THE RENEWAL PROCESS

IS SLEEP DEPRIVATION DESTROYING YOUR CAREER?

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A STATE OF REST

HOW apt, that this week’s pullout looks at renewal, from both a personal and organisational perspective. The importance of sufficient rest, both physically and mentally, cannot be over-looked.

As I have been continually reminded over the months, the fundamental habit of getting enough sleep is crucial – my self-talk protested, saying that sleep is not for champions.

Eventually, my physical shell succumbed to a viral infection, effectively knocking me out cold for almost two weeks.

If not for the super editorial team holding everything together, I struggle to see how our pullout sees the light of day in a weekly edition. This was my body’s way of reminding me of a crucial principle – that renewal was needed, both constantly and consistently.

The centrepiece’s heading reads “Sleep Deprivation: Destroying Both You And Your Career”. Dr. Travis Bradberry shares with us that getting the right quantity and quality of sleep is crucial to harness optimal performance at the workplace and increase health benefits. He gives 10 strategies, among them, learning to meditate, and stop working (this is going to be a real struggle if work is at the very centre of your life, and there is very minimal balance).

Moving back to the beginning of the pullout, there is a short piece on Zen leadership, and how it is more of a subversion of traditional Western leadership principles, focusing on people, work, and place.

The following article from our culture guru, Joseph Tan, explores the importance of rest, and asks us the all-important question: ‘Are you restless, or are you restless?’ A provocative question such as this requires us to take a moment to reflect, recalibrate, and decide on the next course of action.

After the centrepiece, we look at how colouring can dramatically enhance our focus and mindfulness. Yes, you read that right. Colouring is no longer restricted to young children as a creative pastime. Adults are picking up this habit, and millions of these colouring books have been sold, topping the bestseller lists on Amazon.

Next, we’ll be looking at Paul C. Brunson’s numerous successful habits learnt from two billionaires that he worked for. We also had the pleasure of having renowned investor, business consultant, motivational speaker, and self-help author, Robert Kiyosaki, founder of the Rich Dad Company, together with us on The LeadershipShow. We share his take on leadership today.

We look at how success is relative, and that we are not our successes or failures – a lesson that we all too often forget.

Eventually, my physical shell succumbed to a viral infection, effectively knocking me out cold for almost two weeks.

If you found a particular article insightful or interesting, we would love to know your thoughts. Please email us at editor@leaderonomics.com

If you have a flair for writing and editing, and are excellent at dealing with clients, why not consider joining our team of writers? Send in your resume and samples of your write-up to editor@leaderonomics.com, and we will be in touch soon.

For more great interviews, look us up by typing “Leaderonomics Media” on your web browser.

Sit back and enjoy what we have in store for you!
A SENSE OF RESTEDNESS

By JOSEPH TAN
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A leader’s schedule is determined not by the amount of activities but by the clarity of priorities.

I love my Google Calendar – it organises my life and shows me what I need to be doing each day without having me to perform a series of mental gymnastics.

However, just going through the checklist of what needs to be accomplished each day still falls short of what constitutes a fulfilling day.

Being able to cram in more activities increases a sense of achievement – but not necessarily a sense of actualisation.

Nature is set up for cycles of effectiveness with seasons of work and rest. Even the land requires a period of inactivity (rest) in order for it to regain a fertile mindset.

REST VS ENTERTAINMENT

The most common response to a “How are you?” greeting usually goes like this – “I am very busy but what choice do I have?”

There is almost a certain sense of unmistakable fate when it comes to expressing the state of the workplace and the thought of planned rest is foreign to most of us – so much so that towards the end of the year, we usually face the malady of accumulated annual leave!

Some have gotten so used to working that taking a holiday is an unwelcome chore and they can’t wait to get back to the workplace again.

As a quick pit stop, there are those who would resort to the world of entertainment for self-recharging, kind of like letting the hair down.

While entertainment and amusement do offer a respite from the hustle and bustle of work but it falls short of giving that internal recuperation that sends us back with increased enthusiasm and motivation.

Here are three symptoms that may indicate you are getting more entertainment than rest:

1. You go to a loud environment hoping to drown the voice of frustration within.
2. You prefer to be constantly in the company of people rather than to be aware of your own thoughts.
3. You constantly wake up on a Monday morning with a hangover! (rather than being motivated to face the adventures of the coming week).

Please don’t get me wrong – I am not saying that we should abandon all forms of entertainment. I do enjoy the fun and varied entertaining activities, which provide a refreshing break.

However, in the words of Ravi Zacharias – if we start to listen with our eyes and think with our feelings – then there is something soulful, which is missing in the way we care for ourselves when we do not embrace the basics of listening and thinking.

The danger of this visual age is that it organises our lives but does not dictate its course. That which dictates our life comes from the clarity of our priorities in life.

The pursuit of happiness can be a restless quest.

The most common response to the question – “What is your goal in life?” – is this: “I want to be happy.”

Of course, happiness is a driving emotion, which fuels much of the energy we need to go through the ordeals of the day.

If happiness is the sole element, which drives me, then there is cause for concern because emotions are designed as triggers, i.e. emotion provides an indication of where I am but it is lacks the depth and stability to tell me where I should go.

In other words, emotion has descriptive value but not a directional one.

So, how does the concept of rest come in? Without a sense of rest, the pursuit of happiness can actually be quite an exhausting affair – constantly looking for the next emotional high, the next adrenaline rush or the next great self-esteem project.

Without rest, our perception of what makes us happy can be misguided by the influences of popular culture and peer pressure.

Now, there is nothing wrong with desiring to be happy. However, our happiness needs to be anchored on solid principles rather than fleeting emotions.

Here are three solid principles worth anchoring on:

1. Have a life purpose – nothing energises like having a clearly defined purpose statement.
2. Leave a legacy – when you are constantly thinking about the next generation, you have very little time to complain about the current generation.
3. Be comfortable in saying “No” – not every invitation that comes your way is worth your while.

Think about it. How can these principles be internalised in someone unless there are moments of purposeful reflection and personal rest? Your pursuit of happiness will become a journey of joy if you take time to rest along the way – taking time off to journal, to reflect and to ask the “Why am I doing what I am doing?” question every now and then.

PRIORITIES PRECEDE REST

Restless people are constantly looking for the next big thing. Restful people have already decided what the big thing would be. Restless people look to their emotions as their authoritative guide while restful people are guided by the strength of their convictions.

The quality of one’s rest depends not on the quality of entertainment but by the clarity of his or her priorities in life.

Once your priorities are crystal clear, you will find it easier to say “no” to the many distractions that come your way – this ability to say “no” to tempting but distracting activities is the foundation of restfulness.

With hard work, you will achieve success but with the right amount of rest and reflection along the way, you will achieve significance. With hard work, you will achieve material wealth but with intentional rest and soul-searching, you will achieve meaning.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nowadays, I still enjoy using my Google Calendar for the simple reason that it organises my life but does not dictate it. That which dictates my life comes from the clarity of my priorities and not the clamouring of my activities.

Leadership is about1

Taking time to reflect and ask “why am I doing what I am doing?” every now and then. By Joseph Tan

A leader’s schedule is determined not by the amount of activities but by the clarity of priorities.

Take time to rest long the way. Reflect and ask “why am I doing what I am doing?” every now and then.
MONDAY BLUES?

Globally, only 13% of staff are engaged.* Team up with Leaderonomics Good Monday to put motivation back into your employees’ Mondays. 59% more revenue growth per employee is possible with an engaged workforce.


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Book your time with Joseph Tan, our resident Culture & Engagement expert at joseph.tan@leaderonomics.com or +60 12 327 1700

www.leaderonomics.org
By ROSHAN THIRAN
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N Tuesday, more than 50 top human resources (HR) leaders across the country met up at the Sime Darby Leadership Centre to explore and discuss how HR needs to own the design and execution of an organisation’s culture.

Culture in business organisations is generally regarded by many as ‘touchy-feely’ stuff and has minimal business impact. It is very hard to define and many times, most relegate it to something that HR leaders need to manage. When we think of organisational culture, offices like Google spring to mind with the free food and video games abound. Some define culture as a Gen-Yfad where young folks get to have flexible working arrangements and dress up as they please.

The reality is that culture drives results. Culture should be a key business imperative just like marketing and supply chain management, driving a balanced scorecard. Why is this so?

Cultures are experiences that form beliefs. These beliefs drive behaviour and action. Ultimately these actions that are translated from these beliefs will drive results. Your organisational culture could determine your results. Thus, culture should be prioritised as an important business objective that is measured and rewarded. After all, culture is the identity and personality of your organisation.

Yet, in most organisations, HR leaders are left with the task to develop, design and execute on the culture strategy alone. Chief executive officers (CEOs) often ignore the importance of culture, much to their peril.

At this HR networking session, Citibank Bhd CEO Lee Lung Nien spoke on the importance of business leaders co-owning and driving strategic HR imperatives, including driving cultural change.

Lee believes that many things on the HR leader’s plate, including leadership development, recruitment and organisational culture, are key business issues and CEOs need to personally be involved. Lee himself shared how he gets involved even in the hiring process of entry-level management trainee. To him, the people agenda is a key business agenda. Thus, HR leaders need to step up and be counted. Lee spends a huge amount of his time on people and driving the right culture where others can thrive and grow.

Culture has to be intentionally designed and implemented, else it will be accidentally created. Every organisation will have a culture. If it is not intentionally designed, it will usually be created by the most disgruntled employees.

Sime Darby Group chief human resource officer (CHRO), Zulkifli Zainal, who gave the opening keynote address explained that Sime Darby, which has operations in numerous countries from China to other remote parts of the world, has embarked on driving cultural transformation across its entities.

As culture consists of behaviours, values, shared thoughts and aspirations of employees, stakeholders and leaders, it is of key importance to the success of Sime Darby. Driving a singular culture across numerous entities and industries is not an easy task. Yet, Sime Darby has made its cultural imperatives a key part of the business strategy going forward.

The HR networking session had a panel of HR directors sharing their view of culture. Peter Ling, director of HR and organisational development at Mah Sing Group Bhd shared that a huge part of an organisation’s culture is dictated by its CEO or its founder.

Yet, as organisations grow and mature, the current culture set by its founders may not be the right culture to take the organisation forward. Culture has to be dynamic and not static. It has to be ever evolving and changing. It has to be refreshed every three to five years. Jenny Ooi, USG, Rabol senior vice president of HR, provided some practical tips for HR leaders who are starting on their transformation journey.

Before you attempt to “change your organisation”, start by building trust and credibility with your CEO. Once your CEO trusts you fully, then engage in culture building activities.

Charles De Brabant, Valiram Group CHRO shared some of his global experiences on how before setting out on a culture change journey, organisations must have a clear vision statement. Without a clear vision or goal, it would be pointless to pursue a transformation journey.

Every organisation should have a unique culture and it has to be dictated by the vision. Once there is clarity, it won’t be hard to intentionally create a culture to support that vision.

Datin Rowena Florence, director of HR at Microsoft Asia, shared how the company has evolved its culture recently. With new CEO Satya Nadeida setting a clear vision of the future, HR could take the lead to design and “own” the culture space.

She viewed it as an opportunity for HR leader to step up, have a seat at the table and be involved as a business partner. However, this required understanding the business and driving the business agenda, and culture is a great business agenda.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CULTURE CHANGE
Joseph Tan, our resident culture expert shared three big ideas to consider when undertaking cultural initiatives.

1. CULTURE NEEDS TO BE DESIGNED Culture is ever-present – it is either by default or by design. According to Gallup, 24% of employees worldwide are actively disengaged versus 13% who are engaged.

Here are the implications – the default culture mode is usually dictated by the voice of the actively disengaged.

2. CULTURE NEEDS TO SELF-DESTROY While vision, mission and values for an organisation remains unchanged, organisational culture serves as a means to an end. It ought to be refreshed every so often to ensure that it is still an enable for achieving key results. In the words of Marshall Goldsmith: “What got you here won’t get you there.”

3. CULTURE NEEDS TO BE DEPLOYED BY GREAT MANAGERS The key factor affecting employee engagement is the quality of relationship with one’s direct supervisor. Thus, managers play a pivotal role in cascading any cultural transformation initiatives.

Without the manager’s ownership and deployment of the vision and culture, any change becomes an exercise in futility.

FINAL THOUGHTS Reflecting back where culture was the theme for the day, I know that many organisations were shortchanging themselves by undermining the importance of intentionally designing and deploying culture for their organisation. Culture is powerful and can transform nations.

In 1992, I moved to New York City. New York at that point was one of the most dangerous cities in the world and considered by many as the “murder capital of the world” with the highest per capita murder rate.

By 1996, it was regarded as one of the safest cities in the world. How did that transformation happen? It was largely due to a culture change.

New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani believed that culture was the key reason why crime was committed. Not bad people.

Instead of catching murderers and serious crime offenders, he and his team focused on the city’s subway system. In eliminating petty crime, they fixed all broken windows and cleaned up graffiti.

They worked tirelessly to catch folks who did not pay $1.25 for their subway fares. With the subways looking cleaner and petty crime being eliminated, it created an impression that crime was not the “culture” of the city.

Within a few years, it started to yield its results. It was not a result of focusing on eliminating “big” criminals or having special crime prevention programmes. It was as simple as cleaning up the image of the city, creating a new “culture” which was visible and soon embraced in the city.

Your organisation can be transformed. The key is to intentionally create the “right” culture for your organisation. Focus on culture and be amazed by its results.
SLEEP DEPRIVATION: DON’T LET IT DESTROY YOU AND YOUR CAREER

By Dr Travis Bradberry

ICH-OO individuals know it’s not just how much sleep that matters, but also how you sleep. When you get in the way of your body’s natural sleep cycles, it’s absolutely essential that you remove the quality of your sleep through poor sleep hygiene. There are many hidden killers of poor sleep. The 10 strategies that follow will help you identify these killers and clean up your sleep hygiene. Follow them, and you’ll see the performance and health benefits that come with getting the right quantity and quality of sleep.

STAY AWAY FROM SLEEPING PILLS

When I say sleeping pills, I mean anything from the over-the-counter sedatives, like Nyquil, Benadryl, Valium, Ambien to prescription sleeping pills like Suboxone and Rivotril. These substances greatly interfere with your sleep and can disrupt your brain’s natural sleep process.

Have you ever noticed that when you take a medication like Suboxone or Rivotril you seem really strange? When you sleep and your brain removes harmful toxins, it cycles through an elaborate series of changes, shuffling through the day’s memories and storing or discarding them (which are called your sleep cycles), altering your brain’s natural sleep process. Anything that interferes with the brain’s natural sleep process has dire consequences for the quality of your sleep. Many of the strategies that follow eliminate factors that disrupt this recovery process.

If you’re taking sleeping pills, you’re doing it wrong. With the other strategies, such as cutting down on caffeine, you still make it possible to fall asleep naturally and reduce your dependence upon medications.

STOP DRINKING CAFFEINE AT LEAST AN HOUR BEFORE LUNCH

You can keep sleep and improve the quality of the sleep you get by reducing your intake of caffeine. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant that enhances nerve activity by increasing adenosine production and blocking sleep-inducing chemicals in the brain. Caffeine has a half-life of about 6 hours, which means it takes a full 24 hours to work its way out of your system. Have a cup of Joe at 4 pm, and you will still have 20% of the caffeine in your body at 8 pm. If you just cut off one of these devices in the evening, you can limit your exposure with a fiber or protein rich snack. The key is to stop at least one hour before bed.

WAKE UP AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY

Consistency is key to a good night’s sleep, especially when it comes to waking up. Waking up at the same time every day is a great way to avoid a bathroom trip in the middle of the night. The evening to avoid a bathroom trip in the middle of the night.

Remember, the sleep cycle is a day-long process for you to feel rested and alert in the morning and to be ready to sleep at night. If you interfere with the sleep cycle, you interfere with the quality of your sleep.

There is the evening to avoid a bathroom trip in the middle of the night. The evening to avoid a bathroom trip in the middle of the night.

THE PROBLEM

Many people sleep much less than they really need and are under-performing because they think they’re getting enough. Some discover the hard way.

“Dr. Huffington was one of those people who learned to meditate. My job is to help people do that – to learn how to relax and quiet your mind once you hit the pillow.”

When you wake up at the same time every day during the work week but late past this time on the weekend, you are up feeling groggy and tired because your brain hasn’t prepared your body to be awake. This isn’t a big deal on your day off, but it makes you less productive on Monday. It’s far better to go to sleep earlier the night before, than to go to sleep late the night before your regular weekend.

LEARN HOW MUCH SLEEP YOU REALLY NEED

The amount of sleep you need is something that you can’t control, and scientists are beginning to discover how this varies from person to person.

Sleeping in on the weekend is a process for your brain. When you wake up at the same time every day, your brain doesn’t know when it should prepare you to be awake. Roughly an hour before you wake up, your brain starts to prepare itself for sleep. This is called “but I know a guy (or girl) who is...”

You should send this article to the person who reads this article.

BYPASS INTERRUPTIONS

Most people who learn to meditate know that a ritual can have a calming effect. The key is to eliminate all the interruptions that are under your control. If you have heavy headgear, wear earplugs to bed. Your mother likes to call at all hours of the night. You can turn off your ringer before you go to sleep. If you have to use one of these devices in the evening, you can limit your exposure with a fiber or protein rich snack. The key is to stop at least one hour before bed.

You can extend your day by regulating your circadian rhythm. When caffeine disrupts your sleep, the deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) process. When you have a consistent wake-up time, you can expect to be more alert and stay asleep.

Focusing on “but I know a guy (or girl) who is...”

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

It may be difficult to find the time to practise mindfulness in the business of our daily lives, but the benefits can often outweigh the effort put into it.

Although colouring and other similar small practices may not be as effective as making changes as proper structured mindfulness-based trainings, they reflect an easy way to be introduced to the idea. Besides, as long as you feel like it helps you slow down in your life and be more relaxed, that is what is important. So, pick up a colour pencil and start colouring away!

Millie has never had more appreciation for different shades of colour pencils until she took up colouring again. She’d like to see your artwork! She can be reached at millie.ong@leaderonomics.com

PREPRACTISING MINDFULNESS FOR YOURSELF

Some of the more common mindfulness practices are meditation, progressive relaxation exercises, yoga, and tai chi. However, many of these exercises may require some initial guidance in mastering its practice – with proper training and classes to begin with.

However, practising mindfulness yourself can be very easy to accomplish if you set your mind to it.

Start simple – take a minute out of your day to close your eyes and focus on noticing the different sensations you are feeling, and the emotions that you may be experiencing.

Are you feeling hot? Cold? How does your body feel in the position you are sitting in? How does the flow of your breath feel? Are you feeling annoyed, or calm?

It’s as simple as reflecting on why you may be feeling that way, and where it is coming from as an attempt to understand it. More importantly, mindfulness is about accepting these feelings and not about trying to get rid of them right there and then.

This can be a practice that is put in place before starting your day, at the end of your day and intermittently throughout the day as you work on your tasks.

Meditation itself has been linked to being aware of your own personal stream of consciousness, your actions, thoughts, emotions and movement.

Being mindful is about being present and focused on what is in front of you, or what is going on within you – without thinking too much about the past or future.

It’s the observation on the sensations that one is feeling, and allowing them to pass without judgment.

Mindfulness itself has been linked to improvements in self-regulation, reducing stress and anxiety as well as to improvements in self-regulation, in focusing one’s thoughts while promoting attention skills.

It’s as simple as reflecting on why you may be feeling that way, and where it is coming from as an attempt to understand it. More importantly, mindfulness is about accepting these feelings and not about trying to get rid of them right there and then.

This can be a practice that is put in place before starting your day, at the end of your day and intermittently throughout the day as you work on your tasks.
I have spent decades “being edu-
cated” in college, graduate school, numerous professional certifications, and now a PhD programme. All of that schooling and training helped shape the person that I am today, but at no point in my life has there been a more profound education than my time work-
ing for Enver Yucel and Oprah Winfrey. Yucel and Winfrey are two extraordi-
nary people. On top of that, they’re both billionaires. On the surface, they appear
to be totally different people – they are in different industries, have different fam-
ily structures, practice different religions, and speak different languages.

However, once you get past their writ-
ten biographies and dig deeper, you will
notice that they possess many of the
same successful habits. I had the opportu-
nity to work with them for six years collectively and those were, hands down, the best professional experiences of my life. I worked my butt off for them and in doing so, absorbed everything I could.

Thus, it’s my honour to share with you what I learnt from them. Here is Part 1 of the 20 successful habits I learnt working for two billionaires.

1. INVEST IN YOURSELF

This is a very simple concept, but something you would think some-
one who has “made it” would stop doing. Not at all for these two. I saw them both spend a significant amount of time dedicating their resources to self-development like it’s a new language, exercise, social media classes, etc. The moment you stop investing in yourself is the moment you have written off future dividends in life.

2. BE CURIOUS… ABOUT EVERYTHING

What the average person sees as mun-
dane or overly complicated is not viewed
the same way with a billionaire’s mind-
set. I once had a 30-minute conversation with Yucel about the height of the curbs in Washington DC versus Istanbul, Turkey. Billionaires are incredibly curious; what the rest of the world thinks is a problem
is thinking about your business or your idea like your literal baby. No matter your distance, you don’t stop thinking about him or her (and after just having a second son, I can attest to this).

3. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH ‘BETTER’ PEOPLE

I recall going on vacation with Yucel
several times, yachting up and down the southwestern coast of Turkey (also known as the blue voyage). Sounds ballerific, right? No doubt we had a great time, but mixed in with all that swimming and backgammon was discussion of busi-
ness, strategy, planning and plotting.

4. NEVER EAT ALONE

The last time I had dinner with Yucel and Winfrey, there were easily 15 people at our table, respectively. Coincidence? While most of us derive our key information from blogs or newspa-
ners, power players get their information from the source (other power players) directly.

The best way I can describe this habit
is thinking about your business or your idea like your literal baby. No matter your distance, you don’t stop thinking about him or her (and after just having a second son, I can attest to this).

5. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LOSSES

I was working for Winfrey during the time she was taking heat from the media
about poor network ratings. I was also
working for Yucel during the closing of one of his prized divisions. What I wit-
nessed them both do in response was
powerful.

Opposed to covering the losses up with fancy public relations tactics, both
stepped to the stage and said in essence “I own it and I’m going to fix it” and
dropped the mic. Guess what? They
sure did fix things (it’s widely noted that
Winfrey’s network is realising gold ratings and Yucel’s assets have probably doubled since the division closing).

6. UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF ‘LEVERAGE’

This is something that was quite a
shock to me. From afar, a billionaire appears to be someone who is a master at everything. But in truth, they’re spe-
cialists in one or a few areas, and average
or subpar at everything else.

So, how do they get so much done?
Leverage! They do what they do best and get others to do the rest. Keep in mind I see this done with wealthy people and their money all of the time – they use other people’s money for most or all of their projects.

7. TAKE NO DAYS OFF (COMPLETELY)

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several times, yachting up and down the southwestern coast of Turkey (also known as the blue voyage). Sounds ballerific, right? No doubt we had a great time, but mixed in with all that swimming and backgammon was discussion of busi-
ness, strategy, planning and plotting.

8. FOCUS ON EXPERIENCES VS MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

When you have money, your toys are
big. However, the vast majority of money
I saw being spent on their “leisure” was
on actual experiences instead of the typi-
cal car, jewellery, and clothes that we’re
familiar with seeing in music videos and
gossip blogs.

I recall one time at dinner with Winfrey. I spotted a table of about 20 girls off to the side. I later found out that she was treating some of her graduat-
ing girls from her school in South Africa
to dinner in New York City. Experiences
create memories, and memories are priceless.

9. TAKE ENORMOUS RISKS

This is another one of those successful habits every entrepre-
eur can attest to. A matter of fact, Entrepreneur.com created a great info-
graphic outlining commonalities of the world’s billionaires and one of the most prominent was this characteris-
tic: billionaires are not adverse to risk.

What intrigues me even more about Yucel and Winfrey was that even at
their high financial status and success level, they still possessed a willingness
to risk their most precious asset (their name and legacy) on new and bolder
projects. If you’re not taking risks, you’re not making moves!

10. DON’T GO AT IT ALONE

Nothing great in life is achieved alone. Especially in business, success isn’t a solo act. This character trait is akin to “surrounding yourself with better people.” It takes teamwork to make the dream work.

What I witnessed from working for Yucel and Winfrey were characteristics and successful habits that not only applies to business “wins”, but also translates to general life success.

I sincerely hope the tips I’ve shared here will inspire you to create (or maintain) great habits for your success. Keep a lookout for Part 2 next week!
I have been almost two decades since Robert Kiyosaki’s classic financial advice book Rich Dad, Poor Dad hit the shelves, launching him to fame and to an appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

Renowned American investor, businessman, motivational speaker, and self-help author, Kiyosaki founded the Rich Dad Company, which provides personal financial and business education to the general public.

Rich Dad, Poor Dad tells the tale of how two fathers approached their finances — the “Poor Dad” with a PhD who struggled with money, and the “Rich Dad” who was a dropout and became a millionaire through his wisdom and street smarts.

Building on the success of the book, Kiyosaki has written over 20 financial literacy books which have sold over 26 million copies combined.

In an interview with Leaderonomics, he revealed his latest books, his experiences in the military, and his path to becoming an entrepreneur.

LESSONS IN MILITARY DISCIPLINE

His book 8 Lessons in Military Leadership for Entrepreneurs tells the extraordinary story of Kiyosaki’s journey, which, for most youths today, is the road less taken. His decision to enter the military began when he decided that he needed discipline.

During his childhood, he hated school and did not like studying. Living next to the blue-roaring waves as a fourth-generation Japanese Hawaiian; most of his time was spent surfing. He soon realized that surfing was not a viable career path.

Deciding that the military would give him the strict discipline he needed to succeed in life, he plunged straight on. He was admitted into the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point.

There, he was trained to sail oil tankers and ships around the globe. He graduated in 1969, during the Vietnam War. He felt a calling to serve his nation and signed up with the United States (US) Marine Corps.

He learnt to fly helicopters and subsequently served in Vietnam as a pilot. Looking back without regret, he considered this decision to be one of the best in his life.

“I learnt about war; I learnt about friends. And I learnt about me”, he reflected.

Reminiscing about his time in the Marine Corps, he recalled what led him away from the military. He recounted that it was the moral, legal and ethical considerations that brought him out of Vietnam and back to civilian life.

Killing of enemy combatants did not bother him at the time, as being part of the Marine Corps meant that he was given adequate training in that department. However, a fatal event changed the course of his life.

When he was about to shoot a young Vietnamese boy in a gunfire, his conscience stopped him from pulling the trigger, and he decided that he could not take any more of the killings.

A new chapter of his life began from then onwards.

MORALITY, LEGALITY AND ETHICS IN BUSINESS

After leaving the Marine Corps in the 1970s, he started his ordinary civilian life working in the corporate world. In the book Why ‘C’ Students Work for ‘C’ Students and ‘B’ Students Work for the Government, he recounted these experiences along with the antics of some of his friends who were ‘A’ students working in the corporate world.

Being in the corporate world, he felt that his ethics and morality were being challenged by the prevalence of flattery and obsequiousness towards superiors to get to the top of the corporate ladder.

He chose to start his own business because he knew he could never make it in the corporate world – a world that stood in stark contrast with the environment he experienced in the Marine Corps.

In 8 Lessons in Military Leadership for Entrepreneurs, he described the difference between going to military school and going to college. In a military school, according to Kiyosaki, people are taught to trust their friends, while in college, people learn to “stab friends in the back” for grades and promotions.

THE FATE OF LEADERSHIP TODAY

His recent book entitled Second Chance, For Your Money and Your Life deals with the issues of how to survive financially in a world mired by corruption of people in power and institutional failures.
A NEW BREED OF AN EMPOWERED AND DYNAMIC LEADER

How to define success for yourself, no matter what the world says

BY AIDA ADNAN

“A new breed of an empowered and dynamic leader is something I feel very strongly about. Especially as it relates to such positive and lasting fulfillment.

WHAT DOES IT REALLY TAKE TO HAVE A HEALTHY, EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH SUCCESS? AND HOW CAN WE REDEFINE WHAT SUCCESS MEANS TO US AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER?

Taking the time to challenge assumptions – both societies and our own – is something I feel very strongly about. Especially as it relates to such a relative and often loaded concept as success.

When you have the courage to question what you’re doing and, more importantly, why you’re doing it – you stay on your edge of innovation, truth and lasting fulfillment.

PRESSING ALL THE RIGHT BUTTONS

In my seminars, one of the key distinctions I bring up is to honour the process of innovative creation. As a modern society, we have become so dependent on Google, research articles and surveys that we have lost touch with our own capability to be brilliant.

Most successful entrepreneurs and people I know have mastered the art of relying on their own “creative buttons”. That is, to trust that they can build something and make it successful even though it has not been done before, or when all the supportive information and guarantees of it working are not there.

WHAT DOES IT REALLY TAKE TO HAVE A HEALTHY, EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH SUCCESS? AND HOW CAN WE REDEFINE WHAT SUCCESS MEANS TO YOU, HERE ARE MY TWO DISTINCTIONS I BRING UP IS TO HONOUR THE PROCESS OF INNOVATIVE CREATION. AS A MODERN SOCIETY, WE HAVE BECOME SO DEPENDENT ON GOOGLE, RESEARCH ARTICLES AND SURVEYS THAT WE HAVE LOST TOUCH WITH OUR OWN CAPABILITY TO BE BRILLIANT.

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By JEAN SELVAM
jean.selvam@leaderonomics.com

“Why can’t they stop hovering?”

“I think I can handle things on my own by now.”

R ECENTLY, I was in a session with an 18-year-old college student, and she started expressing her frustrations on being suffocated by her parents’ constant attention. She admitted having made mistakes and was still trying to figure out her life! Yet, she yearned to be independent in managing it.

She felt very dependent on her parents and unfortunately, did not feel that they trusted her enough to be responsible. Ultimately, she decided to express her frustrations to her parents, which in return, provoked their outburst: “Don’t we have the right to know and be a part of your life, as your parents?”

HEAVY INVESTMENT

Many parents defend their parenting practices by saying that they are only looking out for their children’s safety and education, and that they are proud to be so involved in their children’s lives, which is a completely fair statement to make!

At the same time, the real motivation of parents is probably multiple. According to an article from Psychology Today, many parents are anxious about the future success of their children and think that clearing every path for the future success of their children is a completely fair statement to make!

Chances are you are a little too invested and may need to allow your child the opportunity to speak up and express themselves. As a parent, you job is not to solve your children’s problems but to guide them into solving it themselves.

HOVERING OVERHEAD

So what does it mean to be a helicopter parent? Helicopter parents are accused of being obsessed with their children’s education, safety, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of their children’s lives. Helicopter parents are also accused of over-programming their children, and for failing to allow them free time to play and explore on their own.

It is common in the younger children but they are also present in secondary school teenagers and even at the university level.

Helicopter parenting is a relatively new cultural phenomenon. Not a lot of research has been done as to the effects of it. But one can certainly imagine the effects when a child does not grow up with a sense of independence and responsibility.

So what typically happens to children of helicopter parents?

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Parents work very hard and with good intentions to make sure that their children are protected from disappointment, failure and hardship. Sadly, “over-helping” might assist teenagers in developing impressive resumes for college admission, but it also robs them of the chance to learn who they are, what they love and how to navigate the world.

It can leave young adults without the strength of will, character that are needed to know themselves and craft a life.

Another research conducted by professors at California State University found that college students with “helicopter parents” had a hard time believing in their own ability to accomplish goals. They were more dependent on others, had poor coping strategies and didn’t have soft skills, such as a sense of responsibility and conscientiousness throughout college.

Don’t get me wrong! I believe that parental involvement might be the extra boost that children need in order to build their own confidence and abilities. I do think that in this day and age, children and especially teenagers need to develop the characteristics and skills needed in order to “survive” and lead full lives.

So are you a helicopter parent? Here are some simple questions to ask yourself.

1. Are you doing your teenager’s homework for them? It may seem ridiculous to some but many parents do complete their children’s college homework for them. If you do, take a moment and consider what qualities you are modeling to your child.

2. Are you often arguing with your child’s teachers, principals, coaches and every other adult who are involved in your child’s life? Chances are you are a little too invested and may need to allow your child the opportunity to speak up and express themselves. As a parent, you job is not to solve your children’s problems but to guide them into solving it themselves.

3. Are your teenagers given responsibilities and chores at home? Something small such as washing their own plates is a value towards being self-sufficient.

4. Do you feel bad about your over-involvement for your child’s mistakes? Parents will always worry about their children, but there is a difference between feeling bad about yourself and supporting your child when he or she makes the mistake.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

If parents and children are able to have an honest conversation about how parents can help in their lives, this will solve a lot of conflicts and over-parenting issues.

I believe that the key is for parents to sit with their children and ask questions like “How do you want this to go?”, “When do you want me to be involved?” and “How can I support you?”

Then as a parent, you have given your child the chance to think for themselves and be accountable for their own actions. In return, children feel trusted by their parents and ultimately become more confident in figuring out their lives.