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EDITOR’S NOTE

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QUOTES

“The best way a mentor can prepare another leader is to expose him or her to other great people.” — John C. Maxwell

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EDUCATION

Roshan ThiRan

EDUCATION

Roshan ThiRan
CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE GRADUATES OF LEADERSHIP DOJO 2016

Koh Lee Ching (Cams Sdn Bhd) | Chua Wee Yee (CIB Net Station Bhd) | Tom Kennedy (Collabro)
Sinan Bin Che Ismail (DD Animation Studio Sdn Bhd) | Lee Chuen Loong (Ed-Online Technologies Sdn Bhd)
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WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU TAKE YOUR RESPECTIVE ORGANISATIONS
AND THE INDUSTRY TO EVER GREATER HEIGHTS!
A few years later, after I was appointed the youngest marketing manager in Unilever, I was on the team. Fast-forward, this was the advice I gave to my team: “Make lots of decisions. You will never be always right, but that’s how you learn.” That advice has served me well to this day.

Obviously, good mentoring is a skill. Some are better at it than others. But what’s most important is the heart of the intention. A mentor doesn’t need anything from you. They just want to give, guide and help the mentee grow.

As I rose through the tiers, I had a mentor who was one of my first mentors. One of them was Lai, a remarkable manager who runs Koh and Fik. (I always get with a new way of approaching the challenges at hand and set for her, she would sometimes send our present- with the mentee and take care of us. One day I thought it was time to take upon the responsibility of sharing the knowledge and experience with one of our mentees. She was my mentor and role model. She always shared her knowledge, experience and wisdom with the mentee and mentees. She was my mentor and role model. She always shared her knowledge, experience and wisdom with the mentee and mentees.

Of course, the relation to work is the same. The mentor must be well informed about the experiences and the mentorship person is usually long term, based on a strong and true relationship. Usually, the mentee initiates when or how often they get together.

In the corporate world, a senior executive or a personal assistant could be a mentor to a less experienced or novice employee. Assigning a mentor to a new hire is often a good way of on-boarding new hires, forming part of the induction programme. Mentoring is one way to help staff retention. Traditionally, I have the privilege of being able to provide feedback and support to others.

Another boss revealed a blind spot in my career. He advised me to be more adaptive and open-minded. He told me to always be ready to learn and grow. This helped me to see things from a different perspective.

The difference between mentoring and coaching is a complex and nuanced concept that requires a deep understanding of the needs and goals of both the mentee and the mentor. Mentoring is often more about providing guidance and support, whereas coaching is more about helping the mentee develop their own skills and abilities. Coaching can help the mentee identify their strengths and weaknesses, set goals and develop a plan to achieve them. Coaching can also help the mentee develop their own leadership style and become more effective in their role.

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THE ART OF LEARNING FROM THE BEST

BY SANDY CLARKE AND MARIA BADRINAM

I t often easiest to learn about the best leaders by discussing their top leadership principles. In this edition, we have provided you with an opportunity to do just that. To that end, we have asked some of the world’s most respected leaders to share their stories and experiences in helping to bring best practices to readers like you.

The Leadership Dojo Programme

A major impact of the programme comes from extending and meeting great leaders across Malaysia who included UMI Group Managing Director Datuk Salleh Sulaiman, Alibaba Bank CEO (ex-Konkernis and many others including the Proprietary Investment Group (PVG) and Valam.

Not only were they mentioned by prominent CEOs, they also had numerous opportunities in which to develop their skills and network. The programme was managed by Leadersonomics’ CEO, Roshan Thiran, who hosted experts and industry thought leaders who shared their thoughts and knowledge during intense learning sessions and learning sessions and one-on-one coaching sessions. It also means that one of the key components of the programme is the selection of an executive coach who spends time on one-on-one basis, helping leaders to understand how they manage and lead the business better. The programme is designed to provide private reflective moments where they develop new ideas and present and reframe their brain for the future.

DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES

A major impact of the programme comes from extending and meeting great leaders across Malaysia who included UMI Group Managing Director Datuk Salleh Sulaiman, Alibaba Bank CEO (ex-Konkernis and many others including the Proprietary Investment Group (PVG) and Valam.

Another valuable element to the Digi programme is the CEO “chow time”, where industry thought leaders openly share their stories, offering candid accounts of their successes and failures along the way. These sessions include constructive feedback and guidance to approach leadership development and strategy. Unfortunately, there are few such golden opportunities to learn as much from so many respected leaders on one place. Digi CEO Abid Murtu, in one of these occasions, mentioned that you can never spend enough time talking to people on the floor – this is where much of the learning is done. Alumna also mentioned to Kris Utthong, CEO of Stampsolve Solution Sdn Bhd, who shared how, as part of the mentoring process, he had the opportunity to talk with Alumna to share the latest trends in the industry and provide feedback and direction on his own path.

TOOLKITS FOR GROWTH

The Leadership Dojo Programme consists of 3 ark toolkits for scaling and developing organisations, including the insightful “4 Constraints” figure – the CEO model developed by Roshan Thiran after 20 years of studying successful and failed businesses. The constraints model takes an in-depth look at common components that often hold back leaders and their businesses from achieving their goals. The toolkit provides a framework for what can be done to overcome the obstacles of these constraints.

Each chief sharing experiences. Another high impact sharing opportunity is a private session with EarthWorld Chairman Tan Sri Liew Khee Sin. The session shared the strategies he undertook as a young man and encouraged the participants to never give up on their dreams. In fact, he encouraged everyone to dream big and then go out and do the different.

The 4 CONSTRAINTS SUFFOCATING MOST ORGANISATIONS

All leaders are faced with certain constraints that influence their ability to lead, especially when it comes to running a business or company. Understanding these constraints is crucial for leaders to make informed decisions and take necessary actions to address them. In this article, we will explore the four constraints that are most common in organizations and how they can impact leadership.

1. Powerlessness

Powerlessness is a significant constraint that affects a large number of leaders. It can arise from a lack of resources, control, or support from others. This constraint can make it difficult for leaders to make decisions, implement strategies, and achieve their goals. To overcome this constraint, leaders need to focus on building relationships and establishing trust with others.

2. Complexity

Complexity is another constraint that leaders face. It can arise from a complex environment, unclear goals, or multiple stakeholders. This constraint requires leaders to have strong decision-making skills and the ability to manage multiple priorities simultaneously. To overcome this constraint, leaders need to prioritize tasks and focus on the most important goals.

3. Dependence

Dependence is a constraint that arises when leaders are too reliant on others. This can lead to a lack of autonomy and creativity, which can hinder leadership development. To overcome this constraint, leaders need to develop their independence and take ownership of their decisions.

4. Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a constraint that arises when leaders are unsure about the outcome of their actions. This constraint can lead to decision paralysis and a lack of confidence. To overcome this constraint, leaders need to develop their ability to make decisions under uncertainty and take calculated risks.

These constraints are not new, and leaders have been dealing with them for centuries. However, understanding and addressing them can help leaders become more effective and successful. By recognizing and overcoming these constraints, leaders can improve their decision-making, interpersonal skills, and overall effectiveness.
LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM SILICON VALLEY
WISDOM FROM THE COACH WHO MENTORED STEVE JOBS, ERIC SCHMIDT AND JEFF BEZOS

By MINDA ZETLIN
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MOST Silicon Valley titans are familiar figures. They make commencement speeches that rack up millions of views on YouTube, get profiled by business websites, and have irreverent movies made about their lives.

Then, there was William Vincent “Bill” Campbell, who died of cancer last year, at 75. He was one of the most influential figures in Silicon Valley, yet was outside the norm in just about every way. Even though he was chief executive officer (CEO) of Intuit and chairman of its board until his death, “Coach,” as everyone called him, could not write a line of code.

Bill Campbell grew up in the Rust Belt of Pennsylvania and attended Columbia University before leaving to join Apple (where, somewhere along the way, he took a left turn and wound up at Apple, where, he told a reporter directly to the top.

Top executives who’ve been coached by Campbell tended to stay out of the spotlight. You won’t find many videos of him on YouTube which is ironic, since one of his roles at Google was to counsel YouTube’s top executives. But he never wanted to accept praise for the accomplishments of anyone he mentored.

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5 BE COMPLETELY TRUSTWORTHY
One reason so many top executives looked to Campbell for mentoring is that they knew they could trust him completely with anything they told him. Thus, he could serve for years on the boards of tech rivals, Apple and Google, without raising any conflicts-of-interest—although there was some yelling from lobsters.

6 GIVE AWAY CREDIT
Campbell tended to stay out of the spotlight. You won’t find many videos of him on YouTube which is ironic, since one of his roles at Google was to counsel YouTube’s top executives. But he never wanted to accept praise for the accomplishments of anyone he mentored.

“People (many in the press) want to credit others for aiding the CEO or founder in these decisions. This result is totally unfair,” he told Fortune reporter Jennifer Reingold (currently senior editor) by email as an explanation for his refusal to be interviewed.

7 BE YOURSELF
In further defiance of Silicon Valley norms, Campbell operated most often, not from a shiny office, but from a table (with a plaque reading “Coach’s Corner”) in the Old Pro sports bar in Palo Alto. Campbell was an investor in the bar, and often gave advice to high-flying tech executives there. He was fond of both, hugs and advice to high-flying tech executives he was fond of both, hugs and profanity and apparently handed out plenty of both.

People loved him for it. He was living proof that you can be exactly who you want to be, live the way you want to live, and still be really, really well. And leave the world a better place for having been here.
EMPOWERING HR THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

By SASHE KANAPATHI
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“How will human resources (HR) function evolve in the future as more jobs become automated?”

This was just one of various thought-provoking questions raised by participants during the Q & A session of a summit on the topic of “Empowering HR through Digital Transformations.” It was jointly organised by Microsoft and Leaderonomics on Jan 11 at Microsoft’s swanky headquarters in Kuala Lumpur City Centre.

Numerous other points were raised as more than 60 HR leaders and directors engaged the panel of speakers in intense dialogue on how HR could have a bigger impact in today’s workforce. Later, I reflected on the session and compiled various takeaways I’d like to share with everyone who could not be there that day.

Evolving Role of HR
Microsoft Malaysia HR Director Datin Roweena Florence kicked off the session by sharing her deep passion for HR and how it plays her to work tirelessly to ensure that lives are improved through the efforts of her team and entire organisation. Her conviction reiterated, for me, the power of passion in driving us to excel.

Roshan Thiran, chief executive officer of Leaderonomics, explained how HR practitioners are evolving from adminstrators to business leaders (refer to Figure 1). He elaborated that in order to be true business partners, HR professionals need to add value not only to employees but also to other key stakeholders of the organisation, including its shareholders, customers, vendors and clients.

He went on to remind HR leaders that they need to help the organisation address the question “What may be constraining their employees from achieving high performance? These areas are leadership, strategy, culture and structure and processes. Roshan stressed that culture and processes, in particular, are areas often neglected by HR leaders due to a lack of understanding about how problems in this area can be identified and addressed.

Another important avenue by which HR can contribute mightily to the organisation lies in learning to “Tell Stories” better. Stories enable the organisation to attract, retain, and engage people. HR plays a key role as the chief organisation- al storyteller. This then begs the question: Are we telling the right stories and ensuring these stories are distributed to the right audiences?

One more key insight I picked up was that creativity is essential. HR: Roshan stressed that there are many ways to engage employees. Amongst the ideas cited was the need to be tech-savvy, to engage the family of employees not only through traditional means but also via creative initiatives like leadership development and employee children’s developmental programmes and other insights-driven efforts to enhance the support infrastructure of employees.

HR as Agents of Change
CEO of CibitBank Lee Lung Nien was another featured speaker that day. It was refreshing to hear the CEO’s perspective on HR. While he urged HR professionals to be agents of change, first he asked how many in the audience, as senior HR leaders, had the ear of their CEO. Could they walk in at any time and receive their CEO’s attention? If a business has scant regard for the HR function, it is unlikely that HR can be effective agents of change and positively influence business direction. It is therefore key for HR to “earn” their right to be agents of change.

Lee followed up with further self-reflection challenges about how connect ed or “digital” we are as HR leaders. With digitisation being a critical initiative of every organisation, it is to make incremental changes and to bring appropriate tools into their organisations to drive change. Yet, many HR leaders are resistant to adopting digital tools that will accelerate their impact as HR leaders.

This is a key lesson not just for the HR function but for all functions. Change will happen but we must proactively seek opportunities to drive this change and not be sitting in a shell resisting the future. Digitisation is a reality that all businesses must embrace.

For HR to be a change agent, we need to embrace these tools, both personally as well as organisationally. A rising, digitised millennial workforce will soon be the norm. Many are already taking their place centrestage. This event was timely reminder to embrace leadership of the future through technology. I look forward to seeing more and more HR practitioners assume the mantle as change agents, who drive the digital transformations of tomorrow.

Evolution of HR
HR as Business Leader
Outside-in HR, customer focused HR, strategic, expert + excellent administrator

HR as Strategist
Succession planning, people management, people strategy, etc.

HR as Functional Expert
Expertise in manpower planning, hiring, etc.

HR as Administrator
Payroll, admin

Figure 1

A panel session with (from left) Aranthiram Balakrishnan of Microsoft, Roshan Thiran of Leaderonomics, and Monir Azzouzi of Maxis.

HR leader or talk to them in their offices, chances are that leader is being reactive, or that the information coming to them has been filtered or coloured. Instead, they should be constantly amongst their employees to make sure they have a finger on the pulse of the organisation, to be proactive instead of reactive. This is the only way to have the ear of the CEO – when you become the ears, eyes and nose of the CEO and the leadership team.

DIGITISATION – THE WAY FORWARD FOR HR
Monir Azzouzi, head of performance and development at Maxis, spoke about the transformation journey that Maxis underwent. Maxis has been up and down on this emotional roller-coaster, but having got rid of multiple career tracks and narrowed it down to just two, Maxis also simplified their benefit structure, resulting in amazing employee engagement scores. One great insight I gained from Monir was how HR must partner with the CEO to drive organisational change and elevate HR to the role of a true business leader.

Microsoft business group lead Ananthram Balakrishnan took the audience on a tour of a wide array of HR digital tools available through the Office 365 platform. From the simplicity of using Skype for Business to schedule meetings to collaborating through Microsoft Teams, HR had a significant role to play in technology. I was particularly impressed with Microsoft Delve, which allows for information discovery across Office 365. It’s a very intuitive collaboration tool that works seamlessly with the brand’s other offerings.

One of the key takeaways that resonated with the audience was how easy it is to make incremental changes and to bring appropriate tools into their organisations to drive change. Yet, many HR leaders are resistant to adopting digital tools that will accelerate their impact as HR leaders.

This is a key lesson not just for the HR function but for all functions. Change will happen but we must proactively seek opportunities to drive this change and not be sitting in a shell resisting the future. Digitisation is a reality that all businesses must embrace.

For HR to be a change agent, we need to embrace these tools, both personally as well as organisationally. A rising, digitised millennial workforce will soon be the norm. Many are already taking their place centrestage. This event was timely reminder to embrace leadership of the future through technology. I look forward to seeing more and more HR practitioners assume the mantle as change agents, who drive the digital transformations of tomorrow.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Finally, Florece made an interesting observation about the importance of reading for all HR leaders. She cited how she goes daily to www.leaderonomics.com to read informative, inspiring articles to learn and grow herself, and recommended others to do likewise.

So, in conclusion, I offer the Top 8 Key Insights I gleaned from HR leaders at this summit. They are:

- Have a passion for what you do to be a change agent.
- Focus on culture and the processes around it.
- Brand your HR initiatives – invest in HR media planning.
- Get techy! Learn up on technology.
- Get a life – and relate and engage better with your people and customers.
- Walk the floor, know what’s happening.
- Invest in integrated tools and automate HR.
- Find partners to help guide the journey.

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Sashe Kanapathi is Director of Learning at Leaderonomics. He is excited that Leaderonomics is offering a digital learning platform at only RM1,000 per organisation (all inclusive). He hopes this will enable all organisations to be able to afford digital learning and embrace it fully. For more information on the digital learning platform, email learn@leaderonomics.com.
HILL women have always been contributing members of their communities. They have only been legally part of the workforce for the last 60 odd years. Prior to the 1960s, women largely assisted their family businesses or took clerical and other lower-level positions in companies. Over the years, many countries have worked to engage women in the labour market and deal with issues like wage inequality, harassment and discrimination.

However, as men had a significant head start in workforce leadership, the highest positions of management, chief executive officers (CEOs) and directors are still predominantly occupied by males in almost every society. This means that many up-and-coming male professionals have access to a host of mentors of their gender who have journeyed along career paths they aspire to, whereas women struggle to find female mentors who have “been there and done that” in terms of walking a path they would like to follow.

Aside from these aforementioned issues, the limitations of the glass ceiling and the struggle to make education more accessible to girls contribute to a situation where women, even in developed economies, still shoulder a larger portion of parenting, homemaking and other social or familial obligations.

THE NEED FOR MENTORS

While women make up nearly half of the workforce today, only 14% of senior executive positions at Fortune 500 companies are held by women. Studies have found that besides the lack of child-care facilities and support for mothers with dependents, most women struggle to climb the corporate ladder due to a lack of suitable mentors and networks.

As stated in a study by Margaret Linehan and Hugh Scullion, “Female managers can miss out on global appointments because they lack mentors, role models, sponsorship, or access to appropriate networks – all of which are commonly available to their male counterparts.”

A crucial benefit of having a credible, respected mentor is that it legitimises the mentored individuals’ capabilities and professional prowess in the eyes of managers and leaders alike. The wisdom and experiences shared by a mentor can also be pivotal to helping a protégé successfully navigate the complexities of corporate terrain. Knowing that an advocate within the organisation or industry has your back can provide a tremendous boost of confidence if you are a woman maneuvering through tedious office politics further weighed down by gender imbalance. In addition, coaching and sponsorship increases one’s visibility to notable members of her organisation and industry.

What’s more, a mentor who can empathise and is aware of the unique gender differences in career management also offers valuable psychosocial support by being a role model and counsellor to her mentees. For any woman – or any a human being, for that matter – this acceptance and affirmation results in an elevated sense of competence as well as self-worth.

PUTTING THE “MEN” IN MENTOR

Currently, however, men are still dominating positions that enable senior professionals to be influential mentors. In truth, many of these male professionals could mentor women just as well as they mentor men if they had a forum to discuss and understand the gender-related issues faced by their female protégés. A man’s ability to be an effective mentor to women depends greatly on the extent to which they understand the challenges that women disproportionate-ly face when managing their careers. A mentor who can adapt their mentorship approach to address the gender-related needs and concerns of their mentees will not only enhance their mentees’ career trajectories, but also contribute to women staying in that field. This in turn helps to extend the positive influence and legacy of the mentor.

So how do we go about developing better mentoring relationships between the sexes?

1. PRIORITISE LISTENING SKILLS OVER QUICK-FIXES

Contrary to popular belief, neuroscience has found that women are not more emotional than men. In fact, when compared, women were better at reframing their negative emotions by utilising positivity while men were more inclined to control, or even mute their feelings.

In short, our gender difference lies not in our level of emotionality, but rather in the form of our emotional expression. Women are more likely to express their feelings through words or even tears while men tend to bottle it up. These differences can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication, as well as relational breakdown, if a mentor is not attuned to his or her female mentees’ neurological inclination to more analytical of her emotions and therefore more openly expressive of them.

The first step in addressing this is for the mentor to exercise his listening skills, aiming to empathise rather than to diagnose or instruct his mentee towards what he sees as an easy solution. This habit also serves to develop the mentor’s interpersonal skills, open doors to larger networks and help them win access to insider details of their company, which in turn, enables them to be more effective leaders.

2. MANAGE YOUR MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP OPENLY AND TRANSPARENCY

One of the main reasons many male mentors do not take women under their wing is the fear of engaging in a close professional relationship with a woman and how this might be perceived by others. While people’s openness to platonic male-female friendships and professional relationships is a work in progress, a mentor can start to mitigate some of these concerns by engaging two female mentees at the same time and encourage them to mentor each other even as he mentors them.

Additionally, conduct your catch-up discussions in the open to avoid generating grist for the rumour mill. Maintaining transparency and openness is the best way to keep your mentorship professional and effective.

OTHER AVENUES FOR WOMEN TO SEEK MENTORS

Malaysia has taken great strides to start programmes that empower women to take the next big step in their career and also find mentors to support their journey. MaIC (Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre), SME Corporation Malaysia, and the Mentoring Women in Business Programme – implemented through a collaboration among the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, Qualcomm Wireless Reach, Maxis and the Foundation for Women’s Education and Vocational Training – are some resources available to women seeking mentors or support in their professional career.

Informed and inclusive mentor and mentorship programmes for female professionals are pivotal to equitable global and community development. As female mentees enjoy a more successful career path with timely promotions, better salaries, improved job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation, they ultimately develop a stronger sense of self-worth that benefits their families and, ultimately, the next generation. Organisations that create and encourage mentorship opportunities for women also help position themselves for further success in the future. Mentoring relationships promote more collaboration and creativity within the organisation. At the end of the day, this makes everyone more self-aware and attuned to one another – widening and enriching our interpersonal skills and professional synergies.

By LOUISA DEVADASON

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“If I hadn’t had mentors, I wouldn’t be here today. I’m a product of great mentoring, great coaching. … Coaches or mentors are very important. They could be anyone – your husband, other family members, or your boss.” — Indra Nooyi, CEO of PepsiCo

L Louisa is a psychology major and freelance writer for Leaderonomics. She believes the time to change and be greater than you’ve ever been is now. To reach out to Louisa, e-mail louisa.allycy@leaderonomics.com

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By ADAM GRANT
editor@leaderonomics.com

To millions of beloved readers, Jeff Zaslow was the advice columnist who replaced Ann Landers (pen name created for columnist, Ruth Cowley) and the bestselling author who captured our hearts with moving books like The Last Lecture with Randy Pausch. But, to me and countless other writers, Zaslow was a devoted mentor who gave countless hours of his time and energy to help aspiring authors.

When I was in middle school, Zaslow and his family moved in, across the street, from our house in Michigan. At a neighbourhood barbecue, I was a shy, nerdy kid shooting baskets alone. He walked over, introduced himself, and challenged me to a game of HORSE. He took a genuine interest in getting to know me, asking about my hobbies and crushes. Although we had just met, I had the uncanny sense that this new neighbour truly cared about me. Suspiciously, he lost that game of HORSE very, very badly.

Looking back, he was the first adult who treated me like a peer, and it helped me come out of my shell. At the time, I had no idea that he would become a mentor to me—or that I would enter the writing profession.

Two decades later, I decided to write my first book. In search of guidance on developing a proposal, I reached out to Zaslow. Less than three hours later, his reply landed in my inbox. He invited me to call his cell phone any time, day or night. He asked me thoughtful questions and listened to my responses.

I explained that I was interested in writing about why people help others. Zaslow kindly reviewed my pitch and met with publishers, my heart was racing. Zaslow had just released a new book and had a stack of them sitting at home in our neighbourhood. But he marched up to the register and paid for a copy of his own book, autographing it so my dad didn’t have to wait for a signed edition.

Even though he gave advice for a living, Zaslow never assumed that he knew the right course of action for anyone else. This humility was visible early in his career. In his late 20s, while writing a story for the Wall Street Journal about the contest to replace Ann Landers, he decided to enter it on a lark. When an interviewer told him he was underqualified, he replied, “I may be 28, but I have the wisdom of a 29-year-old.”

When students ask me how they can pay their mentors back, I challenge them to think about it differently. Mentoring is a gift, and their job is to receive it with gratitude. How can they show their mentors that they’ve made a difference?

In 2012, before I finished writing my book, Zaslow lost his life in a tragic car accident. I missed the opportunity to tell him what an impact he had on me—not only as a writer, but as a role model for how to live a good life.

Zaslow never got the chance to give his own last lecture. I don’t know what he would have said, but I know how he would have made you feel. He would have dazzled you with humour, enlightened you with insight, and inspired you to pursue and savour the most meaningful moments in life.

I dedicated my book to him, but it seems that the most powerful way to honour Zaslow’s memory is to share the wisdom that he imparted through his actions. He taught me four timeless lessons about mentoring.

1. Great mentors don’t give answers. They ask questions.
2. Great mentors are proactive, not reactive. They don’t just respond to outreach; they reach out to their mentees.
3. Great mentors see more potential in their mentees than their mentees see in themselves.
4. Great mentors focus on their mentees’ success, not on their own.

Since we lost Zaslow, people have come out of the woodwork to share how much his generosity meant to them. Perhaps the most stirring was Brad Epstein, a healthcare executive. Seven years ago, I worked on a project with Epstein, not realising that he knew Zaslow. It turns out they were roommates, in Orlando, in their 20s.

“I miss the light he added to the world,” Epstein wrote. “But I can see the glow from countless candles he lit.”

On Jeff Zaslow as a mentor, Brad Epstein had this to say: “I miss the light he added to the world. But I can see the glow from countless candles he lit.”

“Here’s hoping you’re the next Malcolm Gladwell!”

When I started writing, I relied on Zaslow’s work as a model for creating narratives that speak to readers’ hearts along with opening their minds, and his personal example as a reminder of what it meant to put other people first. There was the time in 1983, when he gave the crossiant out of his mouth to a homeless person. There was the Zazz Bash, an annual singles’ party that he created for charity—and led to 78 marriages. In his books, he was always shining a spotlight on others.

And there was the time, when he ran into my dad at a local store. Zaslow had just released a new book and had a stack of them sitting at home in our neighbourhood. But he marched up to the register and paid for a copy of his own book, autographing it so my dad didn’t have to wait for a signed edition.

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When students ask me how they can pay their mentors back, I challenge them to think about it differently. Mentoring is a gift, and their job is to receive it with gratitude. How can they show their mentors that they’ve made a difference?

In 2012, before I finished writing my book, Zaslow lost his life in a tragic car accident. I missed the opportunity to tell him what an impact he had on me—not only as a writer, but as a role model for how to live a good life.

Zaslow never got the chance to give his own last lecture. I don’t know what he would have said, but I know how he would have made you feel. He would have dazzled you with humour, enlightened you with insight, and inspired you to pursue and savour the most meaningful moments in life.

I dedicated my book to him, but it seems that the most powerful way to honour Zaslow’s memory is to share the wisdom that he imparted through his actions. He taught me four timeless lessons about mentoring.

1. Great mentors don’t give answers. They ask questions.
2. Great mentors are proactive, not reactive. They don’t just respond to outreach; they reach out to their mentees.
3. Great mentors see more potential in their mentees than their mentees see in themselves.
4. Great mentors focus on their mentees’ success, not on their own.

Since we lost Zaslow, people have come out of the woodwork to share how much his generosity meant to them. Perhaps the most stirring was Brad Epstein, a healthcare executive. Seven years ago, I worked on a project with Epstein, not realising that he knew Zaslow. It turns out they were roommates, in Orlando, in their 20s.

“I miss the light he added to the world,” Epstein wrote. “But I can see the glow from countless candles he lit.”

Thank your mentor before it’s too late. And then light as many candles as you can.
For an organisation, being able to identify and understand your people (even potential talent!) is valuable information. It allows the right people to be hired and utilised in the right way to achieve organisational goals.

Leaderonomics’ Talent Assessment team works with organisations to better select, assess, identify and develop people to their full potential. Using both traditional and innovative means, our Talent Assessment solutions deliver insight into the strengths, competencies and development gaps of your workforce.

We understand that demands for talent differ from one organisation to another. As such, our Talent Assessment solutions are crafted to best suit your company’s needs.

KNOW WHO TO HIRE AND HOW TO DEVELOP:
THE LEADERONOMOMICS TALENT ASSESSMENT APPROACH

SELECT TALENT
- Increase the probability of selecting the right candidate for hiring
- Assess the job and culture fit of an individual
- Go beyond an interview to evaluate behavioural capabilities and personality
- Determine internal talent readiness to be promoted to new roles
- Determine internal talent readiness for succession planning and talent pipelines

DEVELOP TALENT
- Better understand the strengths of individuals and groups, and leverage on them to maximise returns from the talent pool
- Identify gaps to direct targeted development plans
- Understand the bench strength of employees within the organisation
- Identify key talent and high potentials
- Provide objective feedback of performance to employees from a third-party perspective

Contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.lim@leaderonomics.com to schedule a free consultation.

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