FACING IT HEAD ON

IS FEAR JUST A FOUR-LETTER WORD FOR OPPORTUNITY?
PAGES 6-7

Stand tall
Avoid making B-grade decisions and living mediocre lives.  
Pg 03

SPEAK UP
Do you love or loathe speaking in public?  
Pg 04

BUILDING TRUST
Essentials for winning teams and a culture of greatness  
Pg 09

INTO THE FUTURE
Insightful lessons from Project Almanac  
Pg 12
THE INDOMITABLE ZOHRA

By TARA THIAGARAJAN

tara.thiagarajan@leaderonomics.com

The late Zohra Sehgal was someone whom I consider to be an extraordinary woman. She was unapologetic in every sense of the world.

Sehgal was an actress and choreographer from Saharanpur, India. In her 20s, she travelled to Egypt, Europe, and the United States as part of Uday Shankar’s famous dance troupe. Besides dancing, she also starred in multiple international films from the 1940s. She is known for playing a sassy lovable grandmother in more recent films: Bend It Like Beckham, Dil Se, Kabhi Kabhi Gham, and the famous television series, Doctor Who. Reading about her and watching her movies taught me a lot about fearlessness, an attribute I think everyone should possess. Here are just a few of the numerous lessons Sehgal has taught me.

1. WATER OFF A DUCK’S BACK

Considering the fact that Sehgal was a single young woman travelling and working independently in the 1930s, she endured criticisms for not adhering to the norms of staying home, getting married, or having children.

Being fearful of what others think is something that holds many people back from pursuing their passions and becoming the best that they can be. Sehgal was seemingly unfazed by other people’s judgments (like water off a duck’s back!), proving that she was courageous enough to do things on her own terms.

2. IT’S OKAY TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF

Sehgal was known for finding the funny side to any situation, even if it was at her own expense. She was once quoted as saying, “You see me now when I am old and ugly, in fact, you should have seen me earlier – when I was young and ugly!” Her comment about her appearance showed me that it was okay to not always be perfect, and that we might as well laugh off our imperfections while still learning to be better.

3. LOVE + WORK = CONFIDENCE

Sehgal’s philosophy in life was all about finding happiness and being involved in something you love. That happiness should then radiate from within, exhibiting our inner beauty for the world to see.

Her beliefs really resonated with me as I find building my self-confidence somewhat of a struggle. When inner beauty shines through as a result of fulfilling one’s passion, confidence will also shine through.

CONCLUSION

This woman continues to be a great inspiration to me; she dedicated her life to her craft till her recent passing at the age of 102. Reading about her long, colourful life really encouraged me to seize the day, take chances, and not to let the fear of failing stop me.
We go through all kinds of fear, which may take any shape or form. Some of us fear cockroaches and clowns, while others fear heights. There are even people who have “ablutophobia”, which is the fear of bathing.

In clinical psychology, a phobia is a type of anxiety disorder usually defined as a persistent fear of an object or situation. Whatever the case, fear is a real thing. Simply defined, fear is the uneasy feeling caused by our anticipation of some imagined event or experience.

What are your fears? For some people, it is the fear of failure. The notion that failure will bring humiliation and ridicule is enough to prevent some of us from trying new things.

Others are so comfortable with their status quo that any ideas that may shake their current comfort zones are a fear to them. As a result, many people prefer to take the more comfortable route where they do not have to face their fears.

The consequences? Life goes on without us fulfilling our full potential. We end up at best living mediocre lives because of the B-grade decision we make, out of fear.

History tells us that the great exploits of the world are the results of men and women who have overcome their fear and walked through the corridors of courage and perseverance.

Imagine what the world would look like if not for the bravery of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and William Wilberforce?

What powerful breakthroughs the world will see from the courage of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani schoolgirl who was shot in the head because she defied threats from the Taliban to fight for the right to education?

While some form of fear is expected in life, there are also fears that are abnormal and unwarranted. Such unwarranted fears are usually unhealthy and create an irrational pattern of worry and anxiety.

Fearful people will often experience the following three setbacks:

**HIGH STRESS**

The evil twins of fear and stress always go hand in hand. An unhealthy level of fear leads to a stressful life.

In some extreme situations, this can even lead to mental and emotional meltdowns.

**IRRATIONAL DECISIONS (OR INDECISIONS)**

When fear is present, logic and common sense may not prevail. The preoccupation with the negative consequences of what may happen easily overpowers a person’s logic.

As a result, fear cripples our ability to make the right decisions.

**UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL**

When a person is fearful, he or she will have a more defensive mindset in approaching life. Rather than playing to win at life, the person plays to avoid losing. This results in a mediocre life, robbed of its full potential.

Fear is a thief. It robs us of the wonderful realities of what can happen in our lives if we were free from the intimidations of fear.

So, how can we overcome fear and stand bravely? Here are five principles:

1. **FACE YOUR FEAR HEAD ON**

People who choose not to face their fears are either in denial or have an escapist mindset. Both approaches are psychological coping mechanisms that do not necessarily resolve fear issues.

Overcoming our fears have to begin with acknowledging what our fears are and then deciding to conquer them bravely.

2. **EVERY FEAR REVEALS OUR SUCCESS POTENTIAL**

There is a common saying that in every crisis, there is an opportunity. Similarly, in every fear of ours, therein lies the seed of our untapped potential.

Our fears actually reveal to us the things we could achieve if we were not afraid.

Once we recognise these fears and overcome them, we will unleash a mighty river of dynamism and drive that will bring success and significance into our lives.

3. **DO NOT BE AFRAID OF YOUR FEARS**

Many of the unwarranted fears we face are due to how we perceive and interpret the world.

If we choose to see them through the lenses of loss and pain, we will back down and retreat.

But if we see them through the lenses of opportunities and blessings, we will be motivated to advance forward with bravery, which can be simply defined as the fearless and daring courage to do the right thing.

4. **SEE WITH EYES OF HOPE**

Hope is a powerful force. Hope is the confident expectation that things will become better in the future.

A wise king once said, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.”

When hope is lost, we lose sight of any trace of success, advancement and victory. Hence, we need to open the eyes of our heart and see with eyes of faith that no fear is too difficult to overcome as long as we have hope.

5. **BRAVE IT OUT**

Fear is an attitude. If we choose to embrace it, it sticks to us like a leech. This leech, if unattended, can suck out much of life’s vitality, leaving us defeated and unfulfilled.

In the midst of fierce opposition and uncertainty, Mandela said, “Courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

Mandela was right. Courage is not the absence of fear. The key is to silence it.

Motivational speaker Les Brown has often been credited as saying that, “The graveyard is the richest place on earth, because it is here that you will find all the hopes and dreams that were never fulfilled, the books that were never written, the songs that were never sung, the inventions that were never discovered, all because someone was too afraid to take that first step, keep with the problem, or determined to carry our their dream.”

So, the question is: What would you do if you had no fear? The degree to which you can be free from your fears is equal to the degree of success in your life. Go on, conquer your fear. Stand bravely!

**By ERIC LAU**

editor@leaderonomics.com

Eric Lau is a strategic leader with a relentless belief in people. His personal mission is to inspire and influence others to rise up to their full calling and potential. Eric is a corporate consultant and trainer and regularly leads training sessions in the areas of leadership, management and personal development. To connect with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com. For more leadership insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com
Fear is a survival mechanism designed to keep us safe and far from danger. It stopped our ancestors from walking into a bear cave or a lion’s den. However, in modern times fear has also begun to manifest itself in situations that wouldn’t be classified as “life or death” yet people treat them as if they were.

Ask somebody to stand up and talk in front of a large group and the majority of people will experience symptoms of fear. Public speaking is not a life or death situation, but to many it invokes panic, stress and fear as though it were. People are afraid of being judged, making a fool of themselves or what others think.

There are many approaches, tips and techniques for overcoming the fear of public speaking. The most well known is probably the advice to “imagine your audience in their underwear”, but let me tell you from personal experience it’s not something that I would ever recommend.

The study of how body language impacts our thoughts and views of ourselves is called Body Language. Social psychologist, Amy Cuddy, gave a TED talk in 2012 called “Your body language can make you taller.” Cuddy wanted to discover if these natural physical responses to feelings of power could work in reverse.

When we feel weak and vulnerable we will often “withdraw”, making ourselves smaller, pulling our legs up or wrapping our arms around our bodies. Animals do the same when they feel threatened, a tortoise will withdraw into the safety of its shell while a submissive member of a wolf pack will lower its tail and head in the presence of the pack leader.

Cuddy wanted to discover if these natural physical responses to feelings of power could work in reverse. Could adopting power poses make us feel more powerful (and therefore confident) even if we were initially feeling nervous and anxious? To find out, Cuddy wanted us to try something radical.

**BE LIKE WONDER WOMAN**

What she discovered was amazing, by holding a power pose for two minutes we can “trick” our bodies into believing we are powerful. Two-minute power poses cause changes in our cortisone and testosterone levels, increases our tolerance for risk, and prepares us better for stress.

We can actually use our body language to change how we feel about something, we can “fake it till we make it.” So, the next time you are about to face something that scares you, adopt a power pose for two minutes and your body will experience powerful energy.

A simple pose that you can do almost anywhere without looking out of place is the “Wonder Woman” — stand with your legs shoulder width apart, hands on your hips, chest out and head up.

**NO SHORTCUT: REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE**

You have to face your fears. There is no easy way to overcome a fear of public speaking.

You cannot stand in a room practising power poses and hope to overcome your fear of public speaking. You have to step outside of your comfort zone and practise speaking! You have to practise both the content of your talk and the act of speaking in front of an audience.

Don’t just sit and memorise your text. Stand up, walk around and use the same hand gestures and voice intonations that you plan to use during your talk. Re-enact your talk as many times as you can. When it comes to the actual event, everything is already ingrained and you can focus on enjoying the event rather than worrying over what you are going to say.

Once you have become comfortable with the content, you need to become comfortable with speaking in front of an audience.

**ON TARGET: INCREMENTAL PROGRESSION**

Take things slowly and target incremental progression.

You could start by standing up in front of just one person in the comfort of your home. Once this becomes comfortable increase the pressure a little bit by speaking in front of five people.

The more you practise, the more your body adjusts to the “threat” and the more comfortable you will become. Each time this happens, increase pressure again; increase the number of people that you are speaking in front of, move from your house to a small meeting room, from friends to strangers.

Keep up this incremental exposure and slowly but surely you will be able to address large crowds in lecture halls. Remember to use power poses to help you get your mind and body into a confident state.

Fear can manifest itself with varying degrees of severity, from a slight increase in heart rate to complete incapacitation of the body.

Overcoming a fear of public speaking requires you to take control of the situation rather than allowing the situation to control you.

**BE MINDFUL: POSES AND BODY LANGUAGE**

The study of how body language impacts the way that others have of us is already an established field.

However, Cuddy, an associate professor and researcher at Harvard Business School, took the research of body language in a new direction, questioning how our body positions can impact our thoughts and views of ourselves.

She started by identifying high power and low power poses — poses that we exhibit when we are feeling either very powerful, or, in the latter instance, weak. These power poses are not limited to the animal kingdom, they also appear in the human race, they will punch both fists into the air upon victory.

Fear can be good. Don’t worry if you still feel nervous about public speaking even after you have been practising power poses, rehearsing your talk, and speaking in front of a large audience. Some nerves are good, they keep you sharp and alert. The key is not to let your nerves overwhelm you.

Power poses and practice will help you condition your body for the nerves and you will be able to acknowledge them without allowing them to dominate.

**THE GREATEST MODERN FEAR**

Are you about to face something that scares you? Adopt a power pose for two minutes and your body will experience powerful energy.

Do you love or loathe public speaking? How to?
N 1930, Mahatma Gandhi led a nationwide campaign to boycott the inordinate salt tax imposed by the British empire on his countrymen. He did this by encouraging all Indians to make their own salt and organising massive non-violent protests across India. The response from the rulers – to imprison Gandhi without trial – was met with an emboldened movement of citizens who grew in numbers.

The news of the brutal beating of the peaceful protestors shocked the world, and eventually contributed to India’s independence.

Yet, if all the marchers had been isolated, one by one, removed from their peers and separated from their convictions, an entirely different story could have unfolded.

The secret of overcoming our fears is to put them in the right perspective. As leaders, we must have not so much the absence of fear – but rather, the right fears.

By ABEL CHEAH
editor@leaderonomics.com

1

THEY DESENSITISE THEMSELVES TO THEIR FEARS

Have you realised that, with age and experience, some fears seem to lessen while others evaporate entirely? I recall (with amusement and slight annoyance!) my past childhood fear of panicking about my impending arrest every time I heard the police siren, simply because someone once told me that “the police are coming to get you!” when I was young.

How did this acute, naïve fear disappear? After a few times, I learnt that I wasn’t the one being arrested! Because most fears are inherently irrational and because the foundation of every fear is anxiety of the unknown, experience and exposure can illuminate the darkness that is our uncertainty, helping us realise that there is nothing to be afraid of.

2

THEY FACE THEIR FEARS TOGETHER

One of the most terrifying punishments a prison inmate can ever face is “solitary confinement”, the treatment in which a prisoner is isolated from any human contact, in order to break his/her resolve.

Why is isolation used in both corrective and torturous ways? I believe this is because fear can creep in so much more when one is alone.

Leaders build and maintain support networks, in facing some of the most fearsome environments.

They assemble and encourage, lending their strengths to each other and covering weaknesses of others until finally, their challenges are neutralised.

In the story of the 2,500 Indian protestors, all the marchers moved in columns of 25, walking towards their inevitable abuse, until finally everyone was beaten to the ground. They could have easily overpowered the 400 policemen, yet they maintained their principle of non-violence, and strengthened their resolve by facing their fears together.

The enemy is fear. We think it is helpless, but it is fear.

- Mahatma Gandhi

3

THEY CULTIVATE BIGGER FEARS

In writing this article, I run the risk of oversimplifying what can often be complex and contextual, for fear is not necessarily a bad thing.

Fear is not always irrational. In fact, leaders who simply ignore their fears are likely to be dangerous to their team because they are out-of-touch with their realities.

There are times when the question is not, “How may I overcome this fear?”, but rather, “How can I manage this fear and put it in the right place?”

The height of leadership is the recognition that we do not live for ourselves, but owe each other our love, effort and time.

It is the recognition that some fears are perfectly valid, while others are more important. Did Gandhi and his followers fear physical and emotional abuse and isolation? Yes, and rightly so, for to deny this fear would be to be impractical, irresponsible and reckless.

Yet, Gandhi and his followers feared something bigger than themselves and it was this fear that led them to their actions.

They feared further injustice, the prospect of compromising their values and principles, and a future in which their nation lived in subservience to small, wasteful fears.

In conclusion

The secret of overcoming our fears is to put them in the right perspective. As leaders, we must have not so much the absence of fear – but rather, the right fears.
Standing on the shoulders of giants: is fear just a four-letter word for opportunity?

By KAREN NEZH

Karen.neoh@leaderonomics.com

Mandela was also famously quoted as saying that courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. “I was never an easy man,” he once said. “I was never a leader who knew it all or had all the answers. While it is sometimes natural to people to admire a ‘hardcore leader’ who shows that fear, like anger, are emotions that have even more devastatingly, drowned out at all opportuni-
tates times.

Of course, how we act on that is important. We need to be able to lead ourselves out of a difficult situation. To take the time to analyse what brought us there, to develop a strategy and empower our team to get back on track. By psychologist friends frequently posit the fight or flight response to fear. Clearly if you are tuned down a tiger, satiated on fast or do not step for the world and take action immediately.

3 BE A NOT-DOING LEADER

“The art of not doing the wrong thing is more important than the art of doing the right thing. The one derived from fear of pun-
ishment, the other from fear of punishment.”

- Nelson Mandela

Mandela’s famous words echo the wisdom of the saying, “Power is of two kinds. One is derived from fear of punishment, the other from fear of punishment.” As Gandhi said, “Power based on love is absolute power.”

In my humble opinion, “leading” by evoking fear is short-sighted, ineffective and ultimately powerless from the start. Those who rule by fear of punishment, from the standpoint of our lawyer can perhaps try to understand the concern of these leaders, perhaps by asking some fears of our clients or people to figure out how to move forward from there.

RELATIONSHIPS

Leadership is the foundation of authentic relationships. Our people need to feel engaged and connected to their leaders and organizations to work towards their common goal.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

With all the above working in tandem, there’s a great likelihood of building the future of the individual, the team, the organisation and ultimately yourself as a leader.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

5 YOUR LEADER TOOLBOX

How move on

James Andrew, a yoga instructor, is the epitome of someone who, when faced with a catastrophe, has never hesitated to go on to make a string of absolutely incredible achievements.

In 1989, Andrew and his friend Jamie Sine were snowboarding on the stormy coast of a French mountain. They were, one of the most dramatic in the history of the Alps, tragically, only four hours to face the sea.

Andrew, despite suffering hypothermia and appalling frostbite, survived, but at great personal cost. His left leg below the knee was amputated and, although he had the chance to have his arm amputated, he rejected it. He returned to his company, his team, and leading his group.

How move on

James Andrew, a yoga instructor, is the epitome of someone who, when faced with a catastrophe, has never hesitated to go on to make a string of absolutely incredible achievements.

In 1989, Andrew and his friend Jamie Sine were snowboarding on the stormy coast of a French mountain. They were, one of the most dramatic in the history of the Alps, tragically, only four hours to face the sea.

Andrew, despite suffering hypothermia and appalling frostbite, survived, but at great personal cost. His left leg below the knee was amputated and, although Andrew had the chance to have his arm amputated, he rejected it. He returned to his company, his team, and leading his group.

As Gandhi said, “Power based on love is absolute power.”

The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a love, warm-hearted feeling for others may put the mind at ease.

This helps overcome failures, even securities we may have and goes on to forge to conquer any obstacles we may encounter. It is the ultimate source of ser-

in convenience. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, whether that comes from nature or nurture, it is of course, how we act on it that matters.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.

In time, you will be the leader of leaders who in turn will build the future of others.
PART from my mom, I don’t think anyone has that many red clothes in his or her closet. Any shade of red from candy to cherry, from blush to berry, from rose to ruby, she has them all.

As for me, my love for red has never extended to more than covering 60% of my body with this colour, including lipstick. However, I have to admit that red is a conscious colour choice I make whenever I want to call for attention. It can be when I need:

- to speak in front of a big crowd
- to stand out in a sea of people
- a little energy to lift my mood!

Studies have shown that waitresses wearing red lipstick earn higher tips (although here in Malaysia, I’d argue that it is more of the person being well-groomed rather than the colour of your pout). Research also shows that men are more likely to find women in red attractive. I’d like to think that it is really the confidence level in being able to carry such a strong colour.

IS RED FOR EVERYONE?

One of the things which one should first consider is whether red will be compatible with the person’s personality. Someone of a “Pig Dogs” character (try the

DOE personality test to find out which bird are you would go for every shade there is. On the other hand, a “Dove” would steer clear and might only have spots of red on his/her outfit.

That might explain why within an organisation, there is a higher chance of seeing sales personnel wearing more reds than their colleagues in the accounts department, for example. So, if you are an introvert who stays mostly in neutral hues, then you need to make a conscious effort to wear more red if you want people to start noticing you.

Go with accessories first if you are not comfortable, and slowly make your way to painting a quarter of your wardrobe red.

THE RED RIGHT WAY?

Psychologically, red denotes passion, energy and fire. So if you want to ask for something, don’t barge in wearing something fiery red.

Subconsciously, red has the ability to make people feel intimidated or, at worst, evoke aggression. If you’d like to ask for a salary adjustment, wearing a red camisole underneath a dark blazer is acceptable. But covering yourself in strong chilli red, or even its cousin, the fuchsia pink, is not something I would recommend.

Pick a blue, or grey, or even a white jacket. These are cooler colours, which will be more soothing to the eyes and hopefully, the heart.

WHICH SHADE OF RED TO WEAR?

If you were to place a dozen red blouses next to each other, you would notice that each one is actually a slightly different shade of red. This is because all colours have at least a small portion of either blue or yellow in them, which makes them either a cooler or warmer red (Figure 1).

Knowing whether or not a red is warm or cool is the first thing you need to identify before you can figure out which red is better. Next, think about your wardrobe in general. If you prefer warm tones like orange, yellow, beige, brown, or olive green, then a warm red would be more flattering.

If you are someone who has a wardrobe filled with blue, purple, or grey, then pick a cool red instead.

Still unsure? Think of your jewellery. If your preference is gold, then it’s warm red. If it’s silver, then it’s cool red.

However, for people who look good in both gold and silver (usually of fairer skin tones), then either one is fine.

A personal observation: Malaysian men generally prefer cooler reds, for example, maroon, wine, and burgundy for their ties. Ladies, keep this in mind when you go shopping for your man (or your dad) the next time.

‘RED-DY’ FOR WORK?

Always think of your target audience or the situation you will be in.

If you are attending a boardroom meeting with a group of investment bankers (especially if it’s the first time), then a dark suit is better compared with a fiery red ensemble.

If you need to stand in front of a large crowd to present a new idea, a red suit which will exude confidence might work to your advantage.

As for our male counterparts, unless you are in the creative industry where red blazers, red shoes and red pants are already a part of your daily work wear, knotting a red tie will do for now.

However, do take note that if a red blazer is part of a company’s uniform, then these rules do not really apply.

A uniform is used to represent a company’s brand image and values. So, a red blazer may be used if the message the company wants to convey is “being bold”; or to make their clients identify and remember them better.

MY RED THOUGHTS

For those who are still not so “into” the colour yet, it’s time to push yourself beyond your boundaries! To me, wearing red has more pros than cons.

Here are three good reasons I’d like to leave you with. Wear red because:

1) It gives you a natural blush.
2) It is for good luck.
3) And it is, after all… Chinese New Year!

For example, with a red belt, you can repeat the colour with your earrings or shoes.

For gentlemen, if you adorn a red tie, then a tiny dash of red on your socks says you are fashion forward!

3) USE RED AS AN EMPHASIS

Emphasise only your plus points. If you have nice hair, then wear a red hairband. With a long neck, wear a red necklace.

Get yourself a nice shirt! Pair them with red cufflinks.

If you are concerned with the size of your calves and ankles, don’t wear red stockings.

With a short body, don’t use a thick red belt.

HOW TO BE FASHIONABLY RED?

Here are some guidelines to follow:

1) USE RED AS YOUR FOCAL POINT

When you do red from top to bottom, red is a strong colour that can be used as a focal point in your outfit. But once your focal point covers more than 50% of your body, don’t repeat that colour anywhere else. That means if you are wearing a red dress (for ladies) or a red shirt (for men), don’t do red shoes or red ties.

2) USE RED TO ADD INTEREST

Repeat your colour if it’s spaced apart.

For example, with a red belt, you can repeat the colour with your earrings or shoes.

For gentlemen, if you adorn a red tie, then a tiny dash of red on your socks says you are fashion forward!

3) USE RED AS AN EMPHASIS

Emphasise only your plus points. If you have nice hair, then wear a red hairband. With a long neck, wear a red necklace.

Get yourself a nice shirt! Pair them with red cufflinks.

If you are concerned with the size of your calves and ankles, don’t wear red stockings.

With a short body, don’t use a thick red belt.

I SEE RED...

Ladies, keep this in mind when you go shopping for your man, or your dad. Next time you are in the creative industry, where red blazers, red shoes and red pants are already a part of your daily work wear, knotting a red tie will do for now.

As for our male counterparts, unless you are in the creative industry where red blazers, red shoes and red pants are already a part of your daily work wear, knotting a red tie will do for now.

However, do take note that if a red blazer is part of a company’s uniform, then these rules do not really apply.

A uniform is used to represent a company’s brand image and values. So, a red blazer may be used if the message the company wants to convey is “being bold”; or to make their clients identify and remember them better.

MY RED THOUGHTS

For those who are still not so “into” the colour yet, it’s time to push yourself beyond your boundaries! To me, wearing red has more pros than cons.

Here are three good reasons I’d like to leave you with. Wear red because:

1) It gives you a natural blush.
2) It is for good luck.
3) And it is, after all… Chinese New Year!

For example, with a red belt, you can repeat the colour with your earrings or shoes.

For gentlemen, if you adorn a red tie, then a tiny dash of red on your socks says you are fashion forward!

3) USE RED AS AN EMPHASIS

Emphasise only your plus points. If you have nice hair, then wear a red hairband. With a long neck, wear a red necklace.

Get yourself a nice shirt! Pair them with red cufflinks.

If you are concerned with the size of your calves and ankles, don’t wear red stockings.

With a short body, don’t use a thick red belt.
By LEE HWAI TAH
editor@leaderonomics.com

Once came across a story of a native tribe in America a long time ago that believed trains were gigantic, man-eating monsters that rampaged through the night. The tribe’s initial exposure to trains was the roaring sound of the giant machine as it barrelled past their area during the night.

Therefore, they taught their children to fear the loud, angry, giant “monster” that blasted through the dark.

Decades later, when a young man from the tribe made it to a big city, he was invited to ride on a train.

Initially he hesitated, because he recognised it as that giant, angry “monster” terrifying and eating people. But eventually he stepped into the train and went for the ride.

He was asked later why he dared to get on, and he replied this, “Life has taught me to be more curious than afraid.”

I thought that that was a wonderful story. We were conditioned from an early age to mind our own business and not to sneak and play around with things that could get us hurt. “Curiosity kills the cat” was the quote we were taught in schools.

Let me ask you this: When was the last time you got yourself hurt for being curious?

WHY DEVELOP A CURIOUS MIND AS A COACH?

I’ve learnt in coaching that I cannot form powerful questions without listening well. I can’t listen well if I’m not interested in my coachee.

Sometimes, my coachees come with very interesting stories. Usually, they would bring their issues and challenges in life to me when they were at pretty low points in life.

I find that the best (and only) way I can genuinely show interest to know more about my coachees is by being very curious.

Without curiosity I would miss many subtle clues and nuances, which are crucial to the success of the coaching relationship.

I must not take whatever words spoken by my coachees (even those seemingly insignificant) for granted.

I’ve put on my investigator hat and think from a very inquisitive angle.

Only then can I put together the pieces of the puzzle to see the whole picture.

WHY DEVELOP A CURIOUS MIND IN LIFE?

In my journey of life, I’ve been through disappointments and faced many tears.

I’ve learnt that I can empower myself and take charge by asking this question, “What else can this mean?”

I can always reframe and give new meaning to all outcomes and circumstances, even the negative ones.

For example, when I’m about to speak in front of a crowd, I’d feel butterflies in my stomach, my palms sweating rapidly and my palms sweating. Naturally, one of my inner voices would say, “I’m so nervous, I’m going to wreck the speech big time!”

I would overcome that voice by asking, “What else can these feelings inside mean?”

And I can turn up the volume of another inner voice that answers, “I’m feeling so excited and I’m pumped up for the big occasion. Let’s do this!”

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Without curiosity and the right questions, I’ll miss out on the bigger lessons that are right in front of me.

That would be a waste.

Whenever I feel anxious or nervous, I’ve learnt that I should be more curious than afraid.

Hwai Tах is the founder of Coaching-Journey.com and a certified professional coach and associate certified coach with ICF (International Coach Federation).

Contact him at editor@leaderonomics.com.

For more articles on leadership and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com

By JON GORDON
editor@leaderonomics.com

In my book Soup I discussed how trust is one of the essential ingredients to build great relationships, winning teams and a culture of greatness.

Without trust, you can’t have engaged relationships and without engaged relationships, you won’t be a successful leader, manager, salesperson, team member, principal, teacher, nurse and coach.

In this spirit I wanted to share some thoughts about how we can build the trust that is essential for great relationships.

Many of the suggestions you’d probably already know. Many ideas I share are common sense.

However, I’ve found that so often amid the chaos of life and work, we forget the simple and powerful truths that matter most.

So, here are 11 thoughts about trust. Feel free to share these simple reminders with your leaders, colleagues and team.

1. Say what you are going to do and then do what you say!
2. Communicate, communicate, communicate. Frequent, honest communication builds trust. Poor communication is one of the key reasons marriages and work relationships fall apart.
3. Trust is built one day, one interaction at a time, and yet it can be lost in a moment because of one poor decision. Make the right decision.
4. Value long-term relationships more than short-term success.
5. Sell without selling out. Focus more on your core principles and customer loyalty than short-term commissions and profits.
6. Trust generates commitment; commitment fosters teamwork and teamwork delivers results.
7. Be honest! My mother always told me to tell the truth. She would say, “If you lie to me then we can’t be a strong family. So don’t ever lie to me even if the news isn’t good.”
9. Guide people, help them be better and you will earn their trust.
10. Always do the right thing. We trust those who live, walk and work with integrity.
11. When you don’t do the right thing, admit it. Be transparent, authentic and willing to share your mistakes and faults.

When you are vulnerable and have nothing to hide, you radiate seed, and blogs regularly at www.JonGordon.com. Send us your feedback at editor@leaderonomics.com.

For more leadership insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com

11 WAYS TO BUILD TRUST

1. Say what you are going to do and then do what you say!
2. Communicate, communicate, communicate.
3. Trust is built one day, one interaction at a time, and yet it can be lost in a moment because of one poor decision.
4. Value long-term relationships more than short-term success.
5. Sell without selling out.
6. Trust generates commitment.
7. Be honest!
8. Become a coach.
9. Always do the right thing.
10. When you don’t do the right thing, admit it.
11. When you are vulnerable and have nothing to hide, you radiate.
By SANDY CLARKE  
editor@leaderonomics.com

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES  
THEY'RE LIFE'S GREATEST TEACHERS

To err is human. For instance, the famous composer Bach was once heard to say, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” When we look at our own lives, how many times have we all heard the same? To quote the philosopher Plato: “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”

As we know, mistakes are part of life and happen to everyone. Everyone makes mistakes. Sometimes, we get so impatient, as though we should be able to recognise our faults, put a stop to them immediately and let our lives continue happily ever after. Unfortunately, life doesn’t quite work this way.

Many of us would ridicule the idea that anyone should think that someone could expect such progress to come so quickly – so why do some of us feel that other aspects of life should be any different?

Baby steps
During my stay at a Buddhist monastery in London a couple of years ago, a monk addressed the problem. He said, “When it comes to making changes for the better, we expect so much of ourselves too quickly. If the results don’t come now, this instant, we lose heart and view ourselves as hopeless, but that needn’t be the case.

Say you get angry 46 times in one week. Some might say that you should stop being angry altogether, but who can sustain this with much success? Instead, we should look at making gradual changes. If you can work towards being angry 44 times in a week, this is progress. After that, you keep going, reducing it to 42, 37, 30 and so on. A jug of water fills drop by drop. You get there eventually, and if you lapse, no problem – just keep chipping away.”

So many people have the view that mistakes and failures are things to be embarrassed by and therefore should be avoided altogether. Of course, where possible, mistakes should be avoided, but unless you’re flawless, not making mistakes is out of the question.

Instead, the best way to use your mistakes is to follow the three-step process of:

1. Acknowledging any mistakes
2. Forging yourself for making them
3. Learning as best you can from the experience in an effort to reduce future occurrences

The only person who can build from your mistakes is you. Similarly, the only person who can forgive you for your mistakes is yourself.

How many of you have walked into a gym and become a weightlifting champion within the first week? Most of us would ridicule the idea that anyone should think that someone could expect such progress to come so quickly – so why do some of us feel that other aspects of life should be any different?

Me, myself and I...
By adopting the idea of seeing mistakes as teachers, and by realising that no one else can or may hold you to account but yourself, you’ll find that you have much more space to grow and cultivate the sort of changes that you want to make within yourself. By the same token, it’s also important to realise that other people can and often do make mistakes, and sometimes we can jump on the judgemental bandwagon as though our own conduct, thoughts and views are superior to everyone else’s.

Indeed, there are so many examples of when we justify our own actions but criticise others for making exactly the same choices. How many times have we all heard (coming from ourselves): “Well, yes, I know I did that as well – but that was different?” To quote the philosopher Plato: “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”

Breathe in, breathe out
We all have our struggles, and we are all fighting to make sense of our own reality while trying hard to work with everyone else who has their own perceptions of how things are and how life should be.

By allowing everyone – including ourselves – a little breathing space when it comes to flaws, mistakes and failures, we might just start to find that, little by little, progress is made and that we start to become a little lighter, with less stress and pressure pushing us around trying to chase our tails like dogs in a never-ending and exhausting circle.

What’s more, when we start to open up to the idea that we are likely to make mistakes and accept that this is okay to do so, from here, we actually start to make fewer mistakes, because we have begun the process of gradually ridding ourselves of the tension and fear that cause mistakes in the first place.

Sandy is a journalist in the UK with years of experience in journalism, PR and communications, and was press officer to the Scottish Government at one time. For more articles, visit www.leaderonomics.com
LIFE LESSONS FROM TAEKWONDO

By DINESHSETHU RAMACHANDRAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

A way of life. To me, these four words best describe one of the world’s most recognized of martial arts: taekwondo. Unlike other oriental martial arts, taekwondo is a rather dynamic sport with active movements that include a variety of foot skills. I honestly cannot remember a time in which this sport was not a part of me. At this juncture, perhaps it’s best I let you know that the views and opinions expressed here are entirely my own.

It is purely my reflection on the knowledge acquired throughout my years in taekwondo, in which I have chosen to put forth as life lessons (though I’m always learning something new during each training session).

RESPECTING OTHERS

After being introduced to this sport 10 years ago, the first thing that caught my attention was the act of bowing to one another. This simple act is done not only towards the instructor but also to senior students and your opponents.

“Why do it?” I used to wonder. At that tender, young age, I did not seek to question but merely obeyed. It was only later that I began to understand the significance of this act. The answer was respect.

This was a valuable lesson as it is one that can and should be emulated in the workplace today.

Yes, it is a given that we all show respect towards our friends and superiors but often times we do not show it to our foes. I can already hear some of you yelling in disapproval, “Respect a foe, that’s crazy!”

It is not an absurd idea, for the ability to show respect to those who you disagree with speaks volumes of your own character.

THE POWER OF PERSERVANCE

Perseverance is a fundamental value of taekwondo. It is gained only through the honing of both physical and mental strength.

One cannot exist without the other, for it is only with both that students are able to reach the status of a competent black belt holder. The initial period of strength and flexibility training is one that every taekwondo athlete will remember. Every drop of sweat and tears shed were in the hopes of creating a better self. These are the formative years where both physical and mental strength are cultivated.

However, it is only during a sparring competition (one-to-one combat) that the power of one’s perseverance is truly tested.

I say this because, during training sessions, it is always a familiar face that goes you on the mat. In a competition, the familiar face is replaced by your opponent’s face, with the single-minded aim of beating you to win the competition.

Facing your opponent, you have three options:
- to give up by not appearing at all (mind you, it really does happen),
- to give in by stepping onto the mat with defeat clouding your mind,
- to give it all you’ve got by going in with the unwavering belief that you will emerge victorious.

You see, often times, each member in the team is unable to see the other’s movement, yet they move in such perfect synchronisation that one finds it hard to comprehend their ability to do so.

Those who master the poomsae team event are truly a sight to behold with their unified shouts and their flawless face-level kicks.

Similarly, in the workplace, we should have faith in our colleagues. A goal is only achievable if the bond of trust holds the team together.

That being said, each member should put the team as their first priority and not behave in a self-serving manner.

IN TEAM, WE TRUST

Another aspect of taekwondo is the poomsae, which is a combination of fixed movements utilising both offensive and defensive techniques. Unlike sparring where the focus is on scoring points, the poomsae is all about form – the perfect execution of kicks and punches.

In a competition, the poomsae is usually separated into an individual and team event. The individual event is difficult enough, but the team event is even more difficult and challenging.

This is due to the fact that you now not only have to worry about your own movements but also that of your team, for synchronisation is the key to winning this event.

It is in the team event that you see “magic” happen before your very eyes. How is it that some teams win while others don’t? Trust. The glue that holds them together.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Tae kwondo has many life lessons to offer that are very much applicable to one’s worklife. These lessons are just a few that I have highlighted, but who knows, perhaps once you have decided to join this ancient martial art, you may uncover other lessons.

My decision to join taekwondo is one that has altered the course of my destiny. Without a shred of doubt, I know that this was always meant to be “and that is made up of the choices one makes.”

Robert Frost’s poem, The Road Not Taken, comes to mind where one’s life is made up of the choices one makes. Without a shred of doubt, I know that this was always meant to be “and that is made up of the difference.”

Dinesh has a passion for developing young minds and strongly believes that regardless of age, it is important to keep one’s “spark” burning bright. To engage with Dinesh, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

For more leadership content and insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com

WE SHOULD WELCOME ADVERSITY FROM TIME TO TIME, FOR IT IS ONLY IN SUCH MOMENTS THAT WE DISCOVER OUR CHARACTER.
COURAGE TO EXPLORE THE UNKNOWN

It takes great courage to jump into the unknown and it is only natural to be afraid of the uncertainties ahead. During their first jump into the past, one of the students, David admitted that he was “completely ter-
past, one of the students, David insistence on five teenagers in Project Almanac who dis-
covered the blueprints to build a time travel machine. They succeeded in building the machine and used it to pass class tests, get back at bullies, go to concerts and win the lottery.

This only happens in the movies, right? But what if we had a chance to achieve similar feats in real life? If we had the opportunity to time travel, to right the wrongs we did, to change our circumstances, what would we do with this second chance? In watching this sci-fi adventure, I realised that a lot of important life lessons can be learned from the movie plot – taking risks, having empathy, making difficult choices, setting goals and facing consequences.

Making a difference

It is a well-known fact in time travel movies that manipulating the space-time continuum causes ripple effects. The same is true for Project Almanac. In one scene, a dog accidentally follows them as they re-enter the present. As they drive back home, they notice “Lost Dog” posters stuck around the neighbourhood that weren’t there previously. They soon realise that they had just changed their reality.

This applies to the here and now. Every little thing we do can make a difference, causing ripple effects which can be positive or negative. Therefore, do a good thing even if it is a small one.

Today, I challenge you to be kind to others. Empathy in this sense is realising that others might be afraid and giving them room to retreat. While this may seem scary to some as it involves a certain aspect of letting go, I would like to challenge you to throw caution to the wind and try it out. You may be surprised by the results.

Questions to ponder

1. Even the chance, would you rewrite your past? Why?
2. Was the reality for five teenagers in Project Almanac who discovered the blueprints to build a time travel machine. They succeeded in building the machine and used it to pass class tests, get back at bullies, go to concerts and win the lottery.

This only happens in the movies, right? But what if we had a chance to achieve similar feats in real life? If we had the opportunity to time travel, to right the wrongs we did, to change our circumstances, what would we do with this second chance? In watching this sci-fi adventure, I realised that a lot of important life lessons can be learned from the movie plot – taking risks, having empathy, making difficult choices, setting goals and facing consequences.

Courage to explore the unknown

It takes great courage to jump into the unknown and it is only natural to be afraid of the uncertainties ahead. During their first jump into the past, one of the students, David admitted that he was “completely terrified”. However, because he realised the immense opportunities that lay ahead, he stuck with his decision to time travel.

By being brave and leading the group, he empowered his friends to follow suit and together they were able to uncover the possibilities of time travelling.

Sure, it was uncomfortable at first and the group was momentarily disor-
iented but who ever said that delving into the unknown would be an easy process?

Knowing that you’ve discovered something new makes it all worth-while at the end of the day. To me, this shows that sometimes it is necessary to take risks. To try some-
thing new. It is never easy being the first one to delve into the unknown.

But I would like to urge each and every one of you to take that first step.

Maybe it involves trying out a new system at work. Maybe it involves try-
ning out a new hobby in your personal lives. Or maybe it involves an even more drastic change – changing from a well-paying job to a job that pays less but makes you happy.

The question here is what do you value more? Are you willing to take that leap? Today, I would like to chal-
lenge all of you out there to take cour-
age and just try. Are you ready to take the road less travelled? To jump where no man has ever jumped before?

Empathy

“I’m the one who is on the tape. So if you guys don’t want to come, I under-
stand, okay?” said David just before their first big jump back into the past. Delving into the unknown is not an easy decision. Especially to those who are risk averse. As leaders, it is impor-
tant to have empathy for your team. Change is never going to be easy. Especially if you try and impose changes on your team. Therefore, the strength lies in laying all the cards on the table. Be open and communicate the pros and cons, without forcing others to concur with your idea.

Empathy in this sense is realising that others might be afraid and giving them room to retreat.

While this may seem scary to some as it involves a certain aspect of letting go, I would like to challenge you to throw caution to the wind and try it out. You may be surprised by the results.

Incremental goals

Goal setting is important in every-
thing we do, be it at work or other-
wise. More often than not, we tend to set lofty goals for ourselves. This usually results in disappoint-
ment when we fail short or frustration at the slow progress towards attaining said goals. This is where we can take some pointers from David and his friends. While experimenting with their time travel machine, they initially tried sending an inanimate object back in time.

Once successful, they tried sending themselves back in time for a whole day. Upon later trials, they successively increased the time whereby they went further and further back in time.

Similarly, when we want to achieve something, it is always a good idea to break it down into smaller steps. Another good thing about setting small, incremental goals is that the time frame to achieve it is lessered and you will have more to celebrate with each successive step that ultimately leads you closer to your intended goal.

Think of that one big goal that you want to achieve by the end of 2015. Once you have that in mind, consider how that goal can be broken down into smaller sub-goals and write it down. I assure you that by doing this mini exercise, you will be able to see your goals in a clearer light and it would become more manageable.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As Project Almanac shows us, in order to move forward it is sometimes necessary to take risks, to relinquish control and have empathy. Take time to make a difference in the life of others instead of being so caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday work.

Break bigger goals into smaller, more achievable ones. If anything, I hope that you will try out the challenges I have set in here and learnt something from it.

Caroline Parameswaran is an aspiring psychologist who has a love of travel but has not had the opportunity to embrace travelling the world — yet. She is also passionate about doing meaningful things and would always choose satisfaction over monetary gain.

She enjoys challenges and thus it is no surprise that she has left a bunch of challenges for you. She would love to hear from you when you have tried some of them. Connect with her at editor@leaderonomics.com