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10 IS YOUR TITLE AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR IMPACT?

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LEADERSHIP IS SCARY

FEEL THE FEAR AND JUMP INTO IT ANYWAY

By SONIA McDONALD
editor@leaderonomics.com

LEADERSHIP is scary. No, this isn’t a Stephen King type article on leadership, so no scary music or creatures creeping up on you when you least expect it. The thing is, it doesn’t have to be so scary.

“Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway.” — John Wayne

I see, work, hear and feel leadership every day. I don’t even think we know that we are leaders or are leading. But we are.

I think we have made leadership bigger than what is it. We see the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Steve Jobs, Sir Richard Branson, Brené Brown or Elizabeth Broderick (I could name plenty more) who are all iconic leaders to me.

They are the epitome of what I think leadership is about.

I am not achieving great things or leading amazing causes, so I am not a leader. I don’t have a ‘Chief Executive Officer’ (CEO) or ‘Manager’ in my title, therefore I am not a leader.

I have met plenty of CEOs who are not leaders — keep that in mind! However, leadership isn’t about titles. It is about action. It is about behaviour, attitude and mindset.

Leadership is about making a difference to others. Some of the best leaders in my life have empowered me in small ways.

“Your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” — John Quincy Adams

I have worked with and coached thousands of leaders who did not see themselves as leaders, but they are. It is the little things.

WHAT LEADERSHIP MEANS

You might think leadership is scary, but it’s not. This is what leadership means to me:

1. Leaders can be made. So bring it on!

2. Knowing your leadership story and owning those moments in your life where you have demonstrated leadership. Also who has made a difference to who you are today?

3. Being authentically you. Be a huge fan of authentic leadership. Such leaders are grounded and humble. They are the same person at home, work, and in the community.

4. Self-awareness is key — know who you are. Your strengths, motivators, talents, passions, triggers and weaknesses. What are they? Think about tools you can use to find this out.

5. Leadership is about others. Empowering, inspiring and coaching others to lead.

6. Great leaders surround themselves with their tribe — people who are advisors, mentors, and supporters. They know you inside out; they are willing to give you honest feedback.

7. Leaders are self-taught. Always keep your mind open to learning and growing.

8. Leadership is about courage and failure. Have the courage to be seen, make a difference and be vulnerable. It is okay to fail. Don’t let the fear of failure stop you from stepping up. Own up when you stuff up. Learn from your failures and mistakes, and get back up.

9. Leadership is about integrity. It’s about leading by example, not saying one thing and then doing another.

10. Leadership is about trusting yourself and building trust with those around you.

11. Finally, always focus on your why. Why do you do what you do, your purpose, your passions.

Scared? Feel the fear. Jump. Leadership is about courage. Yes, at times being a leader may be scary. But it doesn’t have to be scary. When I look back on my story and experiences, I am who I am today as a leader because of them not despite them. Even the bad experiences have shaped who I am today and are things that I’m incredibly proud of.

YOUR CALL TO ACTION

I want you to reflect on your leadership experiences and stories. Own them. Share them. And keep building on them. Don’t make leadership bigger than it is. You are a leader. You’ve got this. Leadership is magnificent. And so are you.
A PRESIDENTIAL EXAMPLE
ANALYSING THE ENDURING LEGACY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” (The Declaration of Independence; July 4, 1776, first drafted by Thomas Jefferson)

Jefferson was a man with many ideas. According to author Jon Meacham, “Jefferson was one of the first leaders of his generation to believe that ideas are a given. Great leaders persevere to overcome them and win.”

In Jefferson’s own words: “I suppose indeed that in public life a man whose political principles have any decided character, and who has energy enough to give them effect, must always expect to encounter political hostility from those of adverse principles.”

Great leaders may not achieve all they set out to do, but their vision and message get transmitted to future generations who continue to pursue the vision. Jefferson was indeed a visionary of his time and a leader from whom we can learn much about how truly to build a legacy that lasts.

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WE CAN’T ALL BE LEADERS
WHY GOOD FOLLOWERS ARE EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT TO THE CAUSE

By TAMARA JAYNE
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E keep getting bombarded with articles on leadership and let’s be honest, it’s pretty much the same tips going around like a broken record. Listen more, don’t blame others, don’t be too controlling, make sure people take you seriously, make sure people don’t take you too seriously, be happy, don’t be too happy... and on and on it goes.

We seemingly glorify leadership skills so much that it can often empty leadership of its meaning.

WHO’S THE FOLLOWER?
Ever worked in a team with more than one person wanting to take charge and lead? There is no room for everybody clamouring to get to the top at the same time.

The world needs people who know when to lead and when to take a step back and let others carry the baton. A great leader is one who leads and knows when to follow.

While being a leader is great, we often fail to value followership. A leader is, after all, made up by their followers.

WHAT DOES IT EVEN MEAN TO BE A FOLLOWER?
Followership: the capacity and willingness to follow a leader. So what sets you apart from being just another follower?

1. A good follower knows how to think for themselves. You don’t need to be someone who follows every whim and fancy of the leader like an eager puppy. While it’s great to aid and support the leader when he or she is doing the right thing, a good follower is able to stand up to the leader when he or she is headed in the wrong direction.

Before this point is taken to the extreme and you start picking fights with your manager, thinking for yourself simply means that you aren’t blindly following instructions without knowing why. It also means contributing your thoughts, ideas and opinions to the process when necessary.

2. A good follower follows the leader (even if he or she carries no title). For the most part in history, we see that some of the greatest leaders didn’t have a vision. They followed a deep conviction they had and people sensed that and decided to follow them.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela embodied this. You may not need to overhaul who you are in order to be a leader.

If you have been working long enough, you would probably know by now that title and position doesn’t make a good leader. Perhaps the biggest disservice done by the oversized glorification of ‘leadership skills’ is to the practice of leadership itself— it follows it out, it empties it of meaning.

“It attracts those who are motivated by the spotlight rather than by the ideas and people they serve.”

“[It teaches students to be a leader for the sake of being in charge, rather than in the name of a cause or idea they care about deeply],” says Susan Caine, author of Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking.

3. A good follower follows the ‘right’ vision. People follow a vision. They follow a cause. You become a leader when you have a vision. What is the kind of vision that you want to follow?

Gandhi had a vision. And so did Hitler. Two people with two visions but who produced completely contrasting results.

One started a war. The other tried to resolve it. Yet both had many followers. Your leader may have a strong conviction, but it may not mean that it’s the right conviction. What vision are you following?

A common misconception is that you are either a leader or a follower; the reality is that a great leader also knows how to follow.

Team players are crucial. A common example is when a football team practices the importance of every player working together to achieve the sole purpose of scoring a goal.

Sure, the coach and manager serve a purpose. But the team is what makes it or breaks it as well.

Knowing who you are and what you do well allows you to surround yourself with people who may be better at the task at hand. What if we looked beyond status and power and took on roles where we truly care about what’s at stake?

What if we didn’t view leadership as a title or position to attain, rather instead as a means of service? How a follower doesn’t always mean that you lack leadership skills. However, being a great leader often means knowing when and how to follow as well.
NE morning in September 2010, an associate of mine was slated to interview the chief executive officer (CEO) of a company with an impressive financial record. The aim of the interview was to highlight the company’s success. It wasn’t the kind of uncomfortable interview that sought to probe the possibility of malpractice. But for reasons best known to himself, the CEO turned out to be the least polite interviewer my associate had come across in her career so far. She was perplexed.

The successful performance of the company that was reflected in their annual reports did not match the way the CEO carried himself that day. Maybe he was just having a really bad day. And yet, maybe not – read what Ronald E. Riggio, professor of leadership and organisational psychology at Claremont McKenna College in the US, shared in Psychology Today: “An organisation’s success can be completely unrelated to the company’s leader, or can occur in spite of a bad one.”

KNOW THE REASON WHY
If the leadership is poor, then what could have made the organisation successful? Riggio offers two possible reasons:

1. Timing can be everything
If a company happens to be in the right industry at the right time, it could achieve success despite its poor leadership, at least in the short term.

2. Over-attributing success to the leader
This phenomenon was investigated by Riggio’s two colleagues in an experiment conducted in both the US and Turkey. Students were presented with scenarios of either a successful or unsuccessful work group. When asked how much the success or failure was due to the leader, the US students (individualistic culture) attributed far more credit or blame to the leader, compared to the Turkish students (more collectivistic, group-oriented culture) who gave far less credit or blame to the leader.

PRIGGIO’S TWO EXAMPLES

1. An incredibly good team compensates for the leader’s weaknesses
Some incompetent leaders are very fortunate to be supported by a very capable team of managers and executives. However, if these leaders do not shape up soon enough, they will eventually lose their valuable team members to discerning competitors. And then, the painful truth will be exposed.

2. Some leaders ride on their predecessor’s success
John Doe, the CEO of XYZ for the past one year, was offered the CEO position in a rival company, ABC, which was a world-renowned multinational corporation. Happily, Smith accepted the new post with a significantly improved remuneration package. Less than two years later, Smith resigned, presumably because he did not deliver what was expected at ABC. In fact, his former colleagues at XYZ attested that he had not done well at XYZ either. But if Smith had underperformed, how could he have impressed ABC’s decision makers and secured the coveted position at ABC?

Therefore, the impressive sales record during Smith’s one-year tenure at XYZ was not truly the product of his own capability but largely that of his predecessor’s.

CONCLUSION
We cannot infer that good leadership exists just because the company is enjoying success (executive search consultants, beware!)

Good leadership is not measured solely by company successes. Good leadership, asserts Riggio, is more about the leader’s competency, character and motivations – attributes that help steer the company to successful and honourable outcomes.

In summary, good leadership goes hand in hand with sustainable organisational success that can stand the test of time and the scrutiny of stakeholders.

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LEARNING FROM THE BEST

LESSONS FROM THE SPEAKERS OF THE AMBANK BIZCONFERENCE KUALA LUMPUR

By Matt Taylor
matt.taylor@leaderonomics.com

A

neath the theme, “Growing Companies, Growing Leaders,” the AmBank BizCONFERENCE series was drawing to a close after 12 years of successful outings in Penang, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching. The event sparked a phenomenal line-up of guest speakers, from differing backgrounds, but with one common thread – they know what it takes to grow a business. With their own experiences at one of Malaysia’s biggest SMEs, they shared tips on their journey to success.

Christopher Yap
MD of Business Banking, AmBank

“SMEs can often reach a stage when their customers are complaining or they are complacent and stop growing. The ones that make the real difference, however, are the ones that aim high and are ready to break out internationally and continue their development journey.”

Bhaskar Ganesh
Co-founder of MOL

“I’m one of the few business people in the world that genuinely loves his job emotionally. Therefore, if I need to try to analyse and fix a problem, I’m far removed from those around me, who were more reluctant to change.”

Harsh Bhushan
CEO of RGA Group for Singapore

“The biggest lesson I have learnt from my years of experience is that growing companies are a value of diversity. Growth cannot happen in a homogenous workforce. The hardest thing a leader can do is to deliberate in their actions. Building a diverse workforce is not a program or a statistic. It is a philosophical and fundamental belief that can only come about when you personally understand the world around us.”

Rahman Tharan
CEO and Co-founder of Leaderonomics

“Always be thinking about the bigger picture and the possibilities for expansion. Never feel married to a certain concept or product that you miss out on an opportunity to take on something new. As you grow, you need to act in a more pro-active way and not act in a more reactive way. Act with a minimum-wage effort. Don’t make it your goal to be successful, make it your life’s work to be successful.”

Vinesh Lakkineni
CEO of MOL

“You can’t have a million-dollar dream without having a million-dollar effort. Don’t make it your goal to be something that you miss out on an opportunity to become something else. Never feel married to a certain concept or product that you are looking to keep your company at the same level. Your role is to adopt new technologies.”

Lam tour Cheong
CEO of Sedrive Enterprise and NetTion

“There have been times in history when companies have failed to take advantage of the opportunities that exist today to adopt new technologies. Have your people be in a position to play to them. You are looking to keep your finger on the pulse of what is out there. Of course, it helps to have young talents that are able to absorb the changes and for whom working with technology is second nature. Having more experienced minds in the company is also important, the people that have been there and done that in business who can offer an alternate perspective. It all comes down to tutelage.”

Sawan Kumar Bangal
Co-founder of MOL

“If companies are the one that SMEs should be doing is to build themselves up. A model that is good, having your own company is not an easy one to build. We often have the biggest contribution a bank can make.”

Christopher Yap
MD of Business Banking, AmBank

“Companies too often reach a stage where their customers are complaining or they are complacent and stop growing. The ones that make the real difference, however, are the ones that aim high and are ready to break out internationally and continue their development journey.”

A RWARDING SERIES COMING TO A CLOSE

Fast conferences in the AmBank BizCONFERENCE series have featured guest speakers from across the country giving their insights on everything an SME owner needs to know in order to thrive in today’s competitive environment.

Firstly, we must have clarity of knowing where we want to go. Secondly, we must have clarity of knowing where we think we are and then plan the route to the final. In actual, we aren’t nearly as far along the develop- ment journey as we think and are getting very ahead of ourselves.

What drives you to succeed? It is the only thing that is the same for all good leaders; all with one thing in common – they know what it takes to grow a business. Masterclasses, Plenary Hall in Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, there was a keen interest among the audience from the experts in making the transition from internationally-focused companies to those that want to scale their businesses to the next level.

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“100% of successful projects have a good technical solution to them. What this talk is to say that just having a good plan is not necessarily a guarantee of success. What drives you to succeed is the ability to enable your people to change. Above all, a leader must be clear in many companies, we don’t have clarity and there are three types of clarity that all good leaders must have. Firstly, we must have clarity about where we want to go. What is our end goal and how do we get to that destination?”

By having such knowledge sharing sessions, eager entrepreneurs are given the chance to learn the dos and don’ts from those who have been through the experience. Similarly, the conference’s attendees were given an opportunity to hear from the experts in their field and receive advice and solutions that can be implemented from the tip of their desks.

Due to the overwhelming response from participants, the AmBank BizCONFERENCE series is going to be extended to the rest of Malaysia, the competition promises over RM2 million worth of incredible prizes and development opportunities for all CEOs and business leaders in Malaysia, the competition promises over RM2 million worth of incredible prizes and development opportunities for all CEOs and business leaders in Malaysia.
Reaching the Summit: The Leadership Skills I Learnt Hiking Mount Rinjani

By Amanda Chua

Amanda Chua is part of the Leaderonomics Good Mongers Club, an exclusive group of individuals who actively contribute to the sustainability and growth of their companies. She is an expert in employee engagement and training. She always fosters a culture of engagement and empowerment that is pivotal in the field of learning and development.

Link to this article: Follow us @Leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Business alignment and people performance are the precise implementations of achieving execution excellence. Execution excellence requires a thorough understanding of employees and strategies within the company. The Execution Excellence Simulation will produce a detailed report which highlights the core Customer Services competencies. Through this programme, participants will learn planning and prioritising skills according to urgency and think critically by classifying and directing issues to the correct solutions. Contact training@leaderonomics.com for more details.

PREPARATION IS KEY TO SUCCESS

This feat would not be possible without months of meticulous planning and rigorous preparation – physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. We undertook extensive research to ensure we had the necessary equipment with the help of a comprehensive packing list and tips from friends and kind strangers who went before us.

We prepared ourselves physically through gruelling hours of training, hiking through the hill trails around the Klang Valley in the few months leading up to the big hike.

The regular training we did together week-in and week-out does not only prepare us physically but ensures one is mentally and emotionally capacity to meet the physical demands required to endure long hours of the hike.

Training together as a team is equally important in the preparation process. The camaraderie and bond built through the time spent together leading up to the big hike was necessary to foster a strong team spirit and unity.

As the saying goes: “You fail to plan, you plan to fail.” Nothing comes easy and we can’t achieve success without the preparation and hard work that comes with its share of blood, sweat and tears put in. Yes, there will be circumstances in life where, no matter how much you prepare, the unexpected is inevitable.

Exercising self-leadership by being organised, motivated, and taking care of yourself is encouraged so that you can also effectively care for others. Don’t do your planning and preparation alone.

As a leader, ensuring you are ready and fit to take the challenge is only half the battle won, it is also about the people taking on this journey with you.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

We all started off as strangers brought together by the common aspiration to conquer Mount Rinjani. We ultimately accomplished it because of how we worked together as a team.

From exchanging tips and discussing necessary preparations to getting to know each other’s personalities and individual strengths, strong teamwork and chemistry was needed to make the mission possible.

The frequent interaction enabled us to gauge where each other’s fitness levels, strengths and weaknesses lay in order to support each other as needed.

What kept us going while overcoming the external forces of the harsh climatic conditions, challenging terrain, bitterly cold weather and our own physical limitations was how we look out for one another.

Our motto was: “No one goes left behind”. The constant encouragement, lifting each other’s spirits and motivating one another as we stuck close together, the genuine care for one another with the simple gesture of asking a quick “Are you okay?” from time to time made all the difference.

Ultimately, what made this experience enjoyable was everyone was in good spirits to chip in to help and do their part in making this trip a memorable one.

In order for any team to succeed, “cooperation, teamwork, effective conflict resolution, keeping yourself and others motivated, and getting along in a diverse group is crucial”. This is known as Expedition Behavior (EB) which is very easily translated into the workplace.

Together, we were able to achieve far greater things than we could have if we were all working alone. The daunting task of scaling Mount Rinjani would have never happened if not for teamwork.

Sometimes that means putting other people ahead of you and their needs first. This exemplifies servant leadership which is the key to building effective teams in organisations.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

As much as we tried reading ourselves as best as we could, nothing could prepare us for the arduous climb itself. It was physically demanding, mentally challenging and emotionally exhausting.

We were faced with multiple unexpected challenges – one of us fell sick experiencing altitude sickness; one of us had a hiking shoe break halfway through the hike; injuries and blisters; and a bushfire which changed our hiking route and overall plans.

We were forced to be flexible and adaptable, to find solutions and different ways to work around those challenges in the many unforeseeable circumstances that were posed to us. Although we were primed by previous hikers for how hard it was, when it came to the actual climb itself, it was a different ballgame altogether where one’s endurance, grit and mental strength were put to the test all at once.

But what helped was that we were mentally prepared for the different scenarios and possibilities that might happen and were willing to brave those challenges head on.

You can plan for every foreseeable contingency but sometimes even Plans B and C fall through and any number of unforeseeable conditions can thwart you. Build your ability to be flexible, adaptable, agile and nimble.

It is like a muscle that gets stronger over time; a useful skill in times when faced with crisis or challenges. You will be an asset to your team and company when you are able to troubleshoot and resolve issues during the unlikely event of emergencies or unfortunate circumstances.

Let go of things you can’t control, plan for things you can. Expect the unexpected, and when the unexpected arrives, do not panic but instead, flex your agility muscles and adapt.

DETERMINATION AND WILL

Many advised that it is “all in the mind” and that we just have to push ourselves through it but, when faced with chilly winds, the cold thin air, combined with lack of sleep and physical exhaustion, the thought of giving up persists in your mind.

The worst was during the challenging final leg at the ascend up to the summit, every step forward you take, you slide two steps back due to the steep, rocky, uneven gravel terrain. Nonetheless, we were resolute in our minds that we did not come that far to give up. We simply had to complete the course.

What kept me going was to focus on the next step and not let the image of the daunting ridge at the last stretch discourage me as I put one foot in front of the other and finally made it to the top of the mountain.

Don’t underestimate where determination and will can lead you. It might just give you the edge and unfair advantage you need to succeed in life.

These two traits will impact how far you take, you slide two steps back due to the steep, rocky, uneven gravel terrain. Nonetheless, we were resolute in our minds that we did not come that far to give up. We simply had to complete the course.

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That’s not the end of the story. To read Amanda’s final three lessons she learnt while climbing Mount Rinjani, find the rest of this story online at bit.ly/mountrinjani.

MOUNT Rinjani is the second highest active volcano in Lombok island, Indonesia. A notoriously challenging climb, definitely not for the faint of heart and where one is mentally and emotionally capacity to endure long hours of the hike.

The team taking a moment to catch their breath during the arduous climb. Pic courtesy of Amanda Chua.

All smiles: The team taking a moment to catch their breath during the arduous climb. Pic courtesy of Amanda Chua.

Made it: Amanda at the summit of Mount Rinjani. Pic courtesy of Amanda Chua.

Amanda at the summit of Mount Rinjani. Pic courtesy of Amanda Chua.
A training-of-trainers workshop I attended, the participants were broken into groups of five and asked to present a 25-minute human rights training session targeting law students and young lawyers. We were encouraged to think outside the box by staying away from conventional lecture-style training models to promote effective learning of what is usually considered a heavy subject.

Selecting a human rights topic was easy but deciding on the training style was much more challenging than I had anticipated. Being a group wanted to impress the trainers in the format of which we had identified of the respects all over the world are slowly changing this by forcing the media to appear more realistic and visible. As individuals, we ramped up our own performance by adopting the appropriate accents and mannerisms which we had identified of the respective nationalities.

When our turn came to present, we gave our best. I felt energised as I watched the participants laugh and applaud, clearly entertained by our performance.

I was in high spirits when the participants gave glowing feedback, many of whom reported that the four state representatives’ viewpoints illustrated the spectrum effectively. Just as I thought we had nailed it, my ego was immediately deflated when the trainer delivered her assessment.

She said it was extremely painful to watch us and was appalled by how we “poked fun” at the state representatives from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and France by portraying them as “uneducated” and “unrefined” while the Australian and French representatives were depicted as “intelligent” and “progressive”.

The trainer’s criticism of us was not on how we presented each country’s political views, but on the way we presented the stereotypes of each character.

She said, as human rights defenders, we have the responsibility of not perpetuating negative stereotypes and must be critical of ourselves when developing content for public consumption. I could sense a sudden shift in the training room’s atmosphere, from joyful euphoria to serious as soon as I started listening to the trainer’s critique.

The immediate thoughts that came to my mind were, “how could I not have seen this?” and “what does that say about me as a human rights defender?”

HUMAN RIGHTS – NO LAUGHING MATTER

After brainstorming for hours, we decided to emulate a popular American talk show as the medium of training. The talk show host would be asking a panel consisting four distinguished state representatives from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Australia and France respectively, on a specific issue that relates to freedom of expression. The purpose of selecting four culturally diverse countries was to illustrate the spectrum of the universality of human rights, i.e. how different countries in the world take into account local cultural influences when it comes to adopting universal human rights principles.

The trainer delivered her assessment. I watched the participants laugh and applaud, clearly entertained by our performance. It seemed that the media is convinced that women spend their lives cooking, cleaning, taking care of the baby, primping (and not forgetting longing for that diamond engagement ring), essentially reinforcing the gender stereotype of women being domesticated, materialistic and superficial.

THE FEMALE STEREOTYPE

I went into detail about this story simply to illustrate how powerful visuals are when it comes to reinforcing stereotypes.

So powerful that even people who are supposed to be the bullwarks of human rights fall short in their quest for entertainment.

The more constructive question to ask is this – if the media is so powerful, can it be used to reverse these stereotypes? Let’s examine how the media has been portraying images of women in the past decades.

Most of us have seen hundreds of advertisements on the newspaper, magazines, television and the internet. How often have we come across images of women posing with kitchen utensils, foodstuff, cleaning products, baby diapers, jewellery, slimming supplements and beauty care?

It seems that the media is convinced that women spend their lives cooking, cleaning, taking care of the baby, priming (and not forgetting longing for that diamond engagement ring), essentially reinforcing the gender stereotype of women being domesticated, materialistic and superficial.

THE EVOLUTION OF HOW THE MEDIA PORTRAY WOMEN

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I understood instantly that our zeal to deliver an entertaining performance (what the trainer termed as “gimmick”) had cloudeed my judgment. Later, I talked to a colleague about this.

We rationalised that a key factor of why we failed to recognise this faux pas was how we, as a society, have been exposed to these stereotypes through the media so much, that we have become immune to them.

If the trainer had not called us out, we would have replicated the group assignment in a real training session, oblivious to the fact that we were perpetuating these stereotypes to a group of young impressionable lawyers, who would then move on to ensure the cycle continues.

Ten years on, it was an image of a solo woman hiking on a mountain, triggering key words like independence, power, confidence and freedom to viewers.

One of the collaboration’s success indicators is a leap of 47% in search result images of female CEO from 2007 to 2017. scrolled through the collection, you will see photos of women of different ages, colours, shapes and sexual orientations performing various activities; working in different jobs, playing sports, leading group discussions, repairing machines, etc.

Of course, there are still images of women as mothers, but they are often accompanied by their male partners, depicting a shared parenting lifestyle. According to Getty Images, the top selling image of women in their library in 2007 was a naked woman under a towel. Ten years on, it was an image of a solo woman hiking on a mountain, triggering key words like independence, power, confidence and freedom to viewers.

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One of the collaboration’s success indicators is a leap of 47% in search result images of “female CEO” from last year.

Combined with the democratisation of the media space made possible by the internet, Getty images said that social media users are pushing marketers to portray people in more realistic and diverse ways, thus demanding brands to make women with diverse range of ages, appearances and abilities more visible.

So, how are women portrayed in the Malaysian media and how do we fix any potential problem? To read Ka Ea’s solution to the issue, read the rest of her story at bit.ly/womenmedia1
BE A LEADER, NOT A FOLLOWER

LEADERSHIP ISN'T ABOUT POSITION — IT'S ABOUT IMPACT

ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC?  Followers see the limitations inherent in any given situation; leaders see the possibilities. When things go wrong, leaders don’t dwell on how bad things are. They’re too busy trying to make things better.

ARE YOU OPEN TO CHANGE?  Followers are content to stick with the safety of the status quo. They see change as frightening and troublesome. Leaders are maximizers who see opportunity in change. Because leaders want constant improvement, they’re never afraid to ask, “What’s next?”

ARE YOU DECISIVE IN YOUR ACTIONS?  Followers often hesitate to act, out of fear that they’ll do the wrong thing. Leaders aren’t afraid to make a call, even when they’re not sure it’s the right one. They’ll rather make a decision and be wrong than suffer from the paralysis of indecision.

ARE YOU ACCOUNTABLE?  When mistakes are made, followers are quick to blame circumstances and other people. Leaders, on the other hand, are quick to accept accountability for their actions. They don’t worry that admitting fault might make them look bad, because they know that shifting the blame would just make them look worse.

ARE YOU UNFLAPPABLE?  Followers often let obstacles and mishaps throw them off course. When something goes wrong, they assume the whole project is doomed. Leaders expect obstacles and love being challenged. They know that even the best-laid plans can run into unexpected problems, so they take problems in stride and stay the course.

ARE YOU HUMBLE?  Followers are always chasing glory. Leaders are humble. They don’t allow any authority they may have to make them feel that they are better than anyone else. As such, they don’t hesitate to jump in and do the dirty work when needed, and they won’t ask anyone to do anything they wouldn’t be willing to do themselves.

ARE YOU PASSIONATE?  Followers are trapped in the daily grind. They go to work and complete their tasks so that they can go home at the end of the day and resume their real lives. Leaders love what they do and see their work as an important part of — not a weak substitute for — real life. Their job isn’t just what they do; it’s an important part of who they are.

ARE YOU MOTIVATED FROM WITHIN?  Followers are only motivated by external factors — the next title, the next raise, the next gain in status. Leaders are internally motivated. They don’t work for status or possessions. They are motivated to excel because it’s who they are. True leaders keep pushing forward even when there’s no carrot dangling in front of them.

DO YOU FOCUS ON TITLES?  Follows care a lot about titles, both their own and those of the people they work with. They’re very conscious of who out ranks whom, because they lack the skill and motivation to create leadership from within. Leaders, on the other hand, focus on what each individual brings to the table, regardless of what’s printed on a business card.

ARE YOU FOCUSED ON PEOPLE?  Followers focus on what they can achieve individually. Leaders are team players, because they know that greatness is a collective feat. A leader is only as good as what he or she can achieve through other people.

ARE YOU WILLING TO LEARN?  Leaders, while confident, know that they’re neither superhuman nor infallible. They’re not afraid to admit when they don’t know something, and they’re willing to learn from anyone who can teach them, whether that person is a subordinate, a peer, or a superior.

Followers are too busy trying to prove they’re competent to learn anything from anyone else.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Take another quick look at the questions above. There’s not a single one about title, position, or place on the organisational chart.

That’s because you can have the title and position without being a leader. You may have worked for someone who fits that description. And you probably have colleagues who serve in leadership roles without a title.

Leadership and followership are mindsets. They’re completely different ways of looking at the world.

One is reactive, and the other is proactive. One is pessimistic; the other is optimistic. Where one sees a to-do list, the other sees possibilities.

So don’t wait for the title. Leadership isn’t something that anyone can give you — you have to earn it and claim it for yourself.

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Leaders at all levels need to possess the ability to influence their subordinates positively. The influencing Without Authority Simulation is a true-to-life simulation that helps managers bridge the gap between the theory and application of change management. Contact training@leaderonomics.com for more details.

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

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HOW TO CREATE A “RIPPLE EFFECT”

By KEVIN KRUSE
editor@leaderonomics.com

A leader tasked with seizing new ground and improving an organisation’s performance, do you start with the systems, the people, or yourself? Quick, find a mirror!

According to leadership expert, Chris Hutchinson, leaders cannot be effective if they don’t understand their own values, envision their personal futures, and recognise their unique strengths and weaknesses.

In his book, Ripple: A Field Manual for Leadership That Works, Hutchinson demonstrates that true leadership is like skipping stones in a pond. With an engaging conversational tone and fun, whiteboard-style sketches, he teaches that the secret to leadership is that the power isn’t in the stone. It’s in the ripples. And stone-throwers simply can’t set the frequency and amplitude of their own ripples.

Hutchinson recommends three steps:

1. DECIDE WHAT MATTERS MOST
   Leaders who consciously and explicitly state their own values lead from a place of clarity and empathy. On the other hand, leaders who direct without such self-awareness tend to be defensive and oblivious to others’ motivations and values.
   To reveal what matters most to you, write down your top 10 values. Now underline the top three. Finally, write out your understanding of how you are living (or not) those three values, including in your role as organisational leader. Adjust your course as necessary.

2. CHART YOUR OWN COURSE
   According to Hutchinson, the clarity of the end goal increases the clarity of the actions needed to achieve it. And nowhere is that more true than for leaders’ personal visions for their own lives.
   In his workshops, Hutchinson takes participants through a guided visualisation. He tells them to close their eyes and picture their own memorial services three years from now.
   Then he asks, Who’s attending the service? What do you want those people to remember and say about you? What do you want those people to carry on as your legacy?
   Now ask yourself, “How do I get from my reality of today to my hoped-for future?” Start taking daily steps to get there.

3. KNOW WHERE YOU’RE AWESOME
   Are you often surprised or disappointed when others in your organisation can’t do [or see] the things you do? This is a sign that you don’t know your own strengths, says Hutchinson.
   “When people unthinkingly see the abilities that come easily to them as not important or valuable, they are not recognising — or even discrediting — their own strengths,” he writes.

Kevin is a New York Times best-selling author, keynote speaker, and leadership expert. To connect with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com

Studies have shown that 70% of learning happens through life experiences, 20% is through observation, and 10% is in a classroom. Conclusion? Growth happens through doing and experiencing! Watch more here: bit.ly/waytolearn

Learn mentoring skills from the best in the business as Ravishankar Gundlapalli, CEO and founder of MentorCloud makes his way to Malaysia from Silicon Valley. In an intimate, closed-door session on the morning of November 17, Ravishankar will be sharing why mentoring is so important for your business growth. To register your place at this can’t-miss event, visit bit.ly/hrnetwork2017
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