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**COMPASSION: A SIGN OF GREATNESS**

By LOUISA DEVADASON

louisa.allycyn@leaderonomics.com

COMPASSION and love are co-existing concepts we are all too familiar with, yet struggle to define and understand amongst ourselves. Love, especially, takes so many forms and is expressed in so many ways, be it gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service (devotion), or physical touch (intimacy).

The etymology of the word “compassion” is Latin and means “to-suffering.” More involved than simple empathy, compassion commonly gives rise to an active desire to alleviate another’s suffering. What does this all mean to a leader? Most crucially, leaders with compassion are at an advantage as highly-effective leadership necessitates this crucial value. It’s a transformative value—as Bill George, the widely-respected former chief executive officer of Medtronic puts it most succinctly: “the change from ‘I’ to ‘We.’”

American business consultant, author and lecturer, Jim Collins, in his book Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don’t, set out to uncover defining factors that shifted a company from being just a “good” company to a “great” (defined as outperforming the general market by a factor of three or more) company for 15 years or more. Only 11 Fortune 500 companies met all the criteria.

Perhaps the most important finding in the book is the role of leadership. It takes a special type of leader to transform a company from greatness to greatness—one that demonstrates seemingly contradictory qualities: great ambition and personal humility. While extremely ambitious, their focus is for a larger purpose. What makes compassionate leadership? While Collins didn’t define how we cultivate compassionate leadership, officer in the Royal Navy and the Royal Hong Kong Marine Police turned motivational speaker Manley Hopkinson has a “Big Five” of values that are the basis of his book, Compassionate Leadership.

1. **AWARENESS.** “All that starts here,” Hopkinson says. “Nothing else can happen if we are blind to ourselves and blind to others.” You need to act on yourself and understand your reach.

2. **COURAGE.** Act on that awareness. Stand up and be the real you.

3. **CONFIDENCE.** Believe in yourself and the actions you take. Be fully prepared to accept the consequences of your actions.

4. **JOY.** Hopkinson believes that the modern world encourages people to focus on the destination rather than the journey. “That is wrong,” he says. “The journey is where the joy is found.”

5. **COMPASSION.** In essence, Hopkinson says, compassion is “having the peripheral vision to see others and help them along the journey of awareness, courage, confidence and joy.” He encourages us to reflect on the words of the Dalai Lama, “Empathy is a desire to know the other person. Compassion is to act on that knowledge with positive intent.”

Let’s challenge ourselves to live by The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Louisa is a writer at Leaderonomics who loves books and meeting people. Let her know how you feel about the reading materials mentioned above at louisa.allycyn@leaderonomics.com.

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**GENIUS = PERSPIRATION**

DO you think being a genius is only for the selected few? Apparently, anyone can become one.

The great innovator Thomas Edison once said, “Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.”

But what does it take to become a genius? Lots of practice and hard work of course! As David Beckham and The Beatles prove, there are no shortcuts to brilliance. Start unveiling the genius inside of you today.

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**GREETINGS from everyone here at Leaderonomics!**

roshi.n@leaderonomics.com

GREETINGS from everyone here at Leaderonomics! This week, we bring part two of Career Connect—linking you to professions in Malaysia and the region. Each week, we highlight top-class companies that offer exceptional employment opportunities, starting with our very own, Leaderonomics.

Leaderonomics is consistently growing and on the lookout for eager and energetic people to join us in achieving our mission of transforming the nation through leadership development.

Leaderonomics boasts a unique and progressive community of Leaderonomers that stand by five cultural beliefs (Be Accountable, Be Synergistic, Be Courageous, Be Excellent and Be Agile). We practise what we call a BE culture—Beyond Expectations.

The positions available at Leaderonomics are as follows:

**GENERAL MANAGER, DIGITAL**

As learning and development evolve from a face-to-face classroom-based environment to a dynamic digital space, we are in need of a senior leader who is instrumental in growing our digital presence and footprint.

**HEAD OF ENTERPRISE TEAM**

The enterprise team supports nine individual business units in Leaderonomics. As an enterprise head, your role encompasses the management of all shared services—marketing, branding, technology and various employee initiatives.

**TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST, PROGRAMMER AND/OR WEBSITE DEVELOPER**

If you are gifted technically and have the ability to maintain, develop, upgrade and on the whole, manage all technical aspects of our content-based website, we have the perfect role for you.

**DOGDOGOODVOLUNTEER LEADER**

DoGoodVolunteer is a portal that connects volunteers to non-governmental organisations (NGO). Leaderonomics is looking for a leader with a spirit of volunteerism, who has a passion to connect, empower and impact communities at large. Execution skills, the ability to build infrastructure(s) and to work with our partners, are key competencies needed. The role also requires consulting skills and the ability to work closely with other companies to help drive their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community outreach programmes.

As Leaderonomics continues to grow, we will be continually searching for great individuals like you, who want to put a dent in the world and make a difference in our country and in the communities around us. To apply for any of these roles, email your CV/resume to: people@leaderonomics.com. To view the full list of positions available, visit www.leaderonomics.com.

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I am a strategic leader with a relentless belief in people. His personal mission is to inspire and influence others to rise up to their true calling and potential. He is a Leaderonomics faculty trainer who regularly leads training sessions in the areas of leadership, management and personal development.

To engage us for strategic influencing training modules for your organisation, email us at training@leaderonomics.com. This article was first published on Leaderonomics.com.

**Leaders make mistakes too, right?**

These mistakes can include things like misjudging their subordinates, placing unreasonable demands and even showing unhealthy bursts of emotions. When such things happen, people are usually upset and feel that their leader has unfairly treated them. This can lead to anger, frustration, distrust, demotivation and an erosion of loyalty.

However, a leader who is truly humble and cares for his people will take responsibility for their mistakes. Some leaders find it difficult to apologise because they fear being perceived as weak and that they may lose the team’s respect. Not true.

When leaders admit their shortcomings, they actually gain more respect and are more admired by others because of their courage and humility.

**Of course you can love**

The world-famous director Steven Spielberg was still a student, he was offered an unpaid internship at Universal Studios. The people there eventually recognised his potential and gave him an opportunity to make a short film. It was a short 26-minute love story called *I Believe In You*.

Love is not a common word that is associated with leadership, more so in corporate leadership. But wait a minute, according to the Oxford Dictionary, love is defined as merely a strong feeling of affection.

Hence, when we talk about leading with love, we are not referring to some sort of romantic feeling but a strong positive feeling of affection we can have towards those whom we lead.

Harvard professor and organisational behaviour expert Teresa Amabile’s research shows that the best leaders foster an emotionally nourishing relationship with their employees. That means loving leaders are relationship-focused and are always mindful in cultivating healthy emotional ties with others.

Leaders can indeed show love. If you are still uncomfortable with using the word “love” and “leadership” in the same sentence, perhaps you can use the term “genuine care”. Either way, I think you get the point.

Here are five possible expressions or languages of love that leaders can show to others:

**Love Language #1: I believe in you**

The need to be affirmed by others is a basic human need. The short film later won several film festival awards and he was subsequently offered a seven-year contract directing episodic television with Universal Studios. The rest is history! It all started because someone believed in him and gave him an opportunity.

Famous German playwright and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said, “If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.” How true!

**Love Language #2: I will mentor you**

Every leader by default is a mentor; it comes with the job. Great leaders not only can get things done but they have the heart to teach and coach others to be better at what they do.

When leaders commit to mentoring others, they are communicating their willingness to take responsibility to care, guide and develop those whom they are leading. This is the hallmark of great leadership.

Hence, leaders need to have effective mentoring skills and more so, a sincere heart to nurture others in their development process. A caring leader does not focus on what they can get out from others but rather how they can pour out their lives to help those they lead to move to the next level.

**Love Language #3: I have your back**

I used to work for a very charismatic boss. He was someone who was very eloquent with his words and was absolutely fantastic when it came to human relations with others. Unfortunately, I disliked him. In my three years working for him, I always felt used to get things done in order to fulfil his personal agenda.

When the team had some achievements, he would be very quick to take the credit but when we were unsuccessful, he was also very quick to blame us. I felt undervalued, unappreciated, did not feel secure under his leadership.

**Love Language #4: I forgive you**

Forgiveness begins with simple verbal affirmations such as, “It’s okay. Everyone makes mistakes. They are forgiven. Let’s move on.”

As simple as it may sound, such words of affirmation are so powerful because it brings a closure to the episode. It also signals to the person that he or she can start with a new slate. When this happens, confidence is built and hope is restored.

**Love Language #5: I am sorry**

Leaders make mistakes too, right? These mistakes can include things like misjudging their subordinates, placing unreasonable demands and even showing unhealthy bursts of emotions.

When such things happen, people are usually upset and feel that their leader has unfairly treated them. This can lead to anger, frustration, distrust, demotivation and an erosion of loyalty.

However, a leader who is truly humble and cares for his people will take responsibility for their mistakes. Leaders who do not believe in their potential are still uncomfortable with using the word “love” and “leadership” in the same sentence.

Each sentence, perhaps you can use the term “genuine care”. Either way, I think you get the point.

Leaders can indeed show love. If you are still uncomfortable with using the word “love” and “leadership” in the same sentence, perhaps you can use the term “genuine care”. Either way, I think you get the point.

One of the most vital need is to be assured that the past is the past and they can move on. Inevitably, it leads to demotivation and worsen one’s performance.

Some leaders focus solely on reprimanding the person for their mistakes. Some ignore addressing the real issues by giving the cold shoulder treatment. This can leave the person affected with a greater burden of guilt and insecurity.

In such situations, the person’s greatest need is to be assured that the past is the past and they can move on. Inevitably, it is the leader who can provide this crucial assurance. Leaders should not only address the mistakes and reprimand professionally if needed. More than that, loving leaders need to offer forgiveness.

**Love Language #6: I see you**

I forgive you. Everyone makes mistakes. When mistakes are made, all kinds of emotions can run through a person’s mind. They can feel regretful, remorseful, fearful and even guilty.

In a workplace context, the person may feel that the boss is disappointed or even angry with him or her. This can lead to demotivation and worsen one’s performance.

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We often find ourselves discussing figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln and Florence Nightingale with awe and reverence. Understandably so, these heroes of history saved lives, freed the oppressed, upheld the dignity of the status quo. These people do not stand out in our minds for their power or their might or even their intellect; but rather they are remembered for their compassion. These are leaders with heart—and conviction—they are remembered for their compassion. These are leaders who served and upholds the rakyat who serves and upholds the country: civil servants.

Alvin Ung said, “In the field of leadership, compassion alone is not enough; you need courage as well. A creative tension must exist between compassion and courage. Compassion without courage makes you a bleeding heart that pities but has no cause. Conversely, courage without compassion leads you to pursue an outcome with much energy but without addressing the greatest needs of your followers or organisation. The combination, however, enables you to go the extra mile to love and serve others. It’s the way of extraordinary leaders like Gandhi and Mother Teresa—and it’s also the way for ordinary people like you and me.”

THE EXTRA MILE

Ung shared five definitive components of being an extraordinary leader—conviction for a cause; strong and hardy character for longevity; energy for endurance; a compass to keep you on course; and care for others. It’s central to every leader’s quest for a better world.

UNG ON COMPASSION IN BAREFOOT LEADERSHIP

I define compassion as empathy and care for others. It’s central to our B.A.R.E model here at Barefoot Leadership—to build bonds, act, reflect and engage. This model helps our team at Barefoot Leadership and our clients; to create breakthroughs for others.

Let me illustrate the breakdown of the model:

1. Build Bonds
Build bonds within a top team to resolve conflicts more effectively. Step into each other’s shoes to feel what the other is feeling.

2. Act
In order to act effectively, you have to have conviction about the biggest struggles amongst your followers and organisation. Instead of undermining one another or getting into petty fights, focus on creating strategies as a unit that will lead to the best outcome.

3. Reflect
It’s important to have compassion for yourself too; so you’re not too hard on yourself, or too hard on others, especially in times of failure.

4. Engage
The ability to inspire and persuade others comes when people trust that you serve their most important needs with love.

Compassion goes a long way in helping you to identify those needs. Thus, compassion is one of the essential yet unspoken qualities that is so necessary for humanity to flourish and for leaders to go the extra mile.

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LEAVE YOUR NOTIONS AT THE DOOR

“When you place people in little labelled boxes, they become lazy, slow and so on. What you believe is true will be true. However, understanding that this person in front of you is complex and rich with history, and being able to care about this, will enable you to be a better leader. Bias hinders compassion.”

—Alvin Ung

It is easy to see Ung’s passion for Malaysia and for the people who serve this country; civil servants. He believes they are profoundly misunderstood and often times misconstrued as unmotivated or ineffective and seemingly serving a political master. He says compassion for them has helped him hear them clearly and feel for them. He says the paragon of a civil servant is one who serves and upholds the rakyat—one who is empowered to lead with grace and compassion.

GOING A LITTLE DEEPER

Ung knows the B.A.R.E model is an effective guide to self-assess one’s compassion, starting with building bonds. Ask yourself this: Am I building bonds with the person in front of me?

Ung challenges us to dig deeper than this. Listen to another. He encourages all of us to invite someone out for a beverage and spend that time just listening to what they have to say while being aware of how the conversation is making you feel.

Compassionate leaders are those who step into the shoes of another and are able to actively listen without interjecting their views and queries. So go ahead. What are you waiting for?

Louisa believes compassion and chocolate make the world a better place. If you agree or just feel like airing your thoughts, email her at louisa.aliycyn@leaderonomics.com.

BAREFOOT COMPASSION

By LOUISA DEVADASON
louisa.aliycyn@leaderonomics.com

“Enlightened leadership is spiritual if we understand spirituality not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focused attention.” —Deepak Chopra

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You have heard it before—to love someone is to love without condition. Unconditionally. Selfishly. Selflessly. To love someone without any conditions?

I have heard that before. And when the meaningful days elapse, when the meaningful days elapse, when “the love” is no longer there, it is better for your heart’s sake to let go. Let the love come and go without any conditions?

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WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

BY TAMARA JAYNE
tamara.jayne@leaderonomics.com

We live in a society so thirsty for recognition and approval. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—you name it. We are constantly on the lookout for the latest ways to post our thoughts and photos that will get more views. Job opportunities have arisen because of that.

We are constantly exploring the realms of a world where women are accelerating in the pursuit of their careers. Jobs have taken the place of importance before marriage and parenthood. In many societies, we are still told that women are fastidious and merely want to find “the one,” get married and have babies. In spite of such reasoning, dating apps have flourished among young working professionals.

THE OTHER SIGNIFICANT HALF?
Could this search for the other half bring the significance we are so desperately looking for? Or are we just attempting to shut off the constant pestering of society’s messages telling us that being single is not as fun as having someone?

The need to be significant to someone else and the need to find a significant partner are just some of the ‘loud’ messages from magazine articles such as How to Win a Guy Over in 10 Seconds or love songs played continuously on radios.

With the rise of dating apps, it is easy to be dubious of their users. But perhaps some reasons behind why people are on it are far deeper from what we may presume them to be. Perhaps it has to do with the underlying desire for significance and acceptance.

Dating apps and social media merely provide faint glimmers of these subtle desires. People are looking for something to fill that innate desire to assure themselves that life is worth living. This is to justify that while we are here on earth, we are significant.

FINDING SIGNIFICANCE
The desire to be someone, to make a difference or to reach that stage of significance can be seen in key figures in society.

Mother Teresa devoted herself to caring for the sick and poor. She also founded the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poor. The following quote is one of the more famous lines shared by Mother Teresa:

“The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.”

Another notable figure, Martin Luther King Jr, brought attention to the issue of slavery and played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of African-American citizens in the United States of America.

It is safe to say that the feats accomplished by both King and Mother Teresa will not deny the fact that they were indeed significant people.

That is not to say that we have to now go out and save the world. However, the pattern we see in these key figures are not just the lives they have lived but the people they have influenced and impacted—whether it was one person or by the multitudes.

As Mother Teresa says, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”

Depending on our upbringing or state of thinking, one might believe that significance comes in various forms of success or wealth.

This may be the benchmark we set for ourselves to state that as soon as we have reached it, we have somehow achieved significance in life.

So we strive in our jobs to attain monetary wealth, and once we have settled in our mansions of success, we count our lives as worth living. But will we really?

“I cannot believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be compassionate. It is, above all, to matter: to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.”

—Leo Rosten

PARTING THOUGHTS
Perhaps, the search for significance is measured not by what people have achieved over a span of their lifetime, but by how people around them were impacted by the lives they have lived.

Tamara believes that learning never ends. She is inspired by C.S. Lewis, Max Lucado, and Calvin and Hobbes. To engage with her, email her at tamara.jayne@leaderonomics.com.

THE SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE
By MICHELLE BOON
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EMPOWERING THE STREETS
A DAY IN THE LIFE

BEHIND THE SCENES: FEEDING THE HOMELESS

It started off as an excuse to hang out with friends too. As I am constantly busy with work, this entire thing was partially a selfish reason to catch up while reaching out to the homeless. Now and then, we would also do movie previews. So I tell my friends, if you want to catch up, come for street feeding.” —Gary Liew

Liew found a way to kill two birds with one stone, to speak. He got his best buds on board and organised a great night out bonding while giving people in need a hot meal. A handful of friends grew to a network of over 30 volunteers. Presently, Liew says they are pushing 400. He couldn’t believe the response until he glanced at a group photo. Every Wednesday night, Liew leads the troops to the heart of KL. Why Wednesday?

Liew says, “…Wednesdays because it’s in the middle of the week and there are other street feeding groups coming in at the start and end of the week, but none in between. So that’s why, I mean, these people need to eat every day, right?”

I BECAME US
Street Feeders Organisation is now a non-governmental organisation (NGO). In fact, they plan to expand into an international NGO, but that’s another story. Liew says, “There’s a board of committee members and we hold meetings to discuss sponsors, funding, etc. I retained the title of chairman and founder but most decisions, excluding big ones, is handled by the committee.”

THE STRUGGLE
Liew says, “Money has always been a problem. I had to dig it out of my own pocket and I literally watched money in my bank reducing substantially. And I just didn’t know how to ask for help. The society blames the government, but society is also to blame. It’s an issue we all have to embrace.” —Gary Liew

Liew is joined mostly by young working adults who are very vocal on social media. He calls them “activists behind the screen.” While social media creates awareness, he wants everyone to understand that they are capable of doing so much more.

Liew, and I know this to be true, believes he’s an anarchist at heart. He’s resilient against the naysayers of more senior organisations. While you would think NGOs would work as allies for a shared cause, Liew has seen a territorial side of other organisations who don’t want other organisations serving in close proximity.

The social activist in Liew sometimes makes it hard for him to be diplomatic. Speaking his mind as freely as he does, has occasionally backfired. So he learns on his vice president, who complements his style of leadership, especially when a more tactful representative is required such as for their Odyssey project with the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia.

I know my friend is wise enough to harvest new leaders and to give them opportunities to fill in the gaps that may be present in his leadership style.

“I think it was a good decision to not be the person in charge per se. I’m pretty ballsy sometimes and I learnt not to give a damn from early on and to fight for what I think is right.” —Gary Liew

I guess creating a movement takes a whole lot more to drive it forward. With the right leadership qualities, starting something small can grow into a bigger and meaningful cause for more people. For Liew, his perseverance and hard work throughout the years, has made so many things possible, and it’s a beauty to watch how it touches the lives of people, homeless or not.

Joel Osteen once said: “Keep a good attitude and do the right thing even when it’s hard. When you do that you are passing the test. And God promises you your marked moments are on their way.”

Michelle Boon believes in giving what we can. To engage with her, drop her an email at michelle.boon@leaderonomics.com.
By SHERRIE CAMPBELL
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HIGHLY sensitive people are “different” but different in the way that businesses need. The highly sensitive see things in ways others cannot and are the world’s greatest innovators. These are the people you want running your businesses. You want them on your creative teams to help push your business to the cutting edge.

With their influence, your business will stand out—by creating new ideas and taking existing ideas to a new level of brilliance.

Here are eight characteristics of the highly sensitive that make them exceptional business leaders.

1. EMOTIONAL AWARENESS
   The highly sensitive are acutely aware of their inner emotional workings. They feel the emotions of joy, happiness, love, gratitude, excitement and passion more deeply than the average person. They also experience both physical and emotional discomfort more intensely. Because their thoughts, ideas and experiences tend to be richer and more profound, they are gifted with a greater insight into what makes the human being feel enough to be moved. Because they understand what moves people emotionally, they know how to capture consumers with creative products and ideas. This makes them undeniable assets in the world of commercialism.

2. GREAT EMPATHY
   The highly sensitive are built with a natural and deep empathy towards others, making them powerful leaders, teachers, coaches, guides and mentors. They are completely “tuned in” to the emotional experiences of others, enabling them to stop another person’s negative state from spinning out of control. Their ability to show compassion makes them great balancers in challenging situations. Because of their empathy, they tend to respond to the emotions in others, giving them the insight to calm and to provide practical solutions that ease tensions. When the emotions in others are positive, the highly sensitive are skilled in building upon those emotions to further inspire and motivate their team towards a particular cause.

3. DEDICATED TO FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE
   The highly sensitive stand for what is right. All of their senses are magnified, making them live through feeling rather than rationalising. This makes them “relationship-oriented” rather than “agenda-oriented” in their approach.

   Because their sensitivities and insights are other-focused, they make sure all ideas generated benefit the justice of the whole system. All business communications are focused on far-sighted, rather than short-sighted agreements. The highly sensitive have exactly what it takes to change all facets of their business, due to their commitment to justice and life being based on nothing less than honesty and integrity. They never seek to greedily secure a deal. For them, there is no justice in greed and for this, the highly sensitive are your greatest allies.

4. LEADERS
   The emotionally sensitive are committed to creating dynamic, highly-productive, value-based organisations that hire people who are passionate about their work. They give others ample opportunity to grow, making them feel valued and respected. They are concious in giving those they manage clarity about their roles and responsibilities, thereby eliminating confusion. They do not support the high-control, low-trust model in directing their team. Rather, they empower others to be the creative developers of their own skills in getting to the next level of their career. Innovation never happens in a vacuum, so the emotionally sensitive value, build and maintain large networks of people, assets and establishments. Collaboration is highly valued as diversity provides them varying viewpoints to grasp the full spectrum of challenges which may arise economically, technologically, and financially.

   The emotionally sensitive are attuned to each aspect of their business, providing them the clarity of what needs to be done to stay competitive and a cut above the rest. They are instinctive in knowing how to navigate through all resistance to their ideas. This keen awareness of emotional mechanics allow them to navigate more effectively than most.

5. PASSIONATE
   The highly sensitive are deeply passionate about what they believe in and are able to make significant differences in the business landscape. Their minds are endlessly active and are not built with an “off” switch. They are often so passionate that they consume themselves with their work and cannot stop until they have reached a satisfactory level of readiness to launch their ideas.

   They are intense, deeply imaginative, and perceptive. Whatever they do, they give it all they have got. This quality makes the highly-sensitive person an invaluable commodity in pioneering new paths with a steadfast commitment.

6. NEED SPACE AND TIME TO THEMSELVES
   Because the emotionally sensitive are extreme and ingest the wholeness of the emotional and physical environment around them, they need time to retreat and refuel. In many ways, life is more difficult for them. Everything about life is magnified and penetrating to their experience. Their brilliant minds are constantly in motion—creating, designing, and thinking, like a merry-go-round that never stops spinning.

   They burn out easily if they do not take care to refresh themselves. Without time to disconnect, it can cause blocks in their creativity, so they need quiet time to further make use of their genius.

7. INNOVATIVE
   Many highly-sensitive people are introverted, which is a trait that can also encourage creativity. The emotionally sensitive have a richness of sensory detail, making them attuned to shades, ideas, colours and textures of the commercial world that many do not see. They are also able to see the voids, gaps and spaces for innovation not seen by others.

   The highly sensitive are also interested in creating something new, taking new approaches, and creating products consumers did not even know they needed. They enjoy reimagining and repurposing products or ideas already in place as well.

   Because they prefer the unconventional, they pay little attention to traditional business metrics which inhibit many companies from making breakthroughs. The highly sensitive are thus the people who make the “difference.”

8. GENEROSITY
   The emotionally sensitive are known givers. If you need something they will try to get it for you, regardless of the cost to themselves.

   They are a “player’s coach” looking out for the best interest of each team member and what each one of them needs in order to be successful.

   They are giving, loving, encouraging and committed to any and all people they have relationships with, personal and professional.

   They are demonstrative with generosity and value the impact on the happiness and overall attitude of people. They offer compliments often, acknowledge others for their achievements, and reward liberally, thereby inspiring others to want to work with them and for them.

   The highly sensitive are trailblazers. Being naturally innovative means doing things differently or doing things that have never been done before.

   An emotionally-sensitive person is someone who has embraced this idea and creates environments in which employees are given the tools and resources to challenge the status quo, push boundaries and achieve growth.

PARTING THOUGHTS
   The emotionally sensitive are curious, self-motivated, visionary, risk-taking, constantly-in-motion, playful, self-accepting, adaptive, reflective, experts at recognising patterns, committed to learning, collaborative, articulate, resilient and persevering.

   With them as your leaders, your company will be a cut above the rest.
I t is that time of the year, folks — Cupid’s day of shooting arrows, to create love-struck couples. It’s Valentine’s Day, a magical day where couples go through a period of quiet, personal introspection of how to meet “the one.”

Whether any of the above is true for you, we can all agree that relationships — be it personal or professional — takes ongoing effort and commitment. None of us are excluded from feeling the regular frustrations of being misunderstood or unsupported. It is often a challenge for me as well, to be both a pillar of support for others while supporting my own ambitions.

Do we give selfishly because the more we give the more we get? Or do we take on being ardent in spreading our energy only to those who matter?

What does it take to really master relationships in a way that uplifts us? How do we enable actions that make our relationships an amazing resource of joy and inspiration? In my effort to constantly add value to others as well as to strengthen my own relationships, below is a process that has helped many of my clients strike that balance of giving and receiving fulfillment in their relationships.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Our experiences, whether positive or negative, is bound by our subconscious mind by as much as 85%. The subconscious is made up of beliefs ingrained in us during our formative years; significant ages being six, twelve and 21, where certain incidences trigger what I call your “perception blueprint.”

Our “perception blueprint” acts in a similar way to an equaliser thermometer. When it gets too hot, it kicks in to equalise the temperature back to a desired, cooler degree, and vice versa.

Unfortunately, for most, we set the temperature high on expectation but low on being responsible.

What do I mean by that? To clarify further on this very basic but crucial element in successful relationships are three major elements of what I call the AAA Relationship Matrix.

1. **DECIDE THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP IS 100% YOU**
   
   “I feel that I am the only one making an effort in this marriage!”
   
   “My husband takes me for granted!”
   
   Do any of the above sound familiar to you? Many of us carry this concept that a relationship should be 50/50, which will inevitably result in disappointment for both parties.
   
   If you want real, authentic connection with one another — a connection where you experience joy and fulfillment — then you need to accept and embrace the fact that you are solely responsible for how things turn out. Not 50%, 60% or 80%, but 100%. If there is disappointment or lack of trust, you are responsible. If you are constantly arguing, you are part of the reason that it is happening. When you are willing to own up and say “I am responsible,” you are at a very powerful position.

2. **BE A GIVER**
   
   Relationships are challenging. Any relationship, whether in your professional or personal life, starts off as a fresh, untouched patch of land, not a field ready to harvest. It needs close tending of water, fertiliser and regular weeding. The reason relationships are our greatest teachers is because they teach us about who we really are. They act as magnified mirrors that reflect back to us about areas where there are “overgrown weeds” or areas in need of “preventive pesticide.”

   The one antidote to truly enrich our relationships is to create a positive approach to giving. Give your time. Give your knowledge. Give your positive support. Give kind and uplifting words. Give a smile. Give the best of yourself and in time you will see your relationships flourish.

3. **KEEP FORGIVING ALONG THE WAY**

   When two people meet and agree to come together, they are agreeing to a dynamic dance where both parties participate with their own unique “perception blueprint.”

   This relationship will be a mix of you and your partner’s past, opinions, skills, strengths and weaknesses. It will be tricky and messy. Your patience will be tested at times. There will be surprise and delight in store for you. When the hard times come, just trust that you will be able to handle them. Trust that you deserve the best experience within this relationship.

   Choose to forgive their actions or misinterpretations. Neither of you are perfect but what connects both of you is the objective. Most importantly, forgive yourself for making inaccurate decisions. Forgive yourself for having certain expectations. Forgive yourself enough to let go.

IN CONCLUSION

All successes in life are a product of our relationships — this is something that I can personally vouch for. Our lives are infinitely and intimately intertwined, whether we choose to believe it or not. Therefore, on this special day, take the opportunity to reflect upon and acknowledge the people in your life as well as those who are no longer around. Appreciate the lessons they have taught you and the ones they are still teaching you now. They have all played a part in uplifting you to the remarkable person that you are today.

May your relationships continue to enrich you towards the life and career that you love.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

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By AIDA ADNAN
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A young man dreamed of becoming a basketball player. He went for the varsity team selection, but did not make the final cut. He asked the coach if he could ride with the team just to watch the game. The coach agreed on the condition that he helped to carry jerseys. His parents attended the game too; only to realise that their son was not part of the team. Their disappointment was more than he could bear.

Another young man was born into a poor and unhappy childhood. During birth, an accident with the forceps damaged his facial nerve and left part of his lip, tongue and chin paralysed. His parents were divorced. He did poorly in school and was expelled many times. He looked for relief by fantasising about becoming famous and successful.

Finally, another man—this time not so young—had a strong character and achieved considerable success at his senior-level job. However, he had one weakness—the inability to be submissive to his bosses, and was thus fired when he was fifty years old.

Do you know who they are? The first is Michael Jordan, the second Sylvester Stallone and the third, Lee Iacocca. Do they become champions? Some get their dreams, some get deals, career? No, not initially. Stallone and the third, Lee Iacocca. Is Michael Jordan, the second Sylvester was fifty years old.

Let’s use a romantic analogy to illustrate this. Before marriage and engagement, there is usually a period of courting. It can be by arrangement or by attraction. Two parties become endearingly acquainted with one another and if suitability and eligibility are non-issues, these mutual feelings will lead to commitment and covenant, and eventually a happy relationship.

The engagement is usually an intense period of excitement, anticipation and discovery. It is a time of possibilities and intense energy, and barriers—if there are any—are quickly broken. Time and distance—similar to working late with commitment—are no issue. There is freshness and fascination. Now, could this be a picture of employee engagement in the corporate context where work is concerned? Good chemistry between an organisation and the individual can lead to an idyllic union.

In fact, looking for a job has non-issues, these mutual ability and eligibility are one another and if suitably, these mutual feelings will lead to commitment and covenant, and eventually a happy relationship. When there is compatibility between employer and employee in terms of talent, values, and desire, empowerment is the natural result. Similarly, employees and organisations that practise common values grow into each other and create what we call a high-performing culture. Sadly, the opposite can also happen—when energy is not properly engaged, the result will be a high-poisoning culture.

IN CONCLUSION
Companies pursue synergy, defined as total output being more than the sum of its parts—one plus one is more than two. World-class companies have always pursued synergy while married couples do this naturally, and all of us are the result of this synergistic union. When an individual finds an organisation that shares similar dreams, values and purpose, an enduring love affair will ensue, possibly blossoming into an endearing relationship. Therefore, the ultimate career choice lies in looking for what you can be committed to, in meeting your yearnings and earnings.