WHAT HISTORY CAN TEACH US ABOUT LEADERSHIP

4 WHY HISTORY IS CRUCIAL TO MALAYSIA’S FUTURE

6 BUSINESS THROUGH THE EYES OF 3 GENERATIONS

11 OVERCOMING A NEGATIVE PAST

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A couple of weeks ago, one of our assistant editors, Prethiba Esvary, reminded me that I needed to write a piece on the importance of history and have a Christmas ‘feel’ too. Throughout 2017, I have written about great characters from history and how I have learnt so many lessons from them. These include civil rights activist Rosa Parks, philosopher Socrates, and many others including Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin and most recently Niccolo Machiavelli. As I scratched my head on who to learn from this Christmas season, I started reflecting upon the numerous blessings I have received from various groups of people. They have given so much to bless me and many others.

A TIMELY REMINDER

This is a special time that reminds us to be alive to the good fortune we receive, and to spread goodwill to everyone we meet – particularly those who are less fortunate than ourselves. We become especially aware of how blessed we are compared to so many, and at Christmas time we are invited to pay some act of blessings forward in the spirit of care and humanity.

The old saying, “There but for the Grace of God go I” calls on us to be charitable, in the recognition that we could have easily been among those in need who seek us to help. As I pondered these things, I immediately knew who to learn from. There is perhaps no greater example of a charitable life than that of Nicholas of Myra – a man who was later sainted because his giving would go on to inspire an enduring Christmas tradition.

As a young man, the spirit of giving shone brightly in Nicholas (270-343) who inherited a considerable sum of money after the death of his wealthy parents. His inheritance was used in helping the poor and the sick, and the legend that later inspired the annual giving tradition at Christmas. Nicholas, recounts the dire poverty that the father was on the brink of selling his daughters to servitude, and how Nicholas, as a young Christian, threw a bag of gold coins through their window.

There are many stories about Nicholas’ renowned kind-heartedness and visions of aid. The most famous tale, which inspired the gift-giving tradition at Christmas, recounts how the father was on the brink of selling his daughters to servitude, and how Nicholas, as a young Christian, threw a bag of gold coins through their window.

We see God. But if we love each other, God is more and we’ll be in his service. As leaders, we need to be in the forefront of the giving game.

The legacy of St. Nicholas encourages all of us to let our goodness shine through, and remember that there are always opportunities to help those around us, whatever their needs may be. Although his story is most celebrated towards the end of the year, generosity is a quality that we as leaders need to deploy throughout the year, no matter where we are or what we’re doing. Best wishes to each of you for a blessed Christmas and may 2018 be a wonderful year of giving.

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DO YOU KNOW? The bond that compassion that drove St. Nicholas to anonymously provide for those in need made such an impact that it continues to inspire countless people across the world. The Dutch referred to the Christian bishop as “Sinterklaas”, and brought his story to America in 1625 when settlers founded New Amsterdam (renamed New York) in 1664). The name “Sinterklaas” was mispronounced by non-Dutch speakers, and so the saint became known as “Santa Claus”.

The legacy of St. Nicholas encourages all of us to let our goodness shine through, and may 2018 be a wonderful year of giving. By ROSHAN THIRAN

St Nicholas was a bishop at the young age of 30 – it’s clear to see how the power of giving touches us all on a deep level as we become inspired by the difference it can make when we choose to be generous with our resources and our time.

There is perhaps no greater quality in leadership than giving, as everything else flourishes when we help others through a mindset of generosity and gratitude.

PRONOA

People who give their time, energy and themselves are generally termed ‘lucky’. Good things seem to fall ‘lucky’ for them. However, this is not luck. When we give to others, others tend to look out for us.

Sociologist Fred Goldenr terms it as the opposite of paranoia – he calls it pronoia. Pronoia is the belief that “other people are plotting your well-being, or saying nice things about you behind your back.” When you give, this becomes a fact. People do say nice things about you behind your back. As leaders, we need to consistently give. The more we give, the more our folks feel pronoia and receive.

In the bible, we read, “No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and His love is brought to full expression in us.” When we cultivate the quality of giving, we bring out the best of ourselves and in others as we build bonds of trust, connection, and solidarity.

In giving to others, we not only help to ease their troubles, but we also show them kindness and a recognition that they are much more than their circum-

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM ST. NICHOLAS

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HAP SENG GROUP GIVES BACK

By TAMARA JAYNE

tamara.jayne@leaderonomics.com

A progressive business is often viewed as one that runs successfully and is also able to deliver and think about benefiting society beyond the interests of the company. Hap Seng Group (HSG) – together with partners like Sabah State Education Department, District Education Department, and KPSKTM - Ministry of Resource Development and Information Technology Sabah – aims to open up minds and horizons for youth, to give them the confidence to dream big and to be more than they are. Here are some of the education programmes that the company runs throughout Sabah, to build confidence among youth and provide the necessary skills for their daily lives:

HAP SENG GROUP D-CODE (2013-2016)
HSG D-Code is a coding programme aimed at helping students learn computer programming (coding) skills, build confidence, and promote logical thinking and problem solving skills. It also cultivates leadership and good team player traits.

- 1,061 students from 210 out of 222 government secondary schools around Sabah through 25 camps
- 125 new coders, 86 old coders from HSG D-Code (2015-2016)
- Many learn from old coders, showing the existence of effective peer-to-peer learning

“After attending this programme, I was able to do a presentation in front of a lot of people more confidently. Before this, I used to avoid presentations at all costs because I do not like being the centre of attention. With the support and positivity from my teachers and the facilitators, I was able to overcome my anxiety during the camp.”

Nur Aqella Arulji (p!c), Student, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kundasang, Ranau

HAP SENG GROUP D-CODE SECOND PHASE (2017)

- An advanced coding programme which reached out to 211 students from 66 secondary schools around Sabah through eight camps
- More than 60% of awards at YIC

“I found this programme to be very useful for me and the community here. We can improve our English and gain some confidence in speaking English.”

Kong Sing Hung, 11

HAP SENG SUMMER CAMP IN TAWAU, SABAH (2017)

- 120 kids and youth from Bandar Sri Indah, Tawau and its surrounding – aged between 7 - 15 years old
- A weekend of intentional leadership, character, and self-development

“Instead of just complaining about the career readiness of the incoming graduates to our workforce, we in Hap Seng Group decided to be part of the solution, thus, the emphasis on education for our CSR investment.”

Our programmes focus on the skillsets of the 21st century, high order thinking skills (HOTS), as prescribed in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, where students are exposed to problem solving, ideation, and communication. It is also very crucial that they inculcate the habit of willingness to share, collaborate and work as a team. This will develop their confidence, open up their mind to possibilities and dare to dream big.”

Puan Sri Maimon Arif Patail, CSR Director of Hap Seng Group.

HAP SENG GROUP INTERACTIVE STEM (2017)

- 12 to 18 teachers and 60 students from 4 government primary schools in Kg Tg Batu, Tawau

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TG BATU COMMUNITY CENTRE (2017-2020)

- Approximately 100 participants joined the various activities and English classes, organised based on the different age groups – primary and secondary school students as well as adults
- English proficiency of primary school students improved during mid-term oral and writing assessment

“We like to expose the kids to the idea of having a dream and goal in life. As part of our community service, we organised a Merdeka event where the kids had the chance to write a letter to our beloved Malaysia about their dreams and what they hoped to contribute to Malaysia one day. We organised an event to plant a seed as a symbolic to nurturing their own dreams, which reflects a quote from Aristotle – “the roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.”

Emi Binti Iskandar, 29-year-old participant of the Adult Class

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HAP SENG GROUP IoT (2017-2018)
A programme designed to train teachers to become mentors in the Young Innovators Challenge.
Teachers mentored students for Young Innovators Challenge (YIC) Sabah. 89 from 145 teams joined are from HSG IoT.

- All 48 teachers mentored students to join YIC, state level.
- More than 60% of awards at YIC Sabah won by students of participating schools.
- The Rocking Volt team from SMK Tambunan made it to National YIC.

“My proudest moment in this programme was seeing my students win some medals at a state level competition. We managed to get one gold, two silver and two bronze medals, and this achievement was being talked about for the whole week in my school when we got back. And, seeing my students pitching during the competition confidently was another proud moment for me. I never expected that my students would be able to present in front of the judges and converse well in English.”

Venadita Extacia, Teacher, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Gunungad, Keningau
MALAYSIA'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

By JOHAN MAHMOOD MERCIER

1. that which we must
2. that which we seek to change
3. that which comes naturally

HISTORY IS boring? How the f**k is growing up. The way it was taught in school is. History is this set piece of facts and figures. It has no context or story, nothing about how we got to the present day. It is just a collection of dates and events. History is uninteresting and a waste of time. But what if I told you that history is more important than you thought? What if I told you that history is a key to understanding our future? What if I told you that history is a guide to our present? What if I told you that history is a tool for change? Well, I have a story to tell you today, and it's going to be a good one.

HISTORY IN PERSPECTIVE

We often meet people who dwell in the past with regret. “If only I had made different choices.” They would reflect. This is a pointless exercise, as we are now, a result of our past choices and actions. We cannot change the past, only choose to change our path and interact everything else.

On the value of history, others would argue. Those who do not learn from their mistakes, are doomed to repeat them. History has provided us with lessons and situations and taught us that the past may be good for the future.

It is important for us to understand how the past influenced our history and what we can learn from it today. How it can help us to make better decisions. It is our past that has shaped our future.

An outdated business model is a challenge more successful are

PAST SUCCESS TOGETHER

Deer our 60 years of nationalhood, Malaysia has been an economic success. Malaysia transformed from a poor labor intensive economy to a middle income nation.

Malaysia's transformation has minimized poverty and unemployment. We have become a middle income nation.

Macroeconomic stability: maintaining low inflation, prudent public finances.

Market orientations: adaptation to high investments.

Strong growth and abundance of resources.

Leadership committed to growth and inclusivity.

Malaysia’s history: the Commission of Development recognised Malaysia as one of only 13 countries that successfully completed the transition to a middle income nation.

Malaysia's transformation from a low income economy to a middle income nation was aided by the focus on reducing poverty and unemployment. We have become a middle income nation.

Currency: Success was achieved through macroeconomic stability and prudent public finances.

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Another core value from our history is progressiveness. This is encapsulated within our Rukunegara and Vision 2020 to build a progressive society.

Our long history of inclusiveness continues to be relevant today, given its alignment with the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Which, among others, emphasises the principle that no one left behind.

VALUES AND SOUND PRINCIPLES

While good economic policies can certainly be important, what seems more important is the courage and conviction to implement them. As Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said, “History is progress being the opposite of retrogressing which is not economically emerging and inclusiveness ensure everyone prosper together.

Another core value from our history is progressiveness. This is encapsulated within our Rukunegara and Vision 2020 to build a progressive society.

While good economic policies can certainly be important, what seems more important is the courage and conviction to implement them. As Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said, “History is progress being the opposite of retrogressing which is not economically emerging and inclusiveness ensure everyone prosper together.

There are also positive hygiene beliefs. One example is seen in our elec-

there is no longer reliance on solution built over past business knowledge. The megatrends of the emerging markets, disruptive technology, changing demographics, and global connectivity have fundamentally changed the rules of the game.

In the book "Megatrends: reshaping industries in the age of digital transformation," by Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson, the authors argue that "digital transformation is not just about using technology to do things faster or cheaper. It's about fundamentally rethinking the way we do business and fundamentally rethinking our organization."

For example, in one of our recent projects, we partnered with a leading retail company in Malaysia to transform their supply chain operations. By leveraging AI and blockchain technologies, we were able to significantly reduce lead times and improve overall efficiency. This project demonstrated the power of technology to drive innovation and create value.

In conclusion, Malaysia’s historical significance is a testament to our nation’s resilience and determination. Our journey has been marked by challenges and setbacks, yet we have emerged stronger, more united, and more resilient.

With a strong foundation in our past, we must continue to build on our successes and work towards a brighter future. It is through a combination of strategic planning, strong leadership, and a commitment to progress that we will achieve our vision of becoming a developed nation.

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tronics and engineering sector in Penang, with its focus on high-tech industries. The state government has been actively promoting the electronics and engineering sector, with incentives for companies to set up operations in the region.

As of September 2023, Penang has over 2,300 companies operating in the electronics and engineering sector, with a workforce of over 140,000 people. This sector has contributed significantly to the state’s economy, with a revenue of over RM100 billion in 2022.

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BRIDGING THE AGE GAP

3 MALAYSIAN ENTREPRENEURS SHARE WHY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BETWEEN GENERATIONS IS SO IMPORTANT TO SUCCEED

BY MATT NAYLOR
matt.naylor@leaderonomics.com

I t’s often said that we learn from meeting and interviewing countless leaders and business owners. That, in turn, is reflected in our writing as we aspire to develop Malaysia’s leaders and entrepreneurs.

Xpert in the digital age, visibility and scale-up to develop Malaysia’s next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders is what we had. “In today’s world, a lot of entrepreneurs look for mentorship, but they sit down with someone they don’t know the most of the opportunity. They do it just for the sake of saying that they have done it today. When you are mentor, it is about more than just putting these young people in the right frame of mind or telling them anecdotal experiences from your past. It is about working through those challenges, skills and processes, everything that you can do to help them become successful.” – Johary Mustapha, CEO of Forest Interactive.

STARTING YOUNG

Johary Mustapha
January 1977 – December 2002

When Johary Mustapha founded Forest Interactive in early 2000s, it was not a case of “what I knew and was an entrepreneur,” he says. “I grew up with it. It was there, it was around, it was something that we used to. Now, quitting your job to start your own business is as open and something that everyone wants to hear about. This idea is what matters, not who you work for.”

Johary is the co-founder of Forest Interactive, an inter-racial company that focuses on mobile start-ups. He was one of the pioneers in the region, having been around since the 90s and having been one of the first to introduce the world of e-commerce.

During the early days, Johary tells us that it was a time when everyone was afraid to fail. “I was so used to failure that I started to look for a mentor and fully embrace what I was doing.”

As Johary tells it: “I lived in constant fear of what we had.”

“I became so used to failure that I started to look for a mentor and fully embrace what I was doing.”

While I don’t want to stray too far down the path of my life, I think Johary’s words resonated well with me. “I was so used to failure that I started to look for a mentor and fully embrace what I was doing.”

In the early 2000s, though, not everybody was as lucky as Johary. He had the luxury of setting up his own business rather than work for someone else. “The world was different back then. There were many skills that can only be learnt from experience.”

By the time I was 20 years old and started my first high-tech forest business, it was a rocky beginning though and the first few years were horrible. But I eventually became successful. “It was a rocky beginning though and the first few years were horrible, but we eventually became successful.”

In the digital age, accessibility, leadership and capabilities are what we have to deal with. That’s why we need to have the right frame of mind and mindset to do the right things. But that’s not enough. We also need to have leadership skills and how to treat those who can do the right things. “It’s all about the right frame of mind.”

“Now, quitting your job to start your own business is as open and something that everyone wants to hear about. This idea is what matters, not who you work for.”

“In today’s world, a lot of entrepreneurs look for mentorship, but they sit down with someone they don’t know the most of the opportunity. They do it just for the sake of saying that they have done it today.”

To read Raymond Dow’s thoughts on workplace disruption at the digital age, go to http://bit.ly/2JLg2oL

In this image, the text is: Workforce disruption visibility and scale-up to develop Malaysia’s next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders is what we had. “In today’s world, a lot of entrepreneurs look for mentorship, but they sit down with someone they don’t know the most of the opportunity. They do it just for the sake of saying that they have done it today. When you are mentor, it is about more than just putting these young people in the right frame of mind or telling them anecdotal experiences from your past.”

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In this article, the authors share their experiences and insights on how to help the next generation of entrepreneurs become successful.

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He says, “I would say something about all the things that I learned along the way that I have learnt along the way.”

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For me, everyone should take advantage of this knowledge when it comes to establishing your own brand. “In today’s world, a lot of entrepreneurs look for mentorship, but they sit down with someone they don’t know the most of the opportunity. They do it just for the sake of saying that they have done it today. When you are mentor, it is about more than just putting these young people in the right frame of mind or telling them anecdotal experiences from your past.”

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Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.
We are pleased to announce the following SMEs have been shortlisted for the AmBank BizRACE. Congratulations to all of you and thank you for participating in this exciting business challenge that will help you scale and grow your SME. We wish you all the best for the coming Sharing Session on 10 January 2018 where you will have the chance to meet and share your business plan with our esteemed judging panel in person.

1. A E Stamp
2. Ah Hai Industries
3. Akyu (M)
4. Al Qanaah Resources
5. AppCable
6. Art of Tree
7. Averlife Asia
8. Bay Group Holdings
9. Breathe Apparels
10. Brighton System
11. Brilliant Kids Education
12. C SYNERGY SOLUTIONS
13. Care Academy
14. Careertour (M)
15. Cemseal Industries
16. Check It Out Worldwide
17. Chemy Advance
18. Cloudhax
19. Creative Dreams International
20. CYGEN Group (M)
21. Data Positive
22. DD Online Services & Enterprise
23. Deemples Technologies
24. Dreampod Aegis
25. Dynamic Podium
26. Edu Three Sixty Enterprise
27. Edumind Resources
28. Eng Joo Precision Plastic
29. Epnox Technologies
30. Everpeaks Consulting
31. Everyday Gourmet
32. Exclusive Factory Mobile
33. Exza Medical
34. Eyeport
35. Feedmyguest
36. Food Hero Enterprise
37. Fortifoods
38. Freshcart Grocer
39. Galeevers
40. Go Coach Pte Ltd
41. Grov Design Studio
42. HDCI Sales & Marketing
43. Health Digital Technologies
44. Hong Kong Ban Kah Chai Med. Fty.
45. I Pharmacy (M)
46. Image Logistics (M)
47. IMetal (M)
48. Innovative Loyalty Concepts
49. Irzdan Enterprise
50. Johan Speaking Academy
51. Kissandtell
52. LH Learning Group
53. Lifelink Homecare
54. Linkk Busway Systems (M)
55. Lubina (M)
56. Mademoiselle Enterprise
57. Mase Industries
58. Maxonic Marketing
59. Mee Sim Marketing
60. Microcrest System
61. MIT Academy
62. Mobiversa
63. My Aone Learning
64. NetWealth
65. Noted Academy
66. Ominent
67. Peoplender
68. Perfect Mix Portfolio
69. Persafe Engineering
70. Pertama Crane & Engineering
71. Plus Solar Systems
72. Propay Partners
73. Prudent Aire Engineering
74. PTT Outdoor
75. Raffcomm Technologies
76. Redtro Services
77. Sales Candy Internation
78. SavePromise
79. Segamat Panel Boards
80. Sensory Hub
81. Sihat Mekar
82. SNM Babies and Kids
83. SpareLuggage
84. SPSC Engineering
85. Tee Ip
86. Teong Hin Plastic Industries
87. The Boom Beverage
88. The Picha Project
89. Therapy On Demand
90. Traffic EB Solutions
91. Travel Travel
92. TSCH International Trading
93. TTL Sales & Rental
94. Valiant Equipment
95. Vin Asia
96. Vitalitycare Wellness Management
97. V-Series International
98. Walden Lighting Design
99. We Build Easy
100. WINC Studio
The Law of Attraction works like this: if you think of a thought, you will attract similar thoughts to yourself. This law requires us to understand that our thoughts work like magnets and have a certain frequency. Therefore, as you allow certain thoughts to dwell in your mind, it somehow attracts all similar events that are on the same frequency, whether they are negative or positive thoughts.

Expectation is a powerful attractive force of this law. You must learn to expect the things you want and not the things that you don’t want. Every expectation we have shifts our frequency and it will eventually return to its sender, i.e. you.

To expect what you want, start by visualising it, which is creating images in your mind. In this case, it would be images of yourself enjoying what you want. Powerful thoughts are generated when you visualise, and following the Law of Attraction, these thoughts return a reality to you based on the signals you send into the universe. Are your thoughts in sync with your body? (See Figure 1)

**EMOTIONS AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

Emotions are valuable tools that instantly tell us what we are thinking. Thoughts determine the frequency we are transmitting. Emotions, on the other hand, tell us what frequency we are on at any point in time.

When you feel bad, you are on the frequency of drawing more unpleasant things. On the contrary, when you feel good, it’s a powerful way of attracting positivity into your life. These emotions can also be shifted, i.e. meaning you can choose to shift the frequency you are on. Often, if you choose to stay on a negative frequency, that energy can be transferred onto something or someone else subconsciously.

Often, guilt is used for shifting energies and bringing more of what you want into your life. By being grateful for what you already have, you are more likely to end up attracting pleasant things. The mere fact that we woke up today is already a blessing and we should be thankful for that.

As you start to realise how blessed you are in comparison to those out there, all your challenges will seem minute. You will start to be more positive and come up with solutions for your problems instead of dwelling upon them aimlessly.

The Law of Attraction states that your thoughts manifest into events! How do you apply it in leadership, specifically for leading self, and leading others?

1 **Leading self**

To lead ourselves, we must make sure we are competent and projecting the right leadership qualities first before we are able to lead others effectively. As the saying goes, “The world is your mirror: what you give is what you get.” If you find that you’re not making much progress in life, it’s highly likely that you’re being constrained by an environment that is not conducive for your growth. This is because people, ideas and resources are often in sync with your dominant thoughts.

If we are grumpy and aggressive and constantly shouting at others, most probably we would be receiving that similar response from the people around us, as what we give is what we get! That’s how it works and will continue to work as such unless you make a change.

Your thoughts, emotions and actions are essential to your leadership journey. When you lead by example, you are showing your team what you want your reality and possibilities to be. In turn, they will be in tune with your vision; therefore it is your responsibility to make sure that it is a positive vibe.

2 **Leading others**

Understanding and listening to others is vital in leadership. Once you have listened to them, learn to analyse the issue at hand first. The focus should be on providing viable solutions as opposed to focusing on the challenge itself, as more complications will begin to manifest if we focus on the wrong areas.

In your work or business, let passion lead you to your choices. When you are inspired, others around you will sense it by the way you work, provide guidance, implement ideas and lead. Others will feed off your enthusiasm and this would cause a resonance of the similar energy throughout the team. In return, you will attract that similar energy. Understandably, being humans, we are sometimes susceptible to negative thoughts and self-doubt. The key here is not to allow those emotions to linger around too long as we actively learn to shift them from the negative to the positive.

By doing that, your intentions will eventually alter your behaviour (actions and words) towards achieving the intended success.

**MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS**

The art of meditation is the practice of training the mind to focus on a single point of reference. Here, you may think of meditation as a ‘mind gym’ which functions as a tool for conditioning the mind. It is like how a fitness centre is a place for you to condition your physical body.

In other words, meditation means turning your attention away from distracting thoughts and focusing on the present moment. Being in a world full of stimuli means your thoughts are bound to wander easily. In fact, since the mobile revolution began, results have shown that the average human attention span has fallen from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds.

With this, we have all the more reasons to practise this art of focusing the mind, so that over time, it would become a habit. You may begin your practice with pockets of 2 minutes of mind focus, 5 times a day. This will add up to 10 minutes of meditation in a day, for a start. For continuous improvement, just add one minute to your ‘pocket-sessions’ every week, and it would eventually become a cumulative one-hour meditation.

**BRINGING IT TOGETHER**

It is highly recommended that we make the Law of Attraction and mindfulness a habit. Note down the steps to take for you to condition your physical body; and mind.

To help others through the knowledge that he himself has gained and learned from. To share your thoughts with the world, you write to editor@leaderonomics.com.
LEARNING FROM HISTORY

HISTORY CAN OFFER COUNTLESS INSIGHTS FOR LEADERS TRYING TO NAVIGATE THEIR CHALLENGES

By SANDY CLARKE
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HEN I was in high school, I took a history class during the first two years, and then dropped it as fast as I was able to. History was dreadfully dull, and more than a few of us nodded off during class. I can recall that the Battle of Hastings took place in 1066. In 1297, the first war of Scottish independence from the English unfolded at Stirling Bridge. We also had lessons on the First and Second World Wars, which began in 1914 and 1939 respectively.

During my time at school, I learnt more historical dates than I cared to know. The reason I found the classes so boring was because there was nothing to say why these events took place, what the circumstances were that led up to them, or what the key lessons were from historic decisions that had far-reaching consequences.

As a result, I felt the same way as Henry Ford who once said, “History is more or less bunk.” After all, the past is dead and buried – what use is it to me to know about events that took place centuries before I was born?

The Spanish philosopher George Santayana is the man behind the famous saying, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” When we look to history in the right way, which is to say, when we remember the why more so than the when, there are invaluable lessons to be learnt if we pay close enough attention.

Gypsies might suggest that we humans learn more from our failures than from our successes. Indeed, history can offer countless useful insights for leaders who are searching for ways to navigate their challenges and decide their future course of action. Let’s take a look at four ways history can lend clear context for the decisions we face today.

Without knowing it, we are constantly re-creating the past. History forms the basis for today’s decisions and creativity he encouraged to us with patience and persistence. Churchill said, “When you are going through Hell, keep going.” While it’d be easy (and understandable) to face difficult circumstances with impatience and frustration, this only serves to deepen existing divisions. Effective leadership looks for common ground, understanding, compromise, and commits to doing what is right.

2 \ TRUST YOUR PEOPLE – ENCOURAGE THEIR IDEAS
Alexander the Great conquered a vast empire thanks to his military genius – but his success was in no small way due to the trust and faith he placed in his army of followers, whose innovations and creativity he encouraged to change course when necessary. Good leaders are able to step back and look at the bigger picture – they don’t persevere regardless when something clearly isn’t working.

3 \ LEARN TO ADAPT WHEN NECESSARY
In his classic book, The Art of War, Sun Tzu advises leaders to be sure of the terrain so that they can take advantage of it. In leadership, unexpected challenges cause the terrain to shift, and yet some leaders press on regardless, perhaps even uttering that killer phrase, “This is the way we’ve always done it.” While we can get caught up in the beauty of our own ideas, it’s foolish to neglect revising and changing course when necessary. Good leaders are able to step back and look at the bigger picture – they don’t persevere regardless when something clearly isn’t working.

4 \ STAY COURAGEOUS
Winston Churchill said, “When you’re going through Hell, keep going.” It’s important to change course when necessary – but it’s just as important to know when you should plough straight on and keep chipping away at a particular challenge. It’s through courage that new ideas are not only discovered, but also carried forward. Even if it feels like you’ve been on a losing streak, success might be just around the corner.

History teaches us to learn when perseverance is called for, and encourages us to keep pushing forward until the job is done.

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Missed out key lessons from Alexander the Great? Head on to Leaderonomics.com at bit.ly/ZeeNPK

Here’s another historical figure to learn from, i.e. Winston Churchill! Check it out here: bit.ly/ldrchurchill

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HOW TO OVERCOME
A NEGATIVE PAST

By DAN ROCKWELL
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When an unresolved past grows heavier with the passage of time, little mistakes grow larger. Offence gets heavier. Failures persecute. The past crushes those who hang on to it. The older you get, the more you see what you could have done, but didn’t. Let go of the past every morning. Don’t worry, its bony finger will return tomorrow.

OWN IT

One way to release a negative past is to own it. When you think of your failure, say “Yes, I did that.” Everyone who buries the past uncovers it in the future. Whiners imagine the past can change all. Who feel sorry for themselves are controlled by the past. Don’t react against your negative past. Release it by owning it.

THE NEGATIVE PAST OF OTHERS

The way to get the best from people is to treat them with their potential, not their failure, in mind. Every morning, let go of their past.

1. Give second chances if they have passion to grow.
2. Acknowledge successes without reminders of failure. It’s difficult to lift people higher by beating them down. “You did great this time,” is an insult in disguise.
3. Design all feedback as a forward-facing experience. Establish simple, actionable, observable behaviours.
4. Focus on progress more than failure.
5. Maximise their passion. Maybe they don’t want to go where you want them to.

REPEATED FAILURE

Everyone doesn’t do everything well. Successful leaders bring out everyone’s best and minimise their worst.

1. Repeated failure is a leadership issue. You want to blame them, but you allow it to continue.
2. Realign, retrain, or reassign. Replace, if necessary. When progress falls below expectation. But, always act with their best interest in mind.
3. Everyone has a past. What you do with it impacts your future.

How might leaders deal with the negative past of others?

How might leaders get the most from a negative past?

Dan Rockwell is a coach, speaker and is freakishly interested in leadership. He is an author of a world-renowned leadership blog, Leadership Freak. To get in touch with Dan, write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

REGIONALISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

In changing political and cultural relations, is there a place for regionalism or studies from a regional perspective in academia?

Find out at this upcoming international conference:

What: International Conference of Performing and Visual Arts 2018 (ICPVA 2018)
Where: Cultural Centre, University of Malaya
When: Jan 9-11, 2018
Visit https://umconference.um.edu.my/ICPVA2018 or contact icpva@um.edu.my for more information.

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5 THINGS TO DO IN DECEMBER
ENSURE SUCCESS IN THE NEW YEAR

By MARK C. CROWLEY
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“Fortune favours the bold.”
Virgil (70-19 BC)

THERE'S a great tendency in the month of December to wind things down. With the holiday season upon us, and the least amount of sunlight of the year around to energise us, we're influenced to work in slow motion. We feel like resting and acting upon a conscious or unconscious mindset that tells us things will rev up soon enough – when the new year arrives on January 1.

But it's long been my experience that the most successful leaders have an altered state of awareness about December. They see the month as the true start of the new year, and purposefully work very hard to lay the foundation for high achievement way before Auld Lang Syne gets sung. For these highly effective people, the last month of the year is all about winding things up.

If your ambition is to lead your team to spectacular performance in 2017, here are five things you'll be very wise to accomplish in December:

1. SHARE YOUR VISION
Ideally in person, but alternatively through a well-crafted and thoughtful written communication, use December to inspire your team. The wonderful effect of sharing your dreams for the coming year – all you'd like to achieve and become – is that it gets the juices flowing in the minds and hearts of every person who works for you.

Weeks before the new year starts for real, your employees can give thought to how their efforts fit into your aspirations. And once you plant the seed, they will begin to prepare themselves for the coming challenges. One word of guidance: make sure to acknowledge all your team did to support you this year, before you re-direct your focus to the year ahead.

2. MEET ONE-ON-ONE WITH ALL YOUR DIRECT REPORTS
December is a wonderful month to check in with people and personalise the new year ahead by discovering new ambitions. Knowing that the greatest reason people burn out at work is because their jobs lack sufficient variety, ask your employees if there's a special project they'd like to be involved in. Is there a cross-training or growth opportunity that inspires them? The road to high performance in January (especially important in sales). Come early February, it simply feels great to know you've gotten off to a phenomenal start in the new year and to have established early momentum. The best way to ensure this happens is to stack the deck in your favor. Whatever you traditionally do to drive results, do more of it in December.

3. ASSIGN NEXT YEAR'S GOALS
The funny thing about goals is that they are almost always higher than those assigned the year before. We laugh at this, of course, but new and bigger goals very often have the effect of stressing people out and putting them into a disempowered state of fear. So, one solution is to introduce goals long before they go into effect. The extra time allows people to get their heads around the higher expectations. I've also found it extremely helpful to ask employees to prepare a high-level plan for how they will go about achieving those new goals. The exercise typically reveals to people that the mountain isn't as high as they first imagined. By the time they submit their plan to you, they know how they'll reach the summit.

4. BUILD A PIPELINE
Few things are more exciting for a leader and their team than to have a highly productive month of performance in January (especially important in sales). Come early February, it simply feels great to know you've gotten off to a phenomenal start in the new year and to have established early momentum. The best way to ensure this happens is to stack the deck in your favor. Whatever you traditionally do to drive results, do more of it in December.

5. GET ORGANISED AND REFLECT
I love the last two weeks of December, and have made a habit of using them to get myself organised and emotionally prepared for the coming year. I clean out files, organise my office, and spend time planning. Like chopping wood and carrying water, there's an unseen but really powerful reward for doing the mundane and preparing yourself for a brand new start.

While not always possible, I also love taking off the last week of December and hiking in nature, going for walks – having thinking time. Late December is an ideal period for personal reflection and for becoming fully re-inspired about the future. Every year around this time I'm inspired by C. S. Lewis who said: "You are never too old to set another goal and to dream a new dream."