There are 11 great leadership articles in this week’s pullout. Our website is loaded with an enormous back catalogue of articles, with 50 new online features being added every month!

Head to www.leaderonomics.com for heaps of leadership insight, thought-provoking podcasts and a library of more than 4,000 great videos.

ARE YOU BURNT OUT?

4 FINDING PURPOSE IN YOUR JOB 6 RECOGNISE BURNOUT, AND AVOID IT 8 10 HABITS THAT MAKE YOU UNHAPPY

If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
What can we learn from the work-life balance tactics of hard driving company founders? I’m often asked for my research into extreme productivity, but people don’t realise that I want extreme productivity so I can also spend time with my family and friends. Work-life balance, or integration, or blend continues to be a struggle for most of us.

I recently read an article in which 24 leaders were asked about work-life balance. Here are the findings and some of my takeaways:

**BANISH BURNOUT**

There seemed to be two main themes when it came to why we should even care about work-life balance.

*First,* many of the entrepreneurs interviewed said that, while counterintuitive, working less actually improves their productivity and can prevent burnout.

Alex Chaidaroglou, CEO and co-founder of Allstout Ltd, said: “We are doing a disservice to our clients, team and product if we burn out.”

And Sid Bharath of Thinkific shared: “We don’t realise that the more we work, the higher the chances of us running out of creative ideas and burning out.”

When I think back to the failure of my first start-up, I can now see with hindsight that part of the problem was that I was working too much.

My partner and I would routinely pull all-nighters, or sleep just a few hours on a futon in the office. Working 100 hours a week was the norm.

But how creative could I have possibly been while I was fighting fatigue? How effective of a leader was I when I could barely stay awake? What was my sales presence in front of potential customers?

When I interviewed over 300 entrepreneurs, Olympians and straight-A students for my last book, one of the secrets uncovered was that most of them made sleep, relaxation and breaks a priority.

For most white-collar workers today, our productivity and effectiveness is tied to the speed of our thinking. Without enough rest, our thinking slows down considerably.

The second big benefit to work-life balance is related to just having the priorities of life clearly identified. I was moved to read of Josh Steinme’s message to his team at MWI: “This business matters a lot to me, but my family comes first, and I hope your families come before your job.”

And as a divorced, single father of three, the remarks of Dennis van der Heijden landed too close to home for me.

The CEO at Convert.com shared his perspective: “There will always be something urgent, interesting and cool in the life of an entrepreneur, but children grow up and leave and so do spouses. ‘So, make time to see the growth of your children and invest time to add project spouse’ to your important task manager list.”

**NO. 1 ACTIONABLE TIP**

The team behind the article also asked the 24 entrepreneurs and start-up leaders for their number one most actionable tip for achieving work-life balance.

There were many great tips including staying physically healthy by drinking more water, to being present and mindful, the 80/20 rule, and shutting off the dang smartphone.

But the most mentioned piece of advice is the following:

*You schedule time for work, right? So, you have to do that same for life/family.*

— Benjamin Twichel, WisePops

Utilising your calendar is everything. You treat family time and work-life balance as part of your schedule.

— Nathan Chan, Foundr Magazine

“I set specific times when I am working and when I will spend time with friends and family.” – Jason Quay, Cofounders With Class

“I use the same system that I do at work — schedule it in! Block off times in your calendar to meet friends or family.” – van der Heijden

The second big benefit to work-life balance is related to just having the priorities of life clearly identified.

I was moved to read of Josh Steinme’s message to his team at MWI: “This business matters a lot to me, but my family comes first, and I hope your families come before your job.”

And as a divorced, single father of three, the remarks of Dennis van der Heijden landed too close to home for me.

The CEO at Convert.com shared his perspective: “There will always be something urgent, interesting and cool in the life of an entrepreneur, but children grow up and leave and so do spouses. ‘So, make time to see the growth of your children and invest time to add project spouse’ to your important task manager list.”

**HOW TO AVOID BURNOUT, FROM 24 ENTREPRENEURS**

Followers of my work know I always say: schedule, don’t list. Meaning, throw away your to-do list and just put all your “to-dos” on your calendar.

It sounds extreme but I get emails from strangers daily telling me how this has transformed their lives.

This approach feels strange because it goes against everything you’ve ever been taught about time management.

The calendar is for calls and meetings; the task list is for everything you want to do.

I call “nonsense” on that. If you want to have an amazing life, you must be intentional about it. Your calendar is the plan for your time. And time equals life.

Does work-life balance mean time for exercise to you? Then set recurring time blocks for that morning jog or lunch-time walk around the parking lot.

Does work-life balance mean spending an hour a night with your children? Then time-block it and treat it the same way you would a doctor’s appointment.

Does balance mean keeping in touch with your best friends from college? Then schedule — in the evening — Sunday brunch with them, once every three months from now to eternity.

Remember, there are no right answers. Reflect on your top core values, and then create recurring time blocks on your calendar.

For some, having dinner with the family every Friday is enough family time, for others, it will be having dinner with the family seven days a week.

For some, spending 20 minutes reading before bed will satisfy the value of “fun”, for others, it will be an hour of television. You get to decide what is realistic and what “balance” means to you.

And don’t worry that your spouse will be mildly annoyed that you must schedule time on your calendar to see him/her. When you actually pull off a few date nights, they just might try to sneak in a few more appointments.

By KEVIN KRUSE

*editor@leaderonomics.com*

Kevin Kruse is a New York Times bestselling author, keynote speaker, and leadership expert. He is the founder of The Kruse Group. To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com

---

Like this article? Follow us @leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

**AWARD-WINNING SUSTAINABILITY**

“Congratulations to Mr. Eco Paddy from International Islamic University Malaysia, whose eco-farming project saw them crowned winners of the Alliance Bank Eco-Biz Dream Project 2. Here, they pose with Alliance CEO Joel Komreich, the judges and their cheque for RM10,000! We already can’t wait for next year’s competition!”

---

Our YouTube channel is loaded with hundreds of videos to help make you the best leader possible. Visit youtube.com/leaderonomicsmedia to view the full back catalogue.
leaders who come across as reserved or indecisive. While I cannot concur with everything Machiavelli wrote, we can agree that leadership is tough because human nature is as competitive as it is complex. And while he might have relaxed his views a little had he been living in the more collaborative world of today, many of the insights he developed during his lifetime are still as relevant today as they were some five centuries ago. Let’s look at five key insights from Machiavelli’s writings that continue to offer food for thought to business leaders in the 21st Century.

1. **ALWAYS BE PRESENT AND MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE**
   
   “... of one or on the spot, disorders are seen as they spring up, and one can quickly remedy them; but if one is not at hand, they are heard of only when they are great, and then one can no longer remedy them.”

   This is great advice for all leaders. We oftentimes tend to get excited about visions of the future and possibilities but all of us need to manage the present. Being present and available enables us to manage today.

2. **LEARN FROM OTHERS**
   
   “... to exercise the intellect, the prince should read histories, and study there the actions of illustrious men, to see how they have borne themselves in war, to examine the causes of their victories and defeat, so as to avoid the latter and imitate the former.”

   Almost 500 years later, Machiavelli’s advice is still sound. Leaders who constantly learn, especially from others, are bound to win. Are you learning daily? Are you examining others who have tried and gone before you and learning from their mistakes? If you aren’t, now is a good time to start doing so.

3. **BE PREPARED FOR UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES**
   
   “A wise prince ought to observe some such rules, and never in peaceful times stand idle, but increase his resources with industry in such a way that they may be available to him in adversity, so that if fortune changes, it may find him prepared to resist her blows.”

   This is tough advice. Most of the time, when times are good, we bask in them and stop innovating. Machiavelli advocates working harder in good times to ensure that, when times are tougher, we are prepared.

4. **GET CONSTANT FEEDBACK**
   
   “There is no other way to guard yourself against fallacy than by making men understand that telling you the truth will not offend you.”

   Machiavelli advocates finding ways to always get feedback and build structures to ensure we are hearing what is really happening on the ground. The truth may hurt, but only by telling the truth, can we increase our chances of being seen as someone who is honest with people about everything.

5. **LOVE THOSE AROUND YOU**
   
   “The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the man he has around him.”

   Easy to quote but hard to implement. We all say we like to hire people smarter than ourselves, but the reality is different. Machiavelli advocates leaders ‘win’ and ‘retain’ smart people with love. “Therefore the best fortress is to be found in the love of the people, for although you may have fortresses, they will not save you if you are hated by the people.”

   So, hire great people and surround them with love.

The success of an organisation and its leaders typically rest upon how managers and staff understand the psychological influences and processes of thinking. Leaderonomics has suitable workshops for those in managerial roles to learn the right techniques for critical, analytical and creative thinking for self and organisational improvement.

**By ROSHAN THIRAN**

Roshan Thiran is the founder & CEO of the Leaderonomics Group and is constantly amazed by the various leadership lessons he derives from historical figures. Growing up, Roshan read biographies of great achievers like Niccolo Machiavelli and others. Follow Roshan’s daily adventures and leadership tips on Facebook, Twitter and also on Facebook pages at www.facebook.com/roshanthiran.leaderonomics

Like this article? Follow us @Leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.
FINDING MEANING AT WORK

THREE PRACTICAL WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU DO

By DARYLL TAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

The core of finding meaning in your job is directly related to whether you find significance and importance in what you do, professionally.

Let’s be real, you do not always have to like all the tasks your job requires of you but you have to at least look forward to the outcome.

Completing the mundane creates a base for you to work on more significant and exciting tasks.

You will need to firstly have a mindset that expands beyond your job and learn how to integrate your personal dreams with your company’s goals.

Remember to remain transparent with your employer regarding your job fulfillment and align yourself towards the bigger picture.

With the above mindset set in place, let’s dive into the three practical ways to find meaning in your job.

1. VISUALISE YOUR CURRENT JOB

More often than not, we get a clearer picture if we pen things down; visually comparing pointers to ensure we do not miss anything.

This exercise demands some effort but it is better to spend a tad bit more time now to crystallise your significance rather than jumping into the unknown.

Practical Tip: Take a pen and paper or open your Word document, create two columns.

On the left column, list down – “What is expected of me?” and, on the right column, list down – “What brings me fulfillment?”

Keep these pointers fully based on work.

After you have completed both the lists, match your pointers across both the columns; finding which points are in-sync with your expected duties and what brings you fulfillment.

The more matches you have, the more likely you are to accomplish your set tasks and enjoy the significance of your job.

2. HAVE YOUR OWN SIDE PROJECT

You need to realise that finding meaning in your job requires you to find meaning on a larger scale.

Start thinking about what is missing that your current job cannot offer.

Start creating something of your own and use that as a creative outlet. If you are thinking of something huge and earth-shattering, stop it!

The suggestion is to create something minor and simple to allow you an escape from your tasks and close the gap on areas your job is not able to fulfil.

This is not moonlighting, rather a hobby or personal agenda so that you can focus your energy on something altogether different.

For example: creating a fashion persona on your Instagram, doing charitable work, organising weekend parties, sports coaching, etc.

Practical Tip: Learn how to ideate. Always be on the lookout and ask yourself this question: “What problems are there and what can I do to solve them?”

There is no idea more important than the other. Be focused on your personal development.

As a tool, use Business Model Canvas to formulate your side project or business model.

Run a small casual focus group (if necessary) to validate your idea. Or gather like-minded people to get the project going.

3. DIVE DEEP INTO YOUR PROFESSIONAL VERTICAL

No matter the industry you are in, with the presence of technology, everything seems to be moving and changing faster.

Innovation forces us to always be on our toes to grasp the newest industry practices and/or methods.

In your vertical, ensure that you dive deeper into your role, industry and business unit to fully understand and experience the fullness of your profession.

It is always easy to stay on the surface and ignore the latest best practices or improved systems; it is easier to remain with the old.

However, this attitude will not get you far and, worst case scenario, will deem you obsolete.

For example: if you were an analyst, instead of merely looking at generic data and graphs, dive deep into quantitative/ qualitative analysis, data modelling, high-level programming and the like.

Develop complementary skills to find more meaning in your job.

Practical Tip: Go online and read articles on job descriptions and required skills, shadow your superiors, always be ready to step out of your comfort zone and accept tasks that allow you to push your limits and obtain new and relevant skills.

BONUS: SACRIFICE AND WORK FREE OF CHARGE

If you are really serious about finding meaning in your job, before you accept any full-time offers, take the opportunity to be exposed to multiple companies with the intention of gaining deeper insights into your projected future role.

This is not promoting “free labour”, but a focused strategy to obtain real-life experience and first-hand knowledge of your supposed dream job.

Remember to look beyond the mundane tasks and focus on the end result that will bring you fulfillment and significance in your job.

By implementing these practical methods, you are a step closer to falling in love and respecting your job, allowing you to find true meaning in your profession.
SECRET TO SUCCESS

8 WAYS TO TEACH CHILDREN THE ART OF PERSUASION

By JEFF HADEN
editor@leaderonomics.com

A ll the extremely successful people I know — and all the great leaders I know — are exceptionally good at persuading other people to follow them. Maybe that’s why Mark Cuban has said that knowing how to sell is the one skill everyone needs to be successful.

But being persuasive doesn’t mean you have to manipulate or pressure other people.

At its best, persuasion is the ability to effectively describe the benefits and logic of an idea to gain agreement — and that means we all need to be more persuasive.

And that’s why the art of persuasion is critical in any business or career — and means we all need to be more persuasive.

of an idea to gain agreement — and that effectively describe the benefits and logic people.

you have to manipulate or pressure other their side.

opinions – and to let their enthusiasm their opinions – even if they are just work, just say it will work. If you believe something will work, just say it will work.”

Teach your children to stand behind their opinions — even if they are just opinions — and let their enthusiasm show. People will naturally gravitate to their side.

3 Teach them to adjust their rate of speech

There’s a reason behind the “fast-talking salesman” stereotype — in certain situations, talking quickly works. Other times, not so much.

Here’s what one study indicates — if your audience is likely to disagree, speak faster; if your audience is likely to agree, speak slower.

Why? When your audience is inclined to disagree with you, speaking faster gives them less time to form their counter-arguments, giving you a better chance of persuading them.

When your audience is inclined to agree with you, speaking slowly gives them time to evaluate your arguments and factor in a few of their own thoughts.

The combination of your reasoning plus their initial bias means they are more likely to, at least in part, persuade themselves.

In short, if your children are preaching to the choir, teach them to speak slowly; if not, they should speak quickly.

And if their audience is neutral or apathetic, teach them to speak quickly so they will be less likely to lose other people’s attention.

4 Teach them to know their audience

One of my supervisors used to frustrate me to no end. I was young and enthusiastic and would burst into his office with an awesome idea, lay out all my facts and figures, and wait breathlessly for him to agree with me.

And he would disagree.

Every. Freaking. Time.

Finally — it took longer than it should have — I realised that he wasn’t the problem. My approach was.

His personality meant he was the type that wanted time to think. He liked to process.

By demanding an immediate answer, I put him on the defensive, which meant he went with the safe choice — saying no.

So I tried a different approach.

“I have an idea that I think makes sense,” I said.

“But feel sure there are things I’m missing. If you run it by you, could you think about it for a day or two and then tell me what you think?”

He loved that approach.

One, it showed I valued his wisdom and experience. Two, it showed I didn’t just want him to agree — I genuinely wanted his opinion.

And, most importantly, it gave him time to process my idea.

Teach your children not to push for instant agreement if someone’s personality style makes that unlikely.

And teach them not to ask for thought and reflection if their audience loves to make quick decisions and move on.

5 Teach them not to be afraid to take small “wins”

Research has shown that getting people to agree with you has an enduring effect, even if only over the short term.

Teach your children to focus not on jumping right to the end of their arguments but to start with statements or premises with which they know their audience will agree.

Build a foundation for further agreement.

Remember, a body in motion tends to remain in motion, and that applies to a head nodding in agreement.

6 Teach them to focus on describing positive outcomes

While it’s tempting to use scare tactics, positive-outcome statements tend to be more persuasive.

Researchers hypothesise that most people respond negatively to feeling bullied into changing a behaviour.

So, if your children are trying to create a change, tell them to focus on sharing the positives of that change.

They want to take their audience to a better place, not tell their audience what to avoid.

7 Teach them to share the good and the bad

According to University of Illinois professor Daniel O’Keefe, sharing an opposing viewpoint or two is more persuasive than sticking solely to your argument.

Why? Very few ideas or proposals are perfect.

Your audience knows that.

They know there are other perspectives and potential outcomes.

So teach your children to meet objections head on.

Tell them to talk about the things their audience may already be considering.

Teach them to discuss potential negatives and show how they will mitigate or overcome those problems.

Teach your children to talk about the other side of the argument — and then do their best to show why they’re still right.

8 Teach them to not just say they’re right

Persuasive people understand how to frame and deliver their message but, most importantly, they embrace the fact that the message is what matters most.

Teach your children to be clear, concise, and to the point.

Teach them to win the day because of the art of persuasion should simply be the xing on an undeniable logical cake.

Jeff Haden is a a public speaker and author of more than 50 non-fiction books and ghost-writer for innovators and business leaders. To engage with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com

This article is available at www.leaderonomics.com, where you can download the PDF version.

Like this article? Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 9 December 2017

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8
HEADED TOWARDS BURNOUT?

SOLVING THE CONUNDRUM

IT TURNS OUT THERE’S NO SUCH THING AS “WORK-LIFE BALANCE.” HERE’S WHAT TO DO INSTEAD.

By CHRISTINE Computer

5 leaders, we are expected to be highly present, have clear and consistent insights, maintain significant levels of energy, and stay grounded regardless of circumstances. Yet, in today’s world of relentless change, this can be challenging. When we resist change, we may burn out. When we embrace change, you may be overwhelmed.

A recent 600-page report by the Work-Life Design Lab in London, “Beyond Balance: A New Agenda for Work-Life Integration,” illustrated this reality. You may wonder how much work of ours is too much. It’s not useful, it’s necessary.

You need a combination of work to ensure, especially as the leader in your organisation. Sometimes, you just need to put the brakes on, because there will always be more work. Your turn to act all day long with some 600,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

With all of those thoughts, it’s not surprising that your mind becomes so loud that we lose focus. We shouldn’t get stuck and allow our thoughts to cloud our vision, you may burn out. It’s okay to take a look and say, “Hey! This isn’t working”, and implement a few changes that will steer you towards a destination that is less painful. We can do this at one time for every challenge, but it doesn’t always work. It’s impossible to experience burnout when we feel like we are in control of our predicament.

So how do we take care of our health and wellbeing? What’s important when life throws us a curveball?

Instead of looking at all thoughts in your life, the world, or your daily life as something that you have to work our asses off, Capland explained.

When she asked me what I hoped to get out of it over the next day, but we can’t always get there the next day, because there will always be something else to get in your way.

If you don’t take time to pause and decide to keep going or pivot to another path, you may burn out.

If you’re sick, you’re stressed, you can’t do it.

MINDA ZETLIN

“Work-life balance is a non-starter for me, and I think it’s a non-starter for most people,” Zetlin said.

“You have to renegotiate. Whatever your husband said means, ‘I thank you and want to be with you.’

It’s possible to achieve this if you don’t care about your marriage. It’s not taken.

If work-life integration is a constantly changing spectrum, then it’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside. You’re sick, you’re stressed, you can’t do it.

When you’ve tipped too far for too long and there are other things going on in your personal life, it’s about values. It’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

Negative Evaluation (three minutes):

When, where, and with whom do you” (it’s not OK that they are there).

Optimism isn’t universal consent. It’s not selfish; it’s necessary. Sometimes, you just need to put the brakes on, because there will always be more work.

Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day. Sometimes, you just need to put the brakes on, because there will always be more work.

“Take a vacation, or at least a day off. It’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

If work-life integration is a constantly changing spectrum, then it’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

Resistance VeRsuS

The question of what makes you happy to be a good worker is high on my list. We’re sick of it, and sometimes we’re a little white and then head home to work. It’s always about to be left, an unwanted friend told me “You’ve gone round in circles and you really. And all you’ve done is work”.

You can’t let your whole life balance, mostly because it often seems to be the make of it on the inside. Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

“Take a vacation, or at least a day off. It’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

If work-life integration is a constantly changing spectrum, then it’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

Resistance VeRsuS

The question of what makes you happy to be a good worker is high on my list. We’re sick of it, and sometimes we’re a little white and then head home to work. It’s always about to be left, an unwanted friend told me “You’ve gone round in circles and you really. And all you’ve done is work”.

You can’t let your whole life balance, mostly because it often seems to be the make of it on the inside. Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

“Take a vacation, or at least a day off. It’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

If work-life integration is a constantly changing spectrum, then it’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

Resistance VeRsuS

The question of what makes you happy to be a good worker is high on my list. We’re sick of it, and sometimes we’re a little white and then head home to work. It’s always about to be left, an unwanted friend told me “You’ve gone round in circles and you really. And all you’ve done is work”.

You can’t let your whole life balance, mostly because it often seems to be the make of it on the inside. Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

Your mind is active all day long with some 60,000 separate thoughts each and every day.

“Take a vacation, or at least a day off. It’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.

If work-life integration is a constantly changing spectrum, then it’s always a chance to really shine and pace your movement and growth and a result of this change is working less, taking chances, and making of it on the inside.
HOW TO REPERCEIVE UNHAPPINESS

THE 10 BELIEFS THAT ARE HOLDING YOU BACK FROM BEING CONTENT IN YOUR LIFE

By DR TRAVIS BRADBERRY

HAPPINESS comes in so many different forms that it can be hard to define. Unhappiness, on the other hand, is easy to identify; you know it when you see it, and you definitely know when it’s taken a hold of you. Unhappiness is lethal to everyone around you, just like second-hand smoke. The famous Tenman Study from Stanford followed subjects for eight decades and found that being around unhappy people is linked to poorer health and a shorter life span. Happiness has much less to do with life circumstances than you might think. A University of Illinois study found that people who earn the most (more than $10 million annually) are only a miniscule amount happier than the average Joes and Janes who work for them. Life circumstances have little to do with happiness because much happiness is under your control — it is the product of your habits and your outlook on life. Psychologists from the University of California found that genetics and life circumstances only account for about 50% of a person’s happiness. The rest is up to you.

UNHAPPY HABITS

When people are unhappy, it’s much more difficult to be around them, let alone work with them. Unhappiness drives people away, creating a vicious circle that holds you back from achieving everything that you’re capable of. Unhappiness can catch you by surprise. So much of your happiness is determined by your habits (in thought and deed) that you have to monitor them closely to make certain that they don’t drag you down into the abyss.

Some habits lead to unhappiness more than others do. You should be particularly wary of the 10 habits that follow as they are the worst things you can do. You should get into the habit of seeing yourself as a victim, just want to pull the covers over our heads and refuse to talk to anybody, just because you're more likely to get bad things. Prophecy – if you expect bad things, that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy – you expect bad things, you're more likely to get bad things. Pessimistic thoughts are hard to shake off until you recognise how illogical they are. Force yourself to look at the facts, and you’ll see that things are not nearly as bad as they seem.

STAYING HOME

When you feel unhappy, it’s tempting to avoid other people. This is a huge mistake as socialising, the disappointment you experience when you get them, you discover that you’ve gained them at the expense of the real things that can make you happy, such as friends, family, and hobbies.

SEPARATING YOURSELF AS A VICTIM

Unhappy people tend to operate from the default position that life is both hard and out of their control. In other words, “Life is out to get me, and there’s nothing I can do about it.”

The problem with this philosophy is that it fosters a feeling of helplessness, and people who feel helpless aren’t likely to take action to make things better. While everyone is certainly entitled to feel down every once in a while, it’s important to recognise when you’re letting this affect your outlook on life.

You’re not the only person that bad things happen to, and you do have control over your future as long as you’re willing to take action.

PESSIMISM

Nothing fuels unhappiness quite like pessimism. The problem with a pessimistic attitude, beyond it being hard on your mood, is that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy — if you expect bad things, you’re more likely to get bad things. Pessimistic thoughts are hard to shake off until you recognise how illogical they are. Force yourself to look at the facts, and you’ll see that things are not nearly as bad as they seem.

Blowing Things Out of Proportion

Bad things happen to everybody. The difference is that happy people see them for what they are — a temporary bump — whereas unhappy people see anything negative as further evidence that life is out to get them.

A happy person is upset if they have a fender bender on the way to work, but they keep things in perspective: “What a hassle, but at least it wasn’t more serious.” An unhappy person, on the other hand, uses it as proof that the day, the week, the month, maybe even their whole life, is doomed.

Complaining

Complaining itself is troubling as is the attitude that precedes it. Complaining is a self-reinforcing behaviour. By constantly talking — and therefore thinking — about how bad things are, you reaffirm your negative beliefs. While talking about what bothers you can help you feel better, there’s a fine line between complaining being therapeutic and it fueling unhappiness. Instead of setting goals, learning, and improving themselves, they just keep plodding along, and then they wonder why things never change.

3. WAITING FOR THE FUTURE

Telling yourself, “I’ll be happy when…” is one of the easiest unhappy habits to fall into. How you end the statement doesn’t really matter (it might be a promotion, more pay, or a new relationship) because it puts too much emphasis on circumstances, and, as mentioned, improved circumstances don’t lead to happiness.

Don’t spend your time waiting for something that’s proven to have no effect on your mood. Instead focus on being happy right now, in the present moment, because there’s no guarantee of the future.

2. SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT ACQUIRING “THINGS”

People living in extreme poverty experience a significant increase in happiness when their financial circumstances improve, but it drops off quickly above RM6,000 per month. There’s an ocean of research that shows that material things don’t make you happy.

When you make a habit of chasing things, you are likely to

7. BLOWING THINGS OUT OF PROPORTION

Bad things happen to everybody. The difference is that happy people see them for what they are — a temporary bump — whereas unhappy people see anything negative as further evidence that life is out to get them.

A happy person is upset if they have a fender bender on the way to work, but they keep things in perspective: “What a hassle, but at least it wasn’t more serious.” An unhappy person, on the other hand, uses it as proof that the day, the week, the month, maybe even their whole life, is doomed.

8. SWEEPING PROBLEMS UNDER THE RUG

Happy people are accountable for their actions. When they make a mistake, they own it. Unhappy people, on the other hand, find problems and mistakes to be threatening, so they try to hide them. Problems tend to get bigger when they aren’t acknowledged. The more you don’t do anything about a problem, the more it starts to feel as though you can’t do anything about it, and then you’re right back to feeling like a victim.

9. NOT IMPROVING

Because unhappy people are pessimists and feel a lack of control over their lives, they tend to sit back and wait for life to happen to them. Instead of setting goals, learning, and improving themselves, they just keep plodding along, and then they wonder why things never change.

10. KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES’ES

Envy and envy are incompatible with happiness, so if you’re constantly comparing yourself with others, it’s time to stop. In one study, most subjects said that they’d be okay with making less money, but only if everybody else did too. Be wary of this kind of thinking as it won’t make you happy and, more often than not, has the opposite effect.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Changing your habits in the name of greater happiness is one of the best things that you can do for yourself. But it’s also important for another reason — taking control of your happiness makes everyone around you happier too.

Like this article? Follow us @Leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.
HE traditional boundaries of office-based work no longer apply in the modern business environment. With the proliferation of mobile technology, professionals can now work from home, on the road, in their favourite cafe or indeed almost anywhere there is a good internet connection.

Before ever having workers had so much autonomy over where, when and how they work. This brings a long list of benefits to the forward-thinking companies that are using virtual workforces to maximise their competitive advantage, attract and retain the best talent, and become first-choice employers, all while cutting overhead costs and increasing productivity.

However, running a successful virtual workforce requires a completely new management philosophy. Traditionally, the manager’s role was to supervise, direct, and interact face-to-face with employees. For most managers that was easy. With employees at their desks from nine to five, managers could stop by at any time and check in. Now they’re asking: “How can we maintain solid oversight while allowing our employees the freedom to work virtually?”

That’s a good question, and one that can only be answered with solid planning, training and a top-down understanding of how to implement, integrate and manage a virtual workforce designed to address the challenges of doing business in the 21st Century.

Follow these four steps to build an effective virtual workforce that will take your business to the next level.

**STEP ONE: EVALUATE**

Not every business is the same, so there is no one-size-fits-all virtual workforce that you can simply drag and drop into play.

Some businesses will be more suited to a virtual workforce than others, as certain business units within your company may be able to offer discounts to a high-value customer or become a lower-cost provider. Having employees stationed around the country and even around the globe operating on a range of time zones may open up new opportunities to expand your territories and enter new markets.

What is your competition doing? If they have moved or are moving to a virtual workforce, you are definitely at risk of being left behind.

**STEP TWO: ASSESS**

Virtual workforces offer a range of potential benefits, but also require resources to ensure maximum effectiveness. Like every business decision, you must assess the benefits against the costs to determine if a virtual workforce is the right fit for your organisation.

**Potential benefits**

- Reduction in employee commuting time increases flexibility and improves work-life balance.
- This leads to reductions in staff attrition and associated recruitment and training costs.

- Fewer in-office distractions can improve employee productivity and boost motivation and engagement.
- Cutting your overhead costs may offer the opportunity to rethink your pricing structure and improve your competitive advantage.
- Potential to improve client relationships via face-to-face visits with staff stationed nearby.
- Decreases travel and facility costs for on-the-road employees.

**STEP THREE: IMPLEMENT**

With your evaluation and assessment complete, it’s time to enter the implementation stage. Running a pilot programme provides a positive pathway to transitioning to a virtual workforce in one part of your business without impacting overall operations.

Most importantly, you must have the various business units take full ownership of the transition to ensure they have clearly identified both the opportunities and the risks within a virtual workforce. Also, your managers will need to be trained and motivated so as to be up to the challenge of effectively leading their virtual employees.

To run a successful pilot project, ensure that:

- Software and hardware selection and application is approved by all of the company’s units.
- Sales and IT have worked with all areas of management to identify the most effective management of software, hardware and support.
- Each business unit has clearly-written policies that can be easily distributed to your virtual employees.

During your pilot programme, look for gaps that may require training, new technology or infrastructure, and recruit staff – either internally or externally – with the attributes required to work virtually. Plan out the scope, tasks, timing, resourcing, costs and acceptance criteria (use these as the basis for your ongoing management metric) so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

Be disciplined in completing the plan and, after a meaningful period (this should represent at least one complete business cycle), measure outcomes to goals. This will enable you to construct a new project plan that offers solutions to the gaps in the initial cycle. This may be improved by utilising relevant expertise from outside.

**STEP FOUR: LAUNCH!**

Your pilot project will have lessened the overall risk while gaining the much-needed support for the virtual model across your organisation.

And with all your evaluations, assessments and planning in place, it’s now time to pick a specific date to launch — because the only way you will identify what will work and what will need improvement is by doing it.

By RUTH MACKAY

editor@leaderonomics.com

The 21st Century workforce. To help businesses stay ahead of the curve in today’s VUCA world, Ruth is the founder and managing director of OURTEL Solutions, where she manages a 100 per cent virtual workforce. She is passionate about helping businesses gain a competitive advantage, improve profits and retain top talent through leveraging proven virtual workforce models. Ruth is also the author of The 21st Century Workforce.

To discover more about our forward-thinking programmes by emailing training@leaderonomics.com

RETREAT, TO MOVE FORWARD

Planning for next year? Give your team the space they need to get refreshed and focused for the year ahead. Find out more about our strategic retreats at http://bit.ly/StratRetreat
leadership, followership

Not surprisingly, there has been no shortage of ideas, theories and opinions proffered as possible answers to this question.

Leaders should develop these seven (or eight) key habits. Not surprisingly, the answer – they should adopt principles from the classic The Art of War by Sun Tzu in order to be effective.

Yet another view argues that effective leaders shouldn’t base their strategies on a war tonight, but instead, lead with a touch of compassion.

There are at least as many ideas to this important leadership process as there are books and experts claiming to have the answer.

We ask this question because leadership pervades many aspects of our lives. The effects of good and bad leadership outcomes resonate across teams, organisations and countries.

LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP

Effective leadership drives organisational success but, at the same time, leaders could also be blamed for failures and crises.

From the successful turnaround of Apple’s fortunes by the mercurial Steve Jobs in 1997, to the scandal-plagued leadership of Dilma Rousseff that threatened to disrupt Brazil’s hosting of the 2014 World Cup, and to the creative vision of the CEO of Nike, the effects of leadership outcomes and their leader’s effectiveness, in particular, are all followers.

Leadership requires followership.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FOLLOWERSHIP

But why look at followers? Aren’t followers the crucial other half of organisational success and failures to leadership?

We judge leaders first, and scrutinise the organisation’s policies and procedures, culture, and team processes later, if ever.

There is a problem, however, in seeing leadership only in terms of the leader, in that we end up ‘romanticising’ the notion of leadership.

We put our leaders on pedestals, exalting and admiring them when things go well, and quickly knock them off their lofty perches when they stumble. Focusing on leaders alone only tells one half of the story.

While it is easy to point fingers at leaders, in reality, leaders operate in complex, dynamic systems that also involve non-leader individuals.

Leaders grapple with systems that work against them, cultures that stifle their effectiveness, and efforts with individuals who don’t necessarily agree with them.

The last line is essentially important. Leaders would not be able to accomplish as much, or fail as miserably, as they would in their end state if there were no books and experts claiming to have the answer.

As much as leaders shape followers, in turn, followers shape leadership outcomes and their leader’s effectiveness. Leaders need followers.

Leadership requires followership.

Leaders lead and direct. Followers follow and obey. But this is not always true.

In reality, followers react, respond to, and even act against leaders and their influence.

Consider the many accounts where followers have acted to shape the history of nations – the socio-political upheaval brought upon by the French Revolution, democratic uprisings in the Middle East, the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong and our very own Bersih rallies, to name a few.

Clearly, individuals experiencing the effects of leadership do respond to what they perceive as ineffective leadership.

Followers are the crucial other half of the leadership influence process.

Followers are at the very heart of what makes leadership so challenging.

Systems, structures and policies are, by comparison, more easily changed than the reluctant and resistant hearts of men. Granted, not every follower is an effective one. Some are indeed compliant and subservient.

Effective followers are those who complement the leader, collaborating with them in their leadership journey to achieve organisational goals.

Put simply, the kind of followers implied by the term ‘follow’, the individuals who are just there to be led – are not effective followers.

Effective leadership demands a level of dynamism in its followers not found in passive, subservient, yes-people.

TYPES OF FOLLOWERS

One classic typology of followers suggested by Robert Kelley shows the following types of followers:

- Sheep
  - Passive, dependent and uncritical of the leader. These followers comply with the leader’s directions to the letter, but often require external motivators in order to perform their duties.
  - They are driven by threats of punishment and the promise of reward in fulfilling their roles.

- Yes people
  - Active followers, who are dependent on the leader’s approval and orders.
  - Unlike sheep, yes people don’t quite need as much external motivation to comply with their leaders – they are simply keen to please leaders.
  - Yes people are unlikely to challenge their leader, reluctant to disrupt the status quo and often try to avoid being seen as opposing the leader’s ideals.

- Alienated
  - Passive followers who are nonetheless independent, critical thinkers who are confident enough to challenge their leader’s decisions when necessary or appropriate.

- Empowered and effective
  - Active followers feel empowered by their leaders. They are also independent, critical thinkers who are confident enough to challenge their leader’s decisions when necessary or appropriate.

- Opposite followers do not oppose leaders for the sake of provoking disharmony, but rather do so in the interest of the collective good.

Keep It Up!

By DR EUGENE Y.J. TEE
editor@leaderonomics.com

Leadership, followership

The notion of leadership is so powerful that it can be used mainly out of semantic subservience, passivity and compliance instead of leadership.

Therefore, the leader can be stronger and more effective than the followers.

Types of followers

Sheep

- Passive, dependent and uncritical of the leader. These followers comply with the leader’s directions to the letter, but often require external motivators in order to perform their duties.

- They are driven by threats of punishment and the promise of reward in fulfilling their roles.

- Yes people

- Active followers, who are dependent on the leader’s approval and orders.

- Unlike sheep, yes people don’t quite need as much external motivation to comply with their leaders – they are simply keen to please leaders.

- Yes people are unlikely to challenge their leader, reluctant to disrupt the status quo and often try to avoid being seen as opposing the leader’s ideals.

- Alienated

- Passive followers who are nonetheless independent, critical thinkers who are confident enough to challenge their leader’s decisions when necessary or appropriate.

- Empowered and effective

- Active followers feel empowered by their leaders. They are also independent, critical thinkers who are confident enough to challenge their leader’s decisions when necessary or appropriate.

- Opposite followers do not oppose leaders for the sake of provoking disharmony, but rather do so in the interest of the collective good.

- But wait! The article’s not finished here; the rest of Eugene’s thoughts and advice are waiting for you over at bit.ly/leadersandfollowers

LEADERONOMICS IS GROWING! As we begin the next phase of our journey, we’re looking for awesome people who have the same hunger as we do.

At Leaderonomics, we make it our mission to grow each employee into a leader. Much more than just being an award-winning place to work and offering career growth opportunities for our people, we love sending our employees overseas to continue their development journey as well.

In the last few months, we’ve sent Leaderonomics to attend the European School of Management and Technology (ESMT) in Berlin, Germany; the International Institute for Management Development (IIMD) in Switzerland and to visit the start-up bubble of Silicon Valley in the US.

We push our employees to be adaptable and flexible. We have no job descriptions. Our job descriptions are for 20th Century. Our roles constantly evolve and we are looking for like-minded people who want to grow not just once a year, but daily.

Our vision is to seek to grow people into leaders, build affectionate communities, and transform the world, one leader at a time.

This vision is anchored by the Golden Rule that we can only protect ourselves if we protect the rest of those around us. As members of one vast community, we want to play our role as agents of transformation by creating life, redeeming and sustaining life in all spheres of the global society.

At Leaderonomics, we are acutely aware that such goals and aims cannot be done alone. In reality, we are nothing but only by good fortune, mutual encouragement and communal execution that we can hope to achieve that one day we will see the fruition of what we envision.

That’s why we are looking only for the very best people out there to tackle the next exciting adventure in Leaderonomics’ story. People who have the flexibility to partner with the world, challenge the accepted status quo, drive change and yet have a heart of love.

Life at Leaderonomics is not for everyone. If you are accountable, sympathetic, wanting to constantly grow and push yourself, are extremely agile with a willingness to have courageous conversations and have the perseverance and belief to drive change, then you will find Leaderonomics a great home with a fun-loving family.

If you are looking for a warm and fuzzy place to work (although actually that does sound like us), but cannot handle daily change and organised chaos, Leaderonomics is not the place for you. We pride ourselves on being a place of constant change and growth.

So, if you’re the right man or woman for the job, we are waiting to hear from you!

Just send us a short video of yourself (don’t worry about quality, just use your phone and record) under 90 seconds which outlines who you are and why you want to work at Leaderonomics. (BTW – if you are watching your video on YouTube and are worried about others watching it, just set the video to “unlisted” and only one else will see you in action. It’ll be our little secret...) Once you’ve got your video, email it together with your resume to people@leaderonomics.com

TAKING LEADERSHIP (A LITTLE LESS) PERSONALLY

IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT THE LEADER!
WORK-TECH IMBALANCE

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

In our task-rich, time-poor work culture, many of us can feel like we have so many plates spinning that it’s almost impossible to keep on top of it all. As a result, we try to juggle as much as possible, to multitask in an effort to manage our bulging workload.

We are, in many cases, mired in a swamp of busyness that sees us attending meetings, dealing with emails, taking phone calls, sorting through admin, putting out fires, engaging with colleagues all before we get to make a start on the important tasks of the day.

Despite the many advantages brought to us by technologies such as smartphones, email, and instant messaging, we are surrounded by a smorgasbord of distractions that serve to diminish our ability to get into a state of flow and focus on producing quality work over a concentrated period of time.

To get a sense of this, the next time you read a lengthy article or a book, or when you next watch a TV show or movie, observe how many times you check your phone for messages or use it to quickly scan social media feeds for no particular reason.

Our inability to focus has a profound effect on both our personal and professional lives which isn’t the best news for business, given that so much time is lost to unproductive busyness that eats up company hours.

A study by sociology professor Judy Wajcman at the London School of Economics observed 18 employees at an Australian telecoms company throughout their workday.

It was a typical telecoms outfit, the offices were open-planned, facilitating ease of interaction, and it had large TV screens mounted on the walls projecting various pieces of information. In other words, the potential for distraction was extremely high.

The study discovered that the employees spent approximately half their work day on “work episodes”, essentially people doing any actual work.

The majority of these “episodes” lasted fewer than 10 minutes, with the average episode lasting around three minutes.

It was also found that almost two-thirds of work episode interruptions were self-generated by the employees, and most of the interruptions involved the use of tech devices.

A similar study by ClearContext found that over half of the 250 people surveyed had spent more than two hours each day reading and responding to emails.

Researchers at Loughborough University discovered that, after taking two minutes to deal with an email, observed workers took 68 seconds to return to their main task and regain focus on what they were doing prior to the distraction.

By continually dipping in and out of tasks, we cut off our productivity, which significantly increases the time it takes to get work done.

In many organisations, an inadvertent culture of distraction is fostered thanks, in part, to open-plan offices that allow for constant communication and, inevitably, interruptions to people’s work.

While conversations in the workplace can help to create a positive environment, too much of a good thing can potentially (along with other distractions) create problems in terms of the quality and quantity of work being produced in a day.

Inevitably, this might lead to people having to take work home, which impacts on their personal lives and can cause unnecessary stress from always being mentally switched-on to their work.

To help counter this work-tech imbalance, organisations can help people in a number of ways, including the provision of ‘quiet zones’ where people can go if they really need to focus on getting their work done.

Leaders can also implement initiatives such as a “no emails” policy during weekends and holidays, which can help to ensure employees get some time to mentally clock-off.

Employees can help themselves by setting fixed time periods where they are fully focused on a particular task and by politely making it known to colleagues who fancy a quick gossip session that they don’t wish to be disturbed.

Checking email could also be restricted to two or three times in the working day, with less urgent emails being marked for reply at a more convenient time.

Distractions in the workplace are killers of time. They’re also devilishly tempting and can whisk the best of us away from that deadline we’re now rushing to meet.

By making a conscious effort to set out our time each day and to stick to our assigned periods of focused work, we can put ourselves in a place of greater control over how our time and energy is spent.

Consequently, we will be better able to get through those urgent jobs and effectively manage the less-important tasks that previously devoured our time.

Sandy Clarke is a writer and former editor of www.leaderonomics.com. Hailing from the UK, he has more than 10 years’ experience in journalism and PR. To connect with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com
Learn to Walkabout

By DAN ROCKWELL
editor@leaderonomics.com

Disconnected leaders are captains on the Titanic. Comfortable disconnection in the present signals failure in the future. Isolation may feel comfortable – especially in difficult situations – but it sinks leaders and organisations. When you feel like pulling away, lean in.

So how do we get off the Titanic? Begin with unfocused walkabouts. Just wander around. Wandering around is more important as responsibilities expand. The further you are from the front-line, the more you need to walkabout.

Tip: Connect with the front-line, not just other leaders. Focused walkabouts engage people and expand organisations. If you’re already wandering around, try focused walkabouts.

I encourage leaders to connect by taking 15 minutes a day to walkabout with a specific intention. If once a day is too much, try twice a week.

Seven focused walkabouts you can try when engaging your employees:

1. Walkabout asking questions, not giving direction.
2. Empowering walkabouts. “If you were the boss, what would you do (name a situation)?”
3. Affirmation walkabouts. “You’re really great at XYZ. Keep it up!”
4. Accountability walkabouts. “What’s happening with (name a project)?”
5. Giving feedback walkabouts. “I notice... The impact of this is...”
7. Challenge walkabouts. “I’m counting on you to...”

Two new walkabouts:

1. Learning from failure walkabout. “What are we/you learning from failure?”, “Where did we/you fall short last week? What did we/you learn?”
2. Values walkabouts. Choose an organisational value and ask about it. “How are we recognising this initiative?”

The ship could be sinking – but you wouldn’t know unless you walkabout. What walkabouts seem most relevant to you?

Dan Rockwell is a coach, speaker and is freakishly interested in leadership. He is the author of a world-renowned, socially shared leadership blog, Leadership Freak. To engage with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com