Are you a master builder?

3 UNUSUAL HABITS OF HIGHLY CREATIVE PEOPLE
8 BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR MISTAKES
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THE GREAT MASTERS OF LEADERSHIP

By DARSHANA SIVANANTHAM
editor@leaderonomics.com

DEEP in the heart of the Far East, there lived the Four Great Masters. Each of these Masters were wise beyond their time, and carried with them the wisdom to achieving greatness. There is an unseen and untold synergy when all four of their ageless teachings of business, personal, functional and leadership masteries are combined. It is the integration of powers of all the Four Great Masters that is believed to be the secret to manifesting great leaders.

BUSINESS MASTERY

We begin the journey to great leadership with the First Master, who teaches us how to identify opportunities in life. Training with the first Master reinforces our levels of awareness and perspectives. We develop the ability to form deep insights on how to connect the dots in identifying opportunities for greater collaboration. The first Master specialises in expanding awareness through strategy, vision, and experience.

PERSONAL MASTERY

The second Master teaches the foundational lessons to great leadership—intense self-awareness. Here, one masters the ability to influence, communicate, energise and create, simply through a deeper understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The second Master encourages learning that puts you in touch with the core of your passion, which in turn allows for great flow of creativity in all that you do.

"The best leaders in the world are great at this. They have intense self-awareness." —Roshan Thiran, CEO Leaderonomics

FUNCTIONAL MASTERY

The third Master reminds us to take our key areas of strength and turn them into our expertise. Train with the third Master to dive deep into developing ourselves in specialised spheres, such as technical and functional skills.

The third Master requires a heavy investment of time, energy and commitment. It may be a rough ride here, but without this training, the path to great leadership may be a lot harder to take.

LEADERSHIP MASTERY

The fourth Master—the oldest of them all—teaches us a combination of the most important ingredients a great leader must have, i.e. making decisions, the timing in using all the traits learnt from the other three Masters, and competency as a leader. The fourth Master’s lessons are the last leg of this journey to great leadership, and teaches us how to be visionary leaders without losing sight of the finer details. While it is important that a leader holds great vision, it is equally important for them to remain humble and yet assertive as they build this vision. The fourth Master trains us to develop this through experiences in changing advocacy, decision-making and extreme leadership.

THE FIFTH MASTER — MASTER OF THE MIND

But wait, unknown to most disciples on this journey to great leadership is a fifth Master—without whom, none of the Masters above may matter at all. You can access the fifth Master at any point in your journey. The fifth Master is rather elusive, yet always present. It takes a significant amount of awareness to sense this Master’s presence. The fifth Master, when found, will teach you a very simple yet powerful lesson—the lesson of mastering the mind. Master the mind, says the fifth Master, and you will see that anything can be achieved with ease.

Napoleon Hill was one of those who met this fifth Master. He left us with a great pearl of wisdom: "Whichever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY?

Every journey begins with a small step in the right direction. The journey of leadership requires great vision, commitment, and incredible passion. In Leaderonomics, we believe that the four masteries (and the fifth unseen mastery) are key enablers in ensuring every leader becomes a great and purposeful one. Are you ready to change the world?

Darshana is fascinated by the way our minds work, and believes that the world we perceive is simply a reflection of it. Log on to www.leaderonomics.com to find out more details on our training modules on these four different masteries, please e-mail us at training@leaderonomics.com or call us at +603 7957 5809/5804.

To find out about our leadership philosophy in developing leaders from every stage of life, e-mail us at leadership@leaderonomics.com.
expands a huge amount of my time and energy writing books and articles and working to keep my company innovative. I've developed an obsession with some of history’s most creative minds in the hope that I might learn some tricks to expand my own creative productivity. Some of the things I've learnt are more useful than others, and some are simply too weird to do.

Steve Jobs, for example, routinely sat on toilets, dangling his bare feet in the water while he came up with new ideas, and Yoshio Nakamatsu (inventor of the floppy disc) would dive deep under water until his brain was deprived of oxygen, then write his ideas on an underwater sticky pad.

Word ideas aside, I've developed a pretty good understanding of the habits of some of history's most creative minds. There's enough commonality between different people that I've distilled their habits into strategies that anyone can follow. Six of these strategies stand out because they have the power to change the way you think about creativity. Give them a try, and you'll reach new levels of creative productivity.

1. WAKE UP EARLY
Not all creative minds are morning people. Franz Kafka routinely stayed up all night writing, and William Styron (author of Sophie’s Choice, among other best sellers) woke up at noon every day and considered his “morning” routine to be staying in bed for another hour to think.

However, early risers may make up the clear majority of creative thinkers. The list of early risers ranges from Benjamin Franklin to Howard Schultz to Ernest Hemmingsway, though they didn’t all wake up early for the same reasons. Franklin woke up early to plan out his day, while Schultz used the time to send motivational e-mails to his employees. For many creative people, waking up early is a way to avoid distractions. Ernest Hemmingsway woke up at 5am every day to begin writing. He said, “There is no one to disturb you and it is cool and cold, and you come to your work and warm up as you write.”

The trick to making getting up early stick is to do it every day and avoid naps — no matter how tired you feel. Eventually, you will start going to bed earlier to make up for the lost sleep. This can help you cut off for a couple of groggy days at first, but you’ll adjust quickly, and before you know it, you’ll join the ranks of creative early risers.

2. EXERCISE FREQUENTLY
There’s plenty of evidence pointing to the benefits of exercise for creativity. Feeling good physically gets you in the right mood to focus and be productive. Feeling good physically gets you in the right mood to focus and be productive. Exercise also forces you to have disconnection from the rest of your body and mind. And many people report that they can think more clearly, and are better able to learn new things, after they exercise.

Experts recommend doing a daily 30-minute workout, but I don’t believe in that. I try to do it every day and avoid doing it for a whole day. I believe it’s practically impossible for them to get anything done anywhere else. Staying in one place is actually a crutch; studies show that changing environment contributes to the productivity and creativity. E.B. White, author of Charlotte’s Web, said it well: “A writer who waits for ideal conditions under which to work will die without putting a word on paper.”

As I Lay Dying, and musician Philip Glass, who worked as a plumber.

3. STICK TO A STRICT SCHEDULE
It’s commonly misconception in that in order to be creative, one must live life on a whim with no structure and no sense of need to do anything, but the habits of highly successful and creative people suggest otherwise. In fact, most creative minds follow a strict schedule. Psychologist William James described the impact of a schedule on creativity, saying that only by having a schedule can we “free our minds to advance to really interesting fields of action.”

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The same is true for any type of creative work. If you keep waiting until you are in the perfect place at the ideal time, the time will never come.

4. KEEP YOUR DAY JOB
Creativity becomes more difficult when your livelihood depends upon what you create (and you begin to think too much about what your audience will think of your product). Perhaps this is why so many successful and creative people held on to their day jobs. Many of them, like Stephen King, who was a school teacher, produced their breakout (and, in King’s case, what many consider his very best) work while they still held a nine-to-five.

Day jobs provide more than the much-needed financial security to create freely. They also add structure to your day that can make your creative time a wonderful release. The list of successful, creative minds who kept their day jobs is a long one. Some notable individuals include Jacob Arabo, who started designing his own jewellery while working in a jewelery shop; William Faulkner, who worked in a power plant while writing As I Lay Dying; and musician Philip Glass, who worked as a plumber.

5. LEARN TO WORK ANYWHERE, ANYTIME
A lot of people work in only one place, believing it’s practically impossible for them to get anything done anywhere else. Staying in one place is actually a crutch; studies show that changing environment contributes to the productivity and creativity. E.B. White, author of Charlotte’s Web, said it well: “A writer who waits for ideal conditions under which to work will die without putting a word on paper.”

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Steve Jobs started Apple in his mom’s garage, and J.K. Rowling wrote the first ideas for Harry Potter on a napkin on a train. When you have a creative idea, don’t wait — put it into action as soon as you can. Recording that spark of creativity may very well be the foundation of some-thing great.

6. LEARN THAT CREATIVE BLOCKS ARE JUST PROcrastination
As long as your heart is still beating, you have the ability to come up with new ideas and execute them. They may not always be great ones, but the greatest enemy of creativity is inactivity. Author Jodi Picoult summarised creative blocks perfectly: “I don’t believe in writer’s block. Think about it — when you were blocked in college and had to write a paper, didn’t it always manage to fix itself the night before the paper was due? Writer’s block is having too much time on your hands. If you have a limited amount of time to write, you just sit down and do it. You might not write well every day, but you can always edit a bad page. You can’t edit a blank page.”

Picoult’s comment describes all creative activity — the only way to stay creative is to keep moving forward.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER
In my experience, you must get intentional about your creativity if you want it to flourish. Give these six strategies a try to see what they can do for you.
With the changing definition of functional competencies, how do we measure performance?

HOLISTIC FLAVOUR OF FUNCTIONAL MASTERS

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF BUSINESS AND ORGANISATIONS

By EVELYN Teh

director@leaderonomics.com

“Your production line provides quality and a level of output that is comparable to no other. How do you achieve this level of performance?”

This famous question—asked so far as the Chesterfield’s candle performance—is illustrated to our trainees involved in the candle making process. We asked them to think about the candle only as its main function. The way to solve this problem is actually to empty the trunk of the box and then stick the candle inside the box before the box is sealed. Results from this experiment showed that people generally would not think of using the corkboard as a means to hold the candle. This is not to say that people do not know the corkboard exists; it is rather that they did not think of it as a functional tool.

The CHANGING DEFINITION OF FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES

With the amount of human activity, many people are coming across some of “competency frameworks” as part of their professional development. We believe the main function of an item is sometimes not its main function; it is how we use it to perform a measure of performance. For example, using the candle, people are unfurled about the lack of sales staff and its impact on business growth. The findings indicate that customers are more likely to work on a website for answers rather than speaking to a salesperson, which has led them to keep sales and marketing results at 20% of the entire organisation's cost.

One thing that stood out is the need for functional expertise in various areas. As early as the 17th century, the foundations are the ones supporting the running costs of the organisation. With a lack of investors at the back of these businesses, they are essentially less passive to meet unrealistic targets or empty goals of growth. The findings were consistent with a steady growth rate, and this—combined with the nature of the business (software development)—permitted Affirm to thrive without the barrier of functional competencies of sales.

Moreover, expert of big data analytics is often highly valued. This says that they can assess the company’s performance, identify trends, and provide insights into potential areas for improvement. In addition, they can also help to optimise operations and reduce costs by identifying inefficiencies and improving processes. This results in more effective decision-making and increased profitability for the business.

A GIG ECONOMY

Nevertheless, the case for functional competency sustains when we think about the concept of gig economy. Does the gig economy threaten the foundations of the organisation? Clearly, it does. Gig workers are less likely to be tied to the business philosophy and goals, which can be a barrier to growth. Therefore, it is essential to find ways to integrate gig workers into the organisational culture and ensure they align with the company's values and objectives.

Gig economy is often associated with a sense of freedom and flexibility. Gig workers are not bound to the traditional constraints of a 9-to-5 job, allowing them to balance their work with other commitments. However, this flexibility can also lead to a lack of stability and security, which can be a concern for both gig workers and the organisation.

The main advantage of functional competency is that it enables organisations to make informed decisions and take strategic actions. In the gig economy, gig workers can be valuable assets to organisations, allowing them to fill gaps in the workforce and provide expertise where needed. However, it is essential to ensure that gig workers are not exploited and that they are treated fairly.

The challenge for organisations is to strike a balance between the use of gig workers and the retention of core employees. This can be achieved by providing gig workers with opportunities for career development and rewarding their contributions. Additionally, organisations can implement policies and procedures to ensure fair treatment and respectful collaboration.

In summary, the gig economy presents both opportunities and challenges for organisations. It is crucial to adapt and evolve their strategies to align with the dynamic nature of the gig economy, ensuring that both gig workers and core employees are valued and respected.

DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH TONIGHT’S EVOLVING BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

To ensure functional competencies have a place in today’s organisation, we can do three things:

1. HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET

In my work with technical teams, I have observed a successful transition into leadership positions have a growth mindset in relation to their role.

The “growth mindset” is a concept popularised by education researcher Carol Dweck who suggests that people often figure out before they have put in the maximum effort and that they feel that their success is determined beyond what they are born with. For people with a natural inclination toward technical excellence, building a growth mindset can help them view a wider capacity of their skills. This is because with a growth mindset, people believe in the value of effort, and are more likely to take on tasks that are not in their usual functional comfort zone. In other words, they have a sense of autonomy in their own growth and development, and can make a conscious contribution to the organisation’s human capital.

2. PROVIDE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

While an individual’s growth mindset is a given, it is also the case that the areas of the organisation to make the best of functional competencies by providing cross-functional opportunities.

Whether this is in the form of working with people’s subject matter expertise and having them run a project or engaging in cross-functional activities that require applying technical skills training suitable for the specific level or specific action that are required to function that in the bigger picture aspects of businesses.

The functional competencies “tuck” is likely to be out of bound, but the long and the short for it is where it can be adjusted to be across functions and allow it to be used to address the needs of the organisation.

3. TALK TO YOUR MANAGERS

Creating a culture where functional competencies are valued and respected would make a significant impact.

People with strong expertise are valued for their depth as opposed to how much they have engaged in their team’s change. They could either expand energy in the technical areas. In any case, a continual focus on functional training is likely to make a significant impact that could bear the fruits of having the function can be applied to the business.

What we find that works in providing feedback to any functional training is to complement it with non-technical training suitable for the specific level of or specific actions that are required to apply functions that make the bigger picture aspects of businesses. Functional competencies are sure a fantastic way of organising a business and so long as everyone is well rewarded with strong supervisors and so long as everyone is well compensated having functional competencies is sure a fantastic way of organising a business and ensuring that both gig workers and core employees are valued and respected.

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Graduate Employability Boot Camp

**WHAT DO EMPLOYERS SAY?**

“Our inclusive approach allows us to tap into the graduates’ readiness to enter the workforce. They should be resourceful and be aware of the company’s background before interviewing. To boot camp participants have shown these qualities.”

– Soo Yat Khin, operations manager, Malaysia Global Solution Center, Tech Mahindra

“Through this boot camp, we can personally meet the graduates and groom them up to the quality of the corporate world. These boot camps are a great initiative by TalentCorp to link graduates to the industry.”

– Salimah Abbas, senior manager, HR & admin, UCAN

“We can really see the difference in how the participants of Graduate Employability Boot Camp carry themselves during the interview compared to other candidates. We are confident and well-prepared.”

– Shash Nambiar, recruitment head, Asia Travel (M) Sdn Bhd

“After joining the boot camp, I gained plenty of useful tips that I used during the interview for my current internship at a leading company.”

– Putra D El Fumosus Evang, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

“Experts from the industry are willing to share with us interview insights which are very good because they are specific, very useful in answering the questions we may face in interviews to improve our skills.”

– Mohd Shafiq Mukhriz, Universiti Sains Malaysia

“The boot camp is a platform for the industry to showcase their local talent, to have good attitude and are able to share career opportunity experiences and career-related volunteering opportunities.”

– Stevan Nambiar, recruitment head, Asia Pacific, Post & Sukuran

“The Graduate Employability Boot Camp is an excellent platform for graduates to thrive and rise to the occasion. We are confident and ready to handle the challenges. The interest and effort shown by the candidates and the industry of the CIV were encouraging.”

– Tan Hsiu, director of further resources, Infineon Technologies

“Throughout the duration of the camp, I was given the opportunity to listen to the experience and insights from industry experts. I had fun and enjoyed it and has equipped me very well to step into the workforce.”

–痕迹辉, senior management trainee, Petroliam Nasional Berhad

“Through the boot camp, we are confident that most of the graduates and have been exposed to the corporate world as result of this boot camp. The diversity of talents show that they are confident and well-prepared.”

– Tunku Zahir, manager, corporate planning, Malaysia Global Solution Center, Tech Mahindra

“Experts from the industry are willing to share with useful tips which are very good because they are specific, very useful in answering the questions we may face in interviews to improve our skills.”

– Mohd Shafiq Mukhriz, Universiti Sains Malaysia

“The boot camp is a valuable addition to our corporate training programme. Talent Matching to help graduates understand their capabilities towards potential hiring employers. Cover Letter and CV Review: Guide graduates on preparing an informative resume and cover letter which will help them get through the shortlist. Interview Skills: Activities include participants conducting research on an assigned list of companies, to help them understand the industry and respective companies. Interview Quiz: With tips for jobs during an interview. Unleashing Your Thinking: Exploring creative and critical thinking.”

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ELF-awareness is a quality that will bring out the best in you, and those you work with. It can enhance our reasoning and our thinking, as well as improving our interpersonal skills for better relationship outcomes.

In fact, the one competency that great leaders have in common is self-awareness. Early in their careers, these leaders were able to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to positively change their behaviour for all concerned.

But for some coaches, trying to improve a student’s self-awareness can be really frustrating. Whilst it is never easy to bring to attention a person’s blind spots, and to teach them how to improve their conduct, eventually most will welcome and flourish from their training.

In fact, many find that as their self-awareness improves, they acquire a growing desire to leave some sort of positive mark on the world, be it with their employees or their projects.

But then there are others just like those who audition on television shows such as Australian Idol. Many potential ‘idols’ screen out a song, only to be laughed at by the judges, and then look confused and surprised to even think that the judges could consider them to be bad.

Why would they put themselves out there on national television, only to be ridiculed by all? Sure, some are in it for the attention or to have a joke, but for others—who truly believe they can be the next Australian idol—they fall into the poor self-awareness category. These people need the “5th” to hit the fan.” Before realisation sinks in that, maybe, just maybe, they aren’t perfect after all. I am sure there are people reading this now, who know someone who is the epitome of what I am talking about.

Unfortunately, the truth is, there are many in leadership positions with little or no self-awareness, who are at risk of going down a path to self-destruction, whether it be a career demise or damage to family life. To compound the issue, having the ability to acknowledge your level of self-awareness can be a paradox in itself: you need to be aware enough about yourself, to learn to know yourself even better. Hopefully, these five warning signs are a signal to you, that you might need help.

1. I’M ONLY TOLD BOB HE WAS A HALFWIT, BECAUSE HE NEEDED TO BE PUT BACK IN HIS PLACE.

BEING CONSTANTLY DEFENSIVE

In other words, you may have received some objective feedback that didn’t support your opinions. Instead of listening calmly to the information offered, you jump to the defensive, and we all know defensive people try to deflect the problem by going on the offensive.

2. I HAD TO TAKE OVER THE JOB, BECAUSE SALLY REALLY HAD NO IDEA WHAT SHE WAS DOING!

MUST MICROMANAGE

Sally really did know what she was doing, but you just needed to be in control.

You find fault in minor inconsequential things. However, behind the scenes you are most likely failing with bigger things. Left unattended, these bigger issues will spiral out of control, affecting both your future and possibly the business.

3. ‘YES, BUT...’

MAKE EXCUSES

Every time I hear someone making an excuse using this phrase, I know they really aren’t interested in hearing from others. In your mind you know you are always right and there is a perfectly good reason for why you are right, and everyone else just doesn’t get it.

Unfortunately, you are missing opportunities to explore options that may have great benefits to all. And over time, this conditioned response soon becomes an ingrained habit that is hard to break, and holds you back from growing.

4. I DON’T KNOW WHY THEY THINK I AM A BULLY!

YOU’VE BEEN CALLED A BULLY MORE THAN ONCE

Yes, you are a bully and you don’t know it. You have no sense of what you do that makes people say you are a bully, and you can’t understand why they think you are one. Until you grasp that you aren’t perfect, and do have faults, then you might get off your high horse and respond with a bit more empathy and humility. Until then, watch out world.

5. ‘NO, I AM NOT NEGATIVE BEHIND HIS BACK.’

YOU’RE IN DENIAL

Saying one thing, but acting or behaving differently.

You don’t realise that your behaviour is the driving force which is creating conflict with others. When you lack awareness of your behaviour, you then miss chances to make positive change.

People are great at inventing logical reasons to cover things they are often scared to tackle. However, constant denial will not only create toxic interpersonal relationships, but often lead to personal burnout because of the underlying stress that you fail to recognise.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you have answered “yes” to two or more of these questions, you need to work on your self-awareness. Self-awareness is a learnable skill, not a natural-gazing as many assume. Self-awareness can allow you to make better judgements and allow you to have more control and flexibility over your reactions to events. How can you improve your self-awareness?
HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR MISTAKES

WHAT is accountability? Author Brian P. Moran, in the book The 12 Week Year: Get More Done in 12 Weeks Than Others Do in 12 Months, defines it as "simply taking ownership of one’s actions and results." That is accepting that our actions have consequences, and the ball is in our court to create the results we desire. The fact of the matter is that successful people are accountable.

Leadership author, Michael Hyatt, considered the vitality of accountability both in leaders and in individuals. "When you make a mistake, own it. It will restore people’s confidence and increase your influence." Also it gains respect from the ones around you because this shows both humility and your willingness to learn. According to Linda Galindo in The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success, personal accountability contributes 85% to success and the other 15% depends on the way the wind blows.

But where do you begin?

1 RESPONSIBILITY
Start by learning responsibility. When you’re truly responsible, you believe that overall success or failure is up to you, even if you work within a team or are blinded by unforeseen circumstances. Responsibility is what you must first train yourself to have before taking charge of a task, it is a way of thinking.

It’s easy to claim responsibility when things go well, but it’s hard when they don’t. A truly responsible person claims responsibility either way, both the flaws and success of a task but also deals with what is. Instead of figuring out who’s to blame or worrying about how things “coulda woulda shoulda" been if only something had gone differently, you deal with the matter that is at hand and seek a solution. Hence, one must equip one’s self with the responsibility and the possible outcomes of a task and be prepared to own up.

2 EMPOWERMENT
Self-empowerment begins from within. By empowering yourself, you take the actions and risks to achieve what you aim for rather than waiting for someone to drop it on your lap. Once you have ingrained responsibility, empower yourself to stand up and take a challenge, but remember to always be accountable at the end.

The most direct route to self-empowerment is to be clear about expectations—what you want, what they want, and what you can contribute. To do that, you need to ask questions, make agreements, and clarify everything in writing. Otherwise, you risk suffering the source of all misunderstandings—missed expectations.

But always remember to never blow your own trumpet about something you did! Take stock of your personal talents and triumphs and let the higher-ups know who you are and how you are contributing.

3 PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
It’s the willingness to answer for the outcomes of your choices, actions, and behaviours. This must not be confused with RESPONSIBILITY (Point 1), which is the mind-set one must have before taking up task, and PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY, which is the action of owning up to the results of the task. When you’re personally accountable, you stop using excuses as a “spare card” to justify your failure.

Be your own cop and critic. Are you accountable for your actions even if nobody holds you accountable or nobody catches you? You bet you are. So be your own “accountability cop” and police yourself. A little integrity won’t hurt nobody.

And when trouble arises, look first to yourself and ask four specific questions:

What is the problem?
What am I doing—or not doing—to contribute to the problem?
What will I do differently to help solve the problem?
How will I be accountable for the result?

4 WHO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH MATTERS
Ever come across somebody who always seems to “be down on their luck”? Like they’re constantly shrouded in negativity and usually has nothing positive to say. You know how they say birds of a feather flock together, well that holds water here. Not only does associating with negativity eventually reflect on ourselves, but we begin to slowly get sucked into such a vibe until we unconsciously end up like such.

So replace the negative with a positive. It stops you from feeling unhappy as you have come to accept that you are now going to be solely responsible for how you feel, not other people or other external factors. Associate yourself with “accountable.”

FINAL THOUGHTS
If all else fails, be willing to take different actions. If you want different results, you have to do things differently. One of our biggest problems is that we don’t like to fail and, more importantly, we don’t like to be seen to fail. But in order not to do so, one must be willing to learn from mistakes. Hence, it is important for one to be personally accountable as it not only ensures success, but it also builds character.

By ROHINI RAJARATNAM
editor@leaderonomics.com
the first-time father, I found that there were lots of things that had to be adapted and adjusted, especially in my own lifestyle.

BY JOSEPH TAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

**FAther’'s Day**

My first day

The day finally arrived that my wife woke up to realise that she was not just pregnant but that her baby was now here with us. I was to work through the night, and I was a single parent for the first time. Our baby was a very low birth weight—only 1.5 pounds—so she was very fragile. Having not had any experience of looking after a baby, I was a very nervous father. I had never had to manage a household before, nor was I prepared for the feeding, bathing, dressing, and nappy-changing processes that come with the job. On the other hand, our first few days were very rewarding and exciting. With all the love that our baby had to give and the love and support that she brought to our lives, I found myself in a very happy place.

**THE FRAUGHTER FATHER**

By JOSEPH TAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

**Fathering is a very wry year.**

When my daughter was born 17 weeks early, I thought that I have made it. Finally, I am a father and I appreciate the journey of getting there. However, as I look back, I see that it was a very difficult process for me. For the first time in my life, I have to learn how to take care of someone who is completely dependent on me. This is a very different experience from the role I took on in our marriage. I have never had to be responsible for someone’s life before, and now I am. This is a very important moment in my life, and it has taught me a lot about myself.

**THE CHALLENGE OF CAREER SUCCESS**

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**THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT A FATHER CAN RECEIVE IS WHEN OUR CHILDREN APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS.**

BY JOSEPH TAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

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When you step into the professional world, you become an entity larger than who you ever were. You put aside who you were in preschool, what you achieved in high school and how great you were at university. It’s not to say that all these stages mean nothing or that they have not meaningfully contributed to the person that you are. It’s just that every time you network, meet clients or collaborate with your peers, you are your first impression and subsequent reputation—you are your own personal brand.

In order to thrive professionally, we need to refine two levels of ourselves: the “superficial” i.e. first impressions and the “deep” i.e. functional mastery.

**Impression Formation**

Impression formation is the process by which individuals perceive, organise, and ultimately integrate information to form unified, fixed, and consistent impressions of others. These impressions are made based on our appearance, non-verbal behaviours, as well as how we communicate and engage with others.

1. Appearance: People form a large portion of their ideas about you as you approach them, so learn to be immaculate.
   - Pick clean, neat and crisp outfits as they make you look organised, clean and detail-oriented. Universally, clean, ironed and well-fitted white shirts and tan or black pants and skirts are seen as most professional.
   - Accessories like watches and bags say a lot about you. Many see a good watch as a status symbol, so invest in a good brand.

2. Non-verbal behaviour: This refers to any type of communication that does not involve speaking—facial expressions, body language, touching, voice patterns, and interpersonal distance.
   - Tone: Keep your voice even and train yourself to speak at a steady rhythm.
   - Body language: Practise good posture and stand at an angle from the person you’re speaking to so you do not come across as condescending. Be mindful of conveying openness through your body by keeping arms uncrossed and off your hips. Lastly, smile during your initial greeting but not throughout your exchange. Keep your expression open and warm but smiling too much may make you seem clownish and lead someone to not take you seriously.

3. Engagement: How one relates and communicates with others is pivotal to building and maintaining rapport.
   - Active listening: Learn to be a good listener by paying attention like using verbal and non-verbal cues (for example, say, “Go on…” or nod). Paraphrase the feelings and content heard back to them so they feel you are attentive and value their words.
   - Ask more questions and relate to the answers given.
   - Be genuine: Everyone has values and beliefs, so stand by yours. Universally, being attentive and value their words, people are able to instinctively detect bogusness so it would just make them uneasy around you.

**Functional Mastery**

Functional Mastery is the expertise you bring to the table and what you are skilled at. This element articulates that you bring to the table and what you are skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. This element articulates that you are accomplished at your vocation, skilled at. 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