more effective if it is:

1. **Owned and initiated by the individual/collective group**
   People always say that training and development should be the responsibility of HR/learning and development (L&D) teams. However, I believe that training and development owned and initiated by the individuals themselves would be more relevant and effective as they would know some of their own needs better than anyone else. They would then be more committed to applying what they learnt for their own development.

2. **Guided and coached by the direct supervisor**
   The role of the direct leader is to help and support their people to identify areas of development, bounce ideas off with them on some practical training or development methods that would meet their needs best. Leaders should leverage their experience, knowledge and networks to partner with HR/L&D teams to architect what works best for their people.

3. **Enabled and facilitated by HR/L&D team**
   HR/L&D teams play the role of partnering with line leaders in understanding development needs of their people and also aligning them to the strategic direction set by senior management. They would help enable the various development interventions, be it customised development/training or a collective structured intervention that is financially viable.