UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF GRATITUDE

4 THE THREE PARTS OF “THANK YOU”

6 HOW BEING GRATEFUL CHANGED MY LIFE

10 13 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU REFLECT

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NEGOTIATE LIKE A BOSS

HOW TO GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT OUT OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCEDURE

By PREMA JAYABALAN
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From something small like getting your child to eat their breakfast to securing a big project with a client, negotiation plays a vital role in our communication. With or without realising it, we negotiate every day. Therefore, it’s imperative for anyone to have basic negotiation skills. In any disagreement, individuals understandably aim to achieve the best possible outcome for their position (or perhaps an organisation they represent). However, the principles of fairness, seeking mutual benefit and maintaining a relationship are the keys to a successful outcome.

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL RULES OF NEGOTIATION

1. Everything is negotiable
   People have the misconception that negotiating means coming up with a final price for something. In fact, there are many aspects that can and should be negotiated, such as settling on a warranty for a product, payment terms, ancillary items and many others. Having more options gives you a higher chance of reaching an agreement.

2. Be honest and fair
   Winning a negotiation doesn’t require you to be mean or manipulative. People should treat others the way they themselves would want to be treated, and honesty breeds honesty. Manipulation may win in a negotiation but you risk burning bridges or wreaking damage (and, for it to be successful, the parties involved need to articulate what they want to ensure that they have gained something positive or valuable from the process, with their views and needs having been taken into consideration). Parties need to be diplomatic with each other to address any issues or complications professionally. It is in this phase that all parties make definite concessions.

3. Communicate openly
   When negotiating, always communicate openly so that each party knows what the other is looking for. Negotiation is a give and take process and, for it to be successful, the parties involved need to articulate what they really want to achieve in the process. At times, negotiators tend to get frustrated easily and this complicates the negotiation process. Overcome this by taking a break before resuming the negotiation with different viewpoints.

4. Be pleasant and optimistic
   With the exception of a few extreme cases, most negotiations end diplomatically with the desired results when parties come in with an open mind and multiple options. The key to obtaining good end results for both parties is to think of negotiation as a win-win rather than a win-lose process.

5. Be well prepared
   Preparation is the key to success. The person who is best prepared is the one who gets what he/she wants from a negotiation. To prepare, you need to learn the facts of the situation, gather data and find out what the other party’s wants and needs are. Remember, information is key!

THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

To achieve the best outcome in a negotiation, a well-structured approach with a proper process must be adopted.

Preparation and planning
These are the first steps in a negotiation process. Choosing the right venue is an important factor as it ensures that both parties are at ease. During preparation, both parties will gather data and pertinent information to ensure that the negotiation happens smoothly. Information is a powerful tool as it adds validity to claims. All parties in a negotiation should investigate the others to know their background and strong points.

Clarification and justification
Once the rules and procedures have been established, a discussion will need to take place to determine the position of all the parties in the negotiation. Each party will need to give an explanation to justify their requests and stance.

This part is crucial as it gives the opportunity for each party to explain, clarify and educate the other party on their issues and why it is important for their request to be met.

At this phase, each party needs to be clear on what they want to communicate, as well as to have strong reasons to back up their requests. Communication plays an important role. Speak up clearly and confidently to relay your message and requests.

Bargaining and solving
This phase is the essence of the negotiation process as parties will give and take in order to establish an agreement which benefits all, or the majority of them. At the end of the day, all parties in a negotiation want to ensure that they have gained something positive or valuable from the process, with their views and needs having been taken into consideration.

Closures and implementations
The final step of the process is when an agreement from the negotiation has been formalised and procedures for implementing the agreement are developed. In major negotiations, these agreements will be stated in a lawfully binding formal contract.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

From interacting with family and friends to acquiring billion dollar projects, negotiation exists. The art of negotiation is a skill that you have to master to ensure that you are always a step ahead in acquiring the most desirable outcome in a diplomatic manner.

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LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM SOCRATES

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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“Let him that would move the world first move himself” — Socrates

A FEW months ago I wrote about Benjamin Franklin and his famous 13 Virtues. In this list, Franklin prescribed a list of virtues we should follow if we wish to lead a principled life of meaning. The last of these virtues focused on humility. To be really formidable, Franklin encourages us to “imitate Jesus and Socrates”.

As I read these words of Franklin, I became curious. I could understand Jesus and humility, but Socrates, the philosopher? I had no idea more about Socrates and to my surprise, the Greek philosopher has much to say on leadership and life.

THE INFLUENTIAL SOCRATES

It’s difficult to think of any other historical figure who has been more influential in shaping cultures throughout the world. The philosophy of Socrates formed the basis of Western logic and reason thanks to his well-known ‘Socratic method’, which sought logical conclusions to complex problems through intensive questioning.

Socrates (469 BCE-399 BCE) was born in Athens, Greece, to a stonemason father and a midwife mother. Given his family’s standing, he would likely have received a simple education and been expected to follow in his father’s trade. Everything we know about Socrates stems exclusively from accounts by his friends and students, most notably through works by his students Plato and Xenophon. Through his students, Socrates started to teach the world the importance of mentorship and discipleship.

His physical appearance was the antithesis of the Greek ideal of beauty. Described as being physically unattractive, Socrates said he was to be short and stubby with a flat nose and bulging eyes that made him look as though he was always staring. It’s also reported that he would walk around the streets of Athens barefoot and wear his hair long. As for personal hygiene, Socrates shunned the habit of regular bathing.

To his students and admirers, however, the appeal and attractiveness of Socrates came in the form of his stoic character and brilliant intellect. As an Athenian soldier, his courage and fearlessness was unmatched. Socrates fought in three military campaigns during the Peloponnesian War — at Delium, Amphipolis, and Potidaea.

KNOWING YOURSELF

Perhaps the philosopher’s fearlessness was strengthened by his strong belief that matters of the human mind were vastly more important than the human body. Socrates believed this passion for pondering the human condition, believing that our chief preoccupation for pondering the human condition, belief that matters of the human mind were vastly more important than the human body. Socrates started to teach the world the importance of mentorship and discipleship.

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DEATH AS A HERETIC

A combination of his associations, virtuous actions (which saw him refuse certain orders on principle), political views, unorthodox teaching style and growing influence among the youth of Athens played a part in his three accusers, Meletus, Lycon, Anytus bringing Socrates to stand trial. The crimes for which he stood trial were those of “refusing to recognise the gods acknowledged by the state, and importing strange divinities of his own; he is further guilty of corrupting the young.”

After listening to the accusers’ case and then Socrates’ defense, a jury of 500 determined the philosopher’s guilt by a vote of 280 to 220. Socrates, aged 70, was ultimately sentenced to death by poisoning, which was carried out by drinking a cup of hemlock in the presence of his friends.

We live in a world that hates non-conformity. Socrates was killed because he refused to conform to the accepted norms of society. From Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Joan of Arc and many others perished for being different. Yet, these are the folks that truly make a difference in this world.

They stand up for what they know is right and they relentlessly stay true to their vision. In business, although no one is killed anymore, many leaders have to go through significant pain and endure hardship just because they are ‘heretics’ in their industry or company. And yet, these crazy misfits and rebels who see the world differently are the leaders who ‘push the human race forward’ and change the world.

THE CONTINUOUS LEARNER

As a leading thinker of his time, Socrates placed a great emphasis on self-knowledge and learning, encouraging his followers to ‘employ your time in improving yourself by other men’s writings so that you shall gain easily what others have laboured hard for.’

He also advocated that we should live as we wish to seem — to live as our ideal self through the means of constant self-improvement and refinement of character. A number of years ago, one of my employees approached me and told me he’d been reading MONK, a book on living with contemplation and Socrates’ philosophy. He told me he was unlikely to grow into a world-class teacher if he didn’t learn from others. Socrates had figured out an accelerated way to self-improvement. He knew by reading other people’s wisdom and experiences, we can learn from their mistakes and avoid possible pitfalls.

Great leaders are great readers and learners. They absorb the wisdom of others and complement it with their own experiences and failures, thus accelerating their growth.

THE HUMBLE MAN

Despite his apparent self-assured style, Socrates’ most notable quality was his humility, most known through his famous declaration that if he was the wisest person in Athens, it was only because he was well aware of his own ignorance, while others were too sure about themselves and life.

Socrates’ philosophy was a practical pursuit of truth, focused less on understanding the external world and more on understanding our experiences and failures, thus providing insightful formal logic and ethics systems from the time of Aristotle through to the modern era. And thus the final leadership lesson we can learn from Socrates, that self-awareness is key to our success as a leader.

The life of Greece’s most renowned philosopher also served as an exemplary model for the rest of the world to follow.

Few of us are willing to die in order to stand up for what we believe yet the example of Socrates is one that serves as an inspiration to lead a life of reflection, courage, virtue and understanding so that we might help to build societies of love, peace, and enduring prosperity.

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THREE PARTS OF ‘THANK YOU’

DON’T JUST GIVE RECOGNITION ON AUTOPILOT, MAKE IT MEAN SOMETHING

By KEVIN KRUSE
editor@leaderonomics.com

“THANKS,” Bill said as he walked by, rapping his knuckles on the top of my cube wall. “See you tomorrow,” I glanced at my watch. Every day, at exactly 5:01, my boss left for the day, saying thanks as he walked past my cube.

At the time, I was working as a “secretary.” I was a 23-year old guy working alongside a dozen single women who were in their 30s, all of us in the role of secretary.

I had been placed there by a temporary agency when they discovered I could type 80-words per minute. (It was about 25 years ago so I think we were still called “secretaries” and not “administrative assistants” but I don’t really remember. I do remember that it was a very fun year.)

My boss, Bill, was a creature of habit. At 5pm exactly, he would pop up from his desk, slide on his jacket, grab his briefcase and head for the exit. But without fail, he always thanked me on the way out.

I like to call that a “drive-by thank you”. Better than nothing, but its impact waned as I quickly learnt it was just something he said on autopilot.

Later, as an entrepreneur and a manager, I saw that recognition works almost like a magic spell. It’s one of the top three drivers of employee engagement.

And as a father, I learnt that recognition works magic on children from the time they are toddlers right through to the teen years. While there is a time for reprimand, I’ve found liberal use of recognition is a far better behaviour change.

I talk about having an “attitude of gratitude” so often that my daughter Natalie openly mocks me for it. I love that, too. Means she’s listening.

However, thank-yous are only powerful if we feel they are sincere, thoughtful and specific. I like to give a “thank you” in three parts. It’s a simple formula to make the most of them:

1. Actually say “thanks” or “thank you” — don’t assume someone will “get it” or “know” you are grateful.

2. Mention the behavior or achievement you are grateful for. This is the thing you want more of. This is the thing you want others to know gets rewarded.

3. Link it to a value or to a strategic initiative.

For example: “Hey everybody, before we begin our status meeting I just want to say - Vanessa, thank you for coming in last weekend to debug the reports module.

“It was a real sign of your dedication to teamwork and to hitting our original ship date. We really appreciate it.”

If this seems a bit contrived, know that it’s no different than how we were taught to have good manners when growing up. How do you write a thank you note to Aunt Ida for your 13th birthday present? Say thanks, mention the gift, and how you will use it or how you will be like it so much.

“Aunt Ida, thank you for the white tube socks. I’m really going to enjoy having warm non-threatening feet.”

Want your teenage children to suddenly do more of the right thing? First, don’t take them for granted, and use a three-part thank you to reinforce the behaviours you want more of.

For example: “Owen, thank you for taking out the garbage when you got home from school. It shows how responsible you are, and it really helps me to feel less stressed when I walk in from work.”

Whether you’re giving thanks around the dinner table, trying to drive emotional commitment at work, or navigating relationships with your young kids, a three-part sincere thank-you is noticed and touches people’s hearts.
THINK about a great leader you genuinely respect, and chances are that one of the things that boss does particularly well is to thank their employees. You can too, since recognising and praising hard work and achievement is one of the easiest – and most effective – rewards you can provide.

And if showing appreciation isn’t reason enough, it’s also good business. According to an American Psychological Association study, “Almost all employees (93 percent) who reported feeling valued say they are motivated to do their best at work.”

Fortunately, you don’t need a formal recognition programme. You don’t need to create an initiative and put a recognition process in place. You just need to say thanks – sometimes explicitly, but often implicitly.

Here are some simple – and free – ways to show your gratitude and thank your employees for their hard work.

1 **SAY “THANKS”**

   **Obvious, right? Not necessarily.** Many bosses assume that their employ- ee’s praise and recognition comes in the form of a paycheck. “Why should I thank you for doing your job?” they think. While technically that is correct, it’s also stupid.

   When an employee drops off a report, say: “Thanks.” When an employee spots a problem, say, “Thanks.” Say “thank you” as often as you can.

   Not only will your employees appreciate the gesture, they’ll start to follow your lead and thank the people around them. That’s the easiest way to build a culture of praise and recognition.

   Start saying “thank you” as often as you can for all the little things your employees do. And don’t wait. The more time that passes between great performance and praise, the lower the impact of that praise.

   “Immediately” is never too soon to say thanks.

2 **PROVIDE GREATER FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY**

   Granted, organisations optimise processes and procedures. Yet at the same time, engagement and satisfaction are largely based on autonomy and independence.

   I care when it’s “mine”. I care when I’m in charge and feel empowered to do what’s right.

   When an employee makes a great decision, say thanks by giving them the latitude to make more – and more important – decisions in the future. Say: “Thanks for figuring out how to expedite shipping on that late order… feel free to do what you think is best whenever something like that happens again.”

   Showing trust is a great way to say “thank you”. And you benefit too, because empowered employees almost always find ways to do their jobs better.

3 **SAY “THANKS” BY GENUINELY SEEKING INPUT**

   Engaged employees have ideas; take away opportunities for them to make suggestions, or instantly disregard their ideas without consideration, and they immediately disengage.

   When you say “thanks”, whenever possible follow that up by making it extremely easy for the employee to make a suggestion. If the employee solves a problem, ask if they can think of ways to ensure the situation doesn’t occur again.

   And if an employee helps another employee, start deal with an interpersonal issue, ask what they think you should do to make the situation better. In short, say “thanks” by also showing you respect and trust the employee’s input. That way I don’t just get to feel praised for what I did; I also feel recognised for who I am.

4 **SAY “THANKS” BY ASKING FOR HELP**

   Asking for help implicitly shows respect – you know, or can do, something I don’t know or can’t do. And it shows you trust the other person, because you’re willing to be vulnerable and admit you need help.

   When you say “thanks”, whenever possible follow that up by making it extremely easy for the employee to make a suggestion. If the employee solves a problem, ask if they can think of ways to ensure the situation doesn’t occur again.

   And if an employee helps another employee, start deal with an interpersonal issue, ask what they think you should do to make the situation better. In short, say “thanks” by also showing you respect and trust the employee’s input. That way I don’t just get to feel praised for what I did; I also feel recognised for who I am.

   And speaking of asking…

5 **SAY “THANKS” BY LENDING A HAND**

   When an employee puts in extra effort, saying “thank you” is a great way to recognise that effort. So is pitching in to help.

   But don’t just say, “Is there anything I can help you with?” Most employees will give you a version of the reflexive “No, I’m just looking” reply to sales clerks and say: “That’s okay. I’m all right.”

   Be specific. Find something you can help with. Say, “I have a few minutes. Can I help you finish that?” Offer in a way that feels collaborative, not patronising or gratuitous. Model the behaviour you want your employees to display.

   Then actually roll up your sleeves and help. Helping is a great way to prove you know a task is difficult - and that you appreciate the hard work that goes into competing it.

6 **SAY “THANKS” BY SAYING “YOU’RE WELCOME”**

   Think about a time you gave a gift and the recipient seemed uncomfortable or awkward. Their reaction took away a little of the fun for you, right?

   The same thing can happen when you get thanked or complimented or praised. The spotlight may make you feel uneasy or insecure, but all you have to do is make eye contact and say: “Thank you.” Or make eye contact and say: “You’re welcome. I was glad to do it.”

   Whenever someone thanks you, make sure you respond that way. Show you appreciate the praise. Show your employees that you want them to feel comfortable accepting, and appreciating, praise.

   Because they should.

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**A SHOW OF PRAISE**

**THE SIX DIFFERENT WAYS A LEADER CAN SAY “THANK YOU”**

The next time an employee does something for you, don’t just say: “Thanks.” Ask how they did it. Ask why. Ask what they did. Show that you want to learn from them.

In the process you’ll show vulnerability, respect, and a willingness to listen — which are all qualities of a great boss. And you’ll prove that your “thank you” was far from lip service.

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**THE MAGIC OF ONE MINUTE**

**BY ASEEM PURI**

HOW can you change each day to a joyful one in just one minute? It’s simple. By counting your blessings and expressing your gratitude for them to whichever god or faith we believe in.

Why does gratitude work as a meditation practice? Because it makes you focus on what you have, as opposed to always looking at what you seek. It creates inner contentment and peace that stays with you through the day.

Lastly it helps you deal with the moments when you don’t get something you seek or something you thought you deserve.

So how can one experience this magic in just one minute? Here are the simple steps:

1 **Sit in peace for a moment** without your phone, laptop or the presence of another person. You need a minute’s peace. Find it in any corner of your home or office where you can. If you are in a bus or a train, close your eyes and relax.

2 **Say gently to yourself:**

   a) I say thanks today for all that I blessed with:

   i) I say thank you for blessing me with life, with breath which so many are denied every day.

   b) I say thank you for my last meal which filled me, a meal that so many lack every day.

   c) I say thank you for the love of my Mum, dad, spouse, children, etc.

   d) I say thank you for the sip of clear water that nourished my thirst, which is denied to many

   e) I say thank you for every organ in my body helping me to function

   f) I say thank you for my education, teachers, school, college etc.

   g) I say thank you for (my income, my job, my career)

h) I say thank you for a roof over my head, my home

i) I say thank you for the challenges and teachings you send my way

j) I say thank you for the opportunities and gifts you send my way

k) I say thank you for loving me and forgiving my mistakes

l) I say thank you for saving me in so many crises when I had lost it all

m) I say thank you for always being there in my every prayer

3 **When you are done with the list of thanks, pause – and with a smile on your face, say a final “thanks”**.

   You can also choose to write the list of thanks in a diary every day. It will take no longer than a minute. Remember, those who say thanks have much to be thankful for.
HOW GRATITUDE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

TAKING THE TIME TO SMELL THE ROSES AND THE POSITIVE IMPACT YOU’LL IMMEDIATELY FEEL

By CATHERINE ROBERTSON
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Creating Vibrant Health

Without gratitude, life can be lonely, joyless, and empty. Catherine Robert-

son is an experienced development executive with 15 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry and an experienced public speaker for her book, a wonderful experience. Catherine is the author of The Book of Happiness, a leadership site leaderonomics.com, the top leadership site which contains several helpful lessons about how we can be truly happy. The book that contains several helpful lessons about how we can be truly happy. The

Happiness doesn’t come as a gift – it’s a choice. Many people believe that happiness is a result of something outside of themselves, that the choice comes immediately, but it doesn’t. Nevertheless, we have the choice to spend time on activities that bring us happiness.

We then address our\n
Five Lessons on Happiness

By SANDY CLARK

If you search online for “how to be happy” you’ll be overwhelmed with the amount of information available. Happiness is a complex topic that has been studied for decades, and a wide range of experts have contributed to our understanding of what it means to be happy.

Here are five lessons from this book that can help us avoid the common pitfalls of thinking about happiness:

1. Happiness is a choice. Many people believe that happiness is a result of something outside of themselves, that the happiness comes from the external world.

2. Happiness is not something you can choose. You may have heard that you can choose to be happy, but it’s not that simple. Happiness is a complex topic that has been studied for decades, and a wide range of experts have contributed to our understanding of what it means to be happy.

3. Happiness is not a temporary state. Happiness is not something you can choose, but it’s also not something that will last forever. It’s important to have patience and persistence with your gratitude practice.

4. Happiness is not a destination. Happiness is not something you can arrive at, but it’s something you can work towards.

5. Happiness is a journey. Happiness is not a destination, but a journey that you can take at any time in your life. It’s important to have patience and persistence with your gratitude practice.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE YOUTH AT A TIME

By TAMARA JAYNE

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Two weeks ago, Leaderonomics, together with HELP International School, ran a M.A.D. (Making A Difference) Youth Leadership Summit where over 500 youths from across Malaysia gathered together to hear from different industry leaders.

The young participants were then given an opportunity to apply what they had learnt in a choice of three different subjects – poverty, inequality or the environment. They will now plan out their projects and pitch these ideas to an esteemed panel of judges.

The chosen projects and teams will be sponsored with the funds they need to carry out the initiative. Here are some takeaways from the event:

THE FIRST STEP – DOING SOMETHING

Just talking about wanting to make a difference is one thing, but putting words into action is the real first step.

Everyone goes through a different journey to become a leader. Anyone can comment but a leader actually does something about it”, said Dr. Goh Chee Leong, vice president and dean of the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences at HELP University in his opening speech.

Leadership is also influence. “You’re able to change the direction of your life. It’s about how you use that influence to reach others,“ said Joseph Lalonde, youth leadership leader.

However, leadership is clearly not an easy journey as seen in Sarah Yap Khim Wen’s life. Before winning gold at the SEA Games for individual taekwondo, and a silver medal in pair taekwondo, Sarah dealt with many struggles, failure and wanting to give up, lessons which she shares at the summit. Taekwondo, she said, gave her a sense of achievement, however it was a long and difficult process before she saw any glimmer of hope in reaching her goals.

She admitted that she quit for a month. However, during that month she had one question constantly running through her head: “What if?”

“I didn’t want to live with that kind of regret for the rest of my life. I picked myself up and tried again – it took me five years until I finally paid off. One lesson I learnt was to not let fear overtake my passion. It becomes a barrier for you to achieve what you want in life.”

No matter your background or upbringing, it is never too late to make a change. That was evident in the life of Chaiw Hong Choon, group managing director of Chin Hin Group. Chaiw started off in his early days selling in gangs but eventually found his purpose in life. His advice?

1. Seek your purpose.
2. Set goals to align with your purpose.

You must motivate yourself before motivating others. It starts with belief, and it starts with yourself,” said Syahrinrizzam Samsudin, chief executive officer of Touch ‘n Go at the event.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HARD WORK

“What percentage of leaders are born or made?” Roshan Thian, chief executive officer of Leaderonomics, asked the youth.

Hands went up across the hall as the youth shouted their guesses.

Roshan shared research conducted by a scientist who measured ‘geniuses and non-geniuses’ for 35 years. He discovered that for ‘non-geniuses’ leadership skills are learnt and 5% are genetics. As for ‘geniuses’ – 85% of leadership skills are learnt and 15% are genetics.

Becoming a ‘genius’, therefore, is only ever 10% genetically influenced.

He shared his story of a time when he was 12 years old and didn’t make the cut into the school’s football team. He then decided to practice like crazy until he was finally accepted into the team. He was excited to find out that Mokhtar Dahari – arguably Malaysia’s most celebrated player had become their coach.

To his dismay, he learnt that Mokhtar was an extremely tough coach on them.

“When you came late, he will make you run 50 laps. I was very frustrated but I told myself ‘just ‘tahan’ and persevere.”

“Finally it came to the season’s first game and I discovered that I was not chosen to be on the main team. I was set as a substitute and, despite all my practicing and training, I was brought on for only the last five minutes. I became very angry with Mokhtar.”

The last game of the football season, Mokhtar came and told all of us that he was very sick and had to go overseas for some treatment. After sending all the players off, he called Roshan over and asked him why he was always so angry the past few games.

“I unleashed all my anger and frustration from not having had the chance to play football and how he was too tough on me. Mokhtar was a little surprised and taken aback. He then asked me: ‘Do you think I am talented?’

“I said, ‘You’re Mokhtar Dahari, the best player in the country. Of course you are.’”

He replied with an answer and a lesson I have never forgotten until today: ‘Roshan, I’m not the most talented but I am the best. Talent is a waste of time. Talent doesn’t make you the best.

‘Hard work and effort do. I push you because, when you put in effort, you can achieve success. Anyone can have talent. But hard work and determination is what helps you achieve success even when you don’t feel you are talented.’”

The biggest lesson Roshan learnt was that day that talent is meaningless. “If you don’t get what you want, work hard to get it.”

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

When it comes to achieving success, there are bound to be blunders made in the process. Ho Ming Han, YouTube video producer and director of The Thing Ming, shared his early days of being unsure of what he wanted to do.

“Being brought up in an Asian family living under his parents’ roof, he negotiated with his mother to give him a one-year deadline – he would try making videos and, if that didn’t work out, he would pursue a masters in psychology.

He started off with no equipment but the camera on his laptop. Today, Ming Han and his brother Ming Yue now have over 400,000 subscribers on their YouTube channel ‘The Thing Ming’ and are making a living out of a career that seemed almost non-existent in Malaysia at that time.

“Now is the time to make mistakes,” he shared.

“You’re not responsible for a crying baby, etc. Rather than sitting and trying to think of the right way, just go and do it. Go and do all the wrong ways. Because if you fail, you will learn. And you can learn it quickly.”

DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS WITH OTHERS

Having all the knowledge and passion to make a difference is great but to act on it are what Redza Shahid, co-founder of Grub Cycle and Kim Lim, co-founder of The Picha Project did.

Kim, along with her two friends, Suzanne Ling and Swee Lin, saw a need to help refugees make a living in Malaysia and started The Picha Project, a social enterprise which enables refugee families to cook meals and cater for organisations and events.

“The idea came only when we started discussing it with others,” says Kim.

Redza and the team (Asyraf Sofian, Hawnawisa Roslan and Charan) also started a social enterprise, called Grub Cycle. Noticing how much food is wasted daily, they decided to make surplus food accessible to buy at bargained prices and use part of their proceeds to subsidise the cost of basic food necessities for marginalised communities.

“See if the idea is worthwhile. Call friends, put it on social media, and experiment with the idea. If you can collaborate with someone then do so,” Redza advised the youth.

“ideas come and innovation happens when you discuss with others. Ideas also have to start with small actions. Because if you don’t start somewhere, you won’t see the possibilities,” added Kim.

Yayasan Hasahah and Iskandar Investment Bhd. are sponsoring the funding for the chosen teams to conduct their M.A.D. projects.
BEING COURAGEOUS

WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION

1. The Key to Great Leadership

Time and time again, we have seen how courage has played an important role in many major turning points throughout history, from Martin Luther King Jr. fighting for the equality of African Americans during the civil rights movement in the mid-1950s to Malala Yousafzai advocating education for girls at this present time.

Likewise, those who step up and voice their opinions in organisations and communities today are the very ones who ignite change. Courage and self-confidence are interconnected, relying on one another to push us to achieve the results we want.

Courage provides us with the confidence to pursue a goal, whereas confidence helps us believe that we can bring about change.

2. It Contributes to Development

At Leaderonomics, I was fortunate enough to learn and be part of their cultural beliefs. One of them is “Be Courageous”, which centres on being open to honest and authentic conversations and feedback. Practising this belief relied on three core focus areas:

- Being open
- Speaking up
- Seeking feedback

It’s tough to face what we don’t really want to hear, although oftentimes, these are the very things that we need to know for self-improvement. We must be able to bring up hard-hitting conversations no matter how tough it may be.

By embodying such openness, not only do we improve ourselves, but we also gain greater insights about our surroundings because of these honest and authentic conversations with others.

Speaking up is an integral part of being courageous, and being vocal about your thoughts and values may very well strike a chord with another person.

FACING OUR FEARS

Here are four tips for how you can embrace fear and muster up the courage to conquer it.

1. Acceptance is key

It is important to acknowledge and accept that fear is a universal emotion. What you are fearful of may be different from others; however, it is the emotion itself that is an underlying common ground we have as human beings.

Understand that having fear does not make you a coward; it is nothing to be ashamed of.

2. Find the root cause of your fear

By imagining various scenarios of where you think that particular fear might be present, it can help you find the source of your fear. Once you’ve discovered the reason behind your fear, you’ll be able to think through of effective ways to deal with it.

3. Take Baby Steps to Overcome the Fear

Once you’ve figured out the cause of your fear, let’s put them into action!

Let’s say you’re afraid of speaking to a new client who is more senior in terms of age and experience.

What would you do to prepare yourself to face him/her?

A helpful suggestion would be approaching the person to talk about one’s organisation or making small talk to get those nerves out of the way. Creating actionable plans to overcome your fear, even if they are on a smaller scale, can be incredibly a great step forward in the right direction.

4. If All Else Fails, Don’t Overthink It, Just Do It!

Often, the presence of fear is due to the constant overthinking process that happens in your own mind. Taking risks is part of being courageous too.

At the end of the day, it’s better to have said you tried and failed than to have not tried at all. This helps me every time I’m overwhelmed with anxiety-driven thoughts.

An example would be when I was tasked to come up with an icebreaker game for people twice my age (professional corporate people, mind you!). What made it more challenging was that it had to relate with the module of a two-day training under Leaderonomics, of which I had little to no knowledge.

In the end, I could only briefly read up on the module and do what I’m supposed to do with no time to freak out at all. Well, you could say that it actually worked out just fine.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Keep in mind that you’re never alone, no matter how silly and awkward you think your fears are. Remember to be kind to others too because you don’t know the battles they’re currently fighting.

With these in mind, I wish you well on your continuous journey of courageous self-discovery!

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Whether it is sports or business, a high-performance culture is always necessary to drive the results you desire. Understand what high-performance culture is all about and why organisations – and individuals – need to do to elevate themselves from good to great. Contact training@leaderonomics.com to find out more.

By ALICIA LEE SYIN-SYIN
editor@leaderonomics.com

A 6 children, most of us were taught that the notion of courage meant overcoming extreme adversities, fighting larger-than-life battles, and having no fear against whatever comes our way. By all means, those aren’t untrue. In fact, those very perceptions of courage stayed with me as I grew older. This created a ripple effect on how I perceived the things I feared – I felt less of a person because my battles were deemed socially insignificant compared to others who had “bigger problems”.

For instance, when I was younger, debating with my friend on who should be talking to our class teacher and who should be knocking on her door seemed like a huge deal when it wasn’t to a lot of people.

However, following the years of my tertiary education and crossing paths with diverse groups of people, I realised that I couldn’t have been more wrong about my initial perception of courage. What may have seemed small to me may have seemed big to others, and there was no way for me to judge their fears without being empathetic.

Nelson Mandela demonstrated what it means to be truly courageous, not only through his actions but his words as well, when he said: “I learnt that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel fear, but he who conquers that fear.”

Why is courage necessary?

1. It is the key to great leadership

The source of your fear. Once you’ve worked out just fine.

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We go the extra mile) then be part of their cultural.

One of them is “Be Courageous”, which centres on being open to honest and authentic conversations and feedback. Practising this belief relied on three core focus areas:

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Alicia is still trying to figure out how to be an adult while keeping the child in her alive.

To find out how to make courageous conversation work in your organisation, email us at training@leaderonomics.com. To share your own personal or professional journey of courage, write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com

BE OUR PARTNER

Leaderonomics is expanding and we are looking for partners to work with. If you fit the bill (including a heart of gold, because we go the extra mile) then you are probably who we’re looking for.
13 QUESTIONS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

TAKING THE TIME FOR SELF-REFLECTION

By TRAVIS BRADBERRY
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHEN things aren’t going quite the way you’d like them to, it’s often the result of not asking yourself the right questions. Some questions are hard to confront because you’re afraid you won’t get the answer you want, others because you really don’t want to know the answer.

But the best things in life don’t come easily, and turning away from life’s toughest questions is a sure path to mediocrity. I believe that Socrates said it best: “The unexamined life isn’t worth living.”

Socrates’ observation also applies to business. When Eric Schmidt was CEO of Google, he famously said: “We run this company on questions, not answers.”

Life, like business, runs on questions, not answers. Let’s take a closer look at some of the tough questions we should be asking ourselves regularly.

1. HOW DO PEOPLE SEE ME DIFFERENTLY THAN I SEE MYSELF?

Have you ever heard a recording of how your voice and thought, “Is that what I really sound like?” Because of the way the sound of the voice travels through the human skull, we never hear ourselves the same way that everybody else hears us.

The same is often true for the way we behave. We interpret our behaviour in terms of how we think we come across, whereas everyone else sees the thing. A 360° assessment is a great way to gain this perspective. It gathers feedback that is constructive, anonymous, and accurate.

If you forego the 360 and solicit feedback in person, make certain you ask for feedback that is specific, avoiding broad questions and generalisations. For example, you’re more likely to get an honest and accurate answer to: “How well did I handle myself in the meeting when everyone disagreed with me?” than to: “Am I a good boss?”

And be careful to show that you’re receptive to the feedback. If you flip over or get defensive every time somebody speaks their mind, they’re going to stop doing it.

2. WHAT/WHOM DID I MAKE BETTER TODAY?

That’s another way of saying: “Leave things better than you found them.” Ending each day by asking yourself what or whom you made better is a great way to keep yourself grounded and focused on what really matters.

3. AM I BEING TRUE TO MY VALUES?

Do you ever get that nagging feeling that something is a little off in your life? This often happens when little behaviours creep up on you that violate your values.

If spending quality time with your family is one of your primary values, but you keep staying late at work, there’s a conflict. If you want that nagging little voice to go away, you’re going to have to do something about it.

4. IF I ACHIEVED ALL OF MY GOALS, HOW WOULD I FEEL? WHAT CAN I DO TO FEEL THAT WAY AS I WORK TO ACHIEVE THEM?

The ability to delay gratification in pursuit of your goals is one of the most fundamental prerequisites for success, but delaying gratification doesn’t have to mean being miserable until you cross that finish line.

You can achieve more — and have more fun doing it — if you let yourself feel some of that pride and pleasure along the way.

5. WHAT HAVEN’T I TAKEN THE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT?

It’s a big world out there, and it’s getting bigger all the time. Scientists have theorised that it once took 1,500 years for the accumulated knowledge in the world to double; now it only takes a year or two. Don’t get caught behind.

6. IN WHAT AREAS OF MY LIFE AM I SETTLING?

When you settle, you accept less than you’re capable of. Sometimes we settle in dead-end jobs.

Other times we settle for unhealthy relationships. If you don’t ask yourself where and why you’re settling, it’s hard to stop it.

7. WHAT DO I WANT MY LIFE TO BE LIKE IN FIVE YEARS?

Lewis Carroll once said: “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.” The corollary is that, once you have your destination in mind, you can plan your route.

Five years is the perfect timeframe — it’s not so far in the future that you can’t imagine yourself there, but it’s not so close that you can’t do anything about it.

8. WHAT WOULD I DO IF I WASN’T SCARED?

From a survival perspective, fear has its purpose. It’s what keeps us from sticking our hand in the washing machine or any of the million other things that could get us hurt or killed.

But fear has a tendency to get carried away. Instead of keeping you safe, it keeps you from improving your life and living your dreams.

9. WHO HAS QUALITIES THAT I ASPIRE TO DEVELOP?

When people have qualities that you admire, it’s a great exercise to reflect on these qualities and think about ways that you can incorporate them into your repertoire.

10. WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE SOLVING?

Have you ever been in a meeting and suddenly realised that not everyone was having the same conversation? Not because people were talking over each other, but because they had different ideas about the purpose of the discussion.

Sometimes it helps to put the topic on the whiteboard when you’re having a meeting. This makes certain everyone knows why they’re there.

11. WHAT’S STOPPING ME FROM DOING THE THINGS THAT I SHOULD BE DOING?

It’s easy to shrug your shoulders and say, “I don’t know what to do,” but that’s just an excuse. Most of the time, we know exactly what we should be doing; we just aren’t willing to move the obstacles out of the way.

12. WILL YOU BE MY MENTOR?

It’s an intimidating question to ask, but few people will turn you down. Everyone likes being looked up to, and it feels good to share our knowledge with others.

13. WHAT’S THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON I’VE LEARNT SO FAR IN LIFE?

Am I living that lesson?

Sometimes life pulls us back into complacency and we’re forced to learn a powerful lesson twice. The trouble with this is that it’s just as much of a rude awakening the second time around.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Asking the hard questions can be extremely uncomfortable. But we don’t learn and grow by sticking with what’s comfortable.

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Every effective leader is inevitably a mentor who strives to raise the competency level of others. Leaderonomics has comprehensive coaching and mentoring programmes to help individuals develop relational skills that build a strong mentor-mentee relationship. Through this workshop, participants will learn about the different types of mentoring relationships while setting goals and strategies to achieve intended results within and outside the organisational life. To find out more, e-mail training@leaderonomics.com

By TRAVIS BRADBERRY

Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the #1 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and the cofounder of TalentSmart, the world’s leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies. To get in touch with Travis, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 4 November 2017
HOW NOT TO ASK FOR A RECOMMENDATION LETTER

By ADAM GRANT
editor@leaderonomics.com

O land a job or get into a university, we usually need someone to vouch for us. It can be tough to ask – recommenders are typically more senior than us, they’re busy, and we don’t always know where we stand in their eyes.

When we work up the courage to ask, sometimes the request comes out polite and charming. But more often than we realise, we end up saying or writing the wrong thing.

Here are some of the most ineffective requests that I’ve seen as a manager and a professor, along with a running commentary on what a cyni-cal recommender might read between the lines. My hope is that we’ll all get a little bit more thoughtful about who, how, and when we ask.

Although we haven’t talked in seven years, I really value your opinion of me.

I’ve burned a lot of bridges, and I’m desperately hoping enough time has passed that you won’t remember what a jerk I was.

1

I’m not sure if you remember me, but it would be amazing if you could serve as a reference for my application.

Our interactions were so brief that I forgot you existed until just now. But I’m desperate.

2

I’m wondering if you might write me a recommendation letter. It’s due tomorrow.

You really shouldn’t vouch for me (I’m not conscientious, and I procrastinate a lot), and I think little enough of you to ask you to do this last minute. But I’m really desperate.

3

I know we’ve never met in person, but you have a unique perspective on my qualifications.

If you knew me better, you wouldn’t even consider advocating for me. Also, the first dozen people I asked said no.

4

It would be really great to have your name supporting my candidacy.

There are other people who know me much better, but no one respects them (including me).

5

Please write a recommendation letter for me.

I want to think I’m hot stuff, but really I’m a doofus. If I ask, you’ll probably turn me down. If I frame it as a command, maybe you’ll be intimidated into agreeing.

6

Thank you for your advice on my resume and cover letter last week. You can send your recommendation letter to this address.

I neglected to do my homework when we spoke, and didn’t realise I would need a recommendation. Maybe you won’t recall that I never asked.

7

Are you in a position to write me a glowing letter?

I trust you enough to say nice things about me, but only if they’re really nice. Before I give you the privilege of writing on my behalf, I really need to know what you think of me.

8

You can send the letter to me, and I’ll mail it in.

I’m going to read it first to see if I like it.

9

The application requires three recommendation letters, but I’ve decided to submit four.

I’m hedging my bets in case one of my references trashes me or drops the ball.

10

The application requires three recommendation letters, and I’m excited to submit five.

There’s no way three people can possibly capture the full extent of my greatness.

11

To save you some time, I’ve taken the liberty of drafting the letter for you.

I seriously doubt your ability to sing my praises – and I am seriously more awesome than you think I am.

12

It’s a highly competitive pool, and I want the hiring committee to know about my unique strengths.

So here’s a list of my proudest achievements over the past decade.

13

Please include every impressive thing I’ve ever done, including the time I dominated the Springfield-Harborstown Elementary Spelling Bee. “Intawt” is a totally acceptable spelling.

By contrast, here’s one of the best recommendation requests I’ve ever seen:

“I was hoping you would be willing to write me a letter of recommenda-tion because I have interacted with you over the past couple of years more than with any other professors here.

“I have made countless mistakes as a team leader, including micromanag-ing in our first weeks as a club, not giving proper feedback to my team-mates about their performance, and not being able to defuse tension at board meetings. But I have also grown tremendously, especially with the help of your advice on...”

Adam Grant is a professor at Wharton University of Pennsylvania and author of ‘Give and Take’ and ‘Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World’. He writes on work, motivation and psychology. To connect with him, drop us an email at editor@leaderonomics.com

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 4 November 2017

“Being grateful does not mean that everything is necessarily good. It just means that you can accept it as a gift.” — Roy T. Bennett

Online Exclusive

We brought her home with us when she was just two months old. Since then, she has been a great joy and an “annoyance”. Lin Lin Yee shares the lessons she’s learnt from her late beagle and best buddy, Anya. Read on at bit.ly/beaglebuddy

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