CREATING A SECURE SPACE FOR INNOVATION

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3 EINSTEIN’S LESSON ON IGNORANCE

7 HERE’S WHY THE BEST PROJECT MANAGERS FAIL

If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
THINK about the greatest job you ever had. Were you allowed to fail? In reality, a company that encourages its people to try, and be allowed to fail, or succeed, is a company that deeply engages its people. But does a company engage people, or do bosses? Disengaged employees are rarely disengaged from the company (unless the company is reallys run). They are often disengaged from their bosses.

So, at the core of being able to fail is a boss who allows you to do so with unwavering support. An example of a company that did not create a safe place for failure was one I worked with years ago. The chief executive officer (CEO) of this start-up was zooming towards success. It eventually became a multi-billion-dollar business-to-business technology company.

The CEO, however, ran the company like a prison. He made sure that no individual met his/her goals. He once said to me: “If anyone meets his or her goals in a given period, it just means that the goals were too low. I look for people to achieve 70% of their goals and then ask why they missed the mark.”

AS A RESULT...

With every single person at the company constantly missing goals, the culture was depressing and oppressive. The CEO would also call out people publicly for missing the mark.

The only thing that kept employees around was the fact that the company was taking off, creating a new market around was the fact that the company was constantly missing goals, the culture was depressing and oppressive. The CEO would also call out people publicly for missing the mark.

Like any other start-up, many employees had stock. They all held on, praying for an eventual sale. The company was sold, and some employees made it to the end. Others, did not.

The bottom line is that it was a fabu2014ous company with a highly-flawed CEO. Almost all employees served their tenures to get paid out on the day of the sale.

After all, the employee lock-ups were over and a mass exodus ensued. It was the ultimate unsafe place for failure. New ideas were not encouraged. While the company succeeded, it was eventually eclipsed by competitors.

My hunch is that the company’s head in the market started to evaporate once the ideas stopped.

THE COST OF EMPLOYEE DISENGAGEMENT

My example above has a cost. At the core are employees who are afraid to try. They disengage from work for fear of failure. And as you can see, when they disengage, ideas stop and so does creativity.

A study of 1,500 respondents revealed that disengaged employees cost companies from USD400–550 billion per year, according to The Engagement Institute, a collaboration of companies led by The Conference Board, an independent business membership organization and research association.

Not only are these employees not producing, they are afraid to try. It was reported in Work Institute’s 2017 Retention Report that it costs up to a third of a worker’s annual salary to replace them.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE FOR FAILURE

Simply put, failure is a key to success. We all learn from failure. We all remember what went wrong and how to correct it the next time around.

But, how does one create a culture of safe failure? You may have heard of the method “fail cheap, fail quickly, fail often.” Through failure, an organisation can test results in sales and marketing to gather intelligence and inform future decisions.

The product team can test pilot projects and find out if there is acceptance for a new product. Failing on a test marketing programme or test product is cheaper than betting it the next time around.

But, how is that “safe failure culture” inoculated in a company? It begins and ends with a management team that promotes failure as a road to success. Great managers create a culture of engaged employees who are always learning. Those excited about their work share articles and trends about the industry and apply proven ideas to the business and their industry.

Learning, and a learning culture, starts at the top. They try new ideas. Some fail, and that’s okay.

TONE AT THE TOP

“Tone at the top” is a term that started in the field of accounting. It is used to describe an organisation’s general ethical climate with regard to financial controls. Today, its meaning has gone beyond finance to encompass overall business ethics.

Tone at the top also sets the culture of an organisation, whether it is a political administration, company, or sports team. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 80% of employees claim poor management decreases productivity.

As a public case in point, think about the recent presidents of the United States.

Think about the tone at the top set by Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and now, Donald Trump. Look at the turnover of personnel of each administration in their first year. Here are the statistics for the last four presidents.

- Donald Trump – 34%
- Barack Obama – 9%
- George W. Bush – 6%
- Bill Clinton – 11%

Is there a reason Trump had the highest turnover? As of November 2017, Trump still had more than 250 unfilled jobs. The job of the team is to execute and make sure that clients are not just satisfied, but elated.

Our CEO has put his trust in the team and said: “If you need anything, let me know.” This unwavering support has set a tone at the top of interdependence and belief in the entire team.

Are the employees trying new ideas? Yes! Do most of these ideas work? No! But for those that do work get rolled out. The result is that everyone is working 14 hours a day – no complaints, only joy – five failures to every one success. And the days are flying by. We are succeeding because we are allowed to fail.
**IGNORANCE & SIMPLICITY**

**THE UNUSUAL LESSONS I LEARNED STUDYING ALBERT EINSTEIN**

*As we stop gathering knowledge, we become less wise. Einstein remained wise to the end by constantly telling himself he was ignorant and didn’t know enough. As leaders, we must learn to emulate Einstein and keep reminding ourselves of our ignorance and lack of knowledge.*

**THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY**

Einstein claimed: “Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex. It takes a touch of genius, and a lot of courage, to move in the opposite direction.”

In our complex world, a key lesson we can learn from Einstein is to simplify. To him, the best solutions were the simple ones. Observing great leaders, they don’t execute seamlessly because anything they do is simple. There is no complexity in the change they drive, nor in their communications. This makes it easy for everyone to be aligned. Einstein knew the secret of success — to simplify and keep things simple.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

A final lesson from Einstein was his humility to accept that he was human and made mistakes. His biggest mistake (which we now know today, may not have been a mistake after all) was surrounding his predictions about the expanding universe.

When another scientist, Edwin Hubble, proved the universe is expanding, Einstein immediately ditched his theory and admitted it was his greatest blunder.

Great leaders quickly realise their mistakes and learn from them. They admit it and use it to build themselves up. Do we really admit when we are wrong? Do we use these mistakes to build ourselves up?

**CURRENT TOPICS**

- How to simplify in every part of our lives and organisation.
- Are ignorAnt
- Are we simplifying in our organisation?
- Are we simplifying in our communications?

**BE A LEADER**

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**By ROSHAN THIRAN**
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**“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” — Albert Einstein**

A merican businessman and retail entrepreneur J.C. Penney once said: “Give me a stock clerk with a goal, and I will give you a man who will make history. Give me a man without a goal, and I will give you a stock clerk.”

In 1905, German-born Swiss patent clerk, Albert Einstein (1879–1955) proved that statement right when he published works that would revolutionise the world’s understanding of science.

Einstein was an iconoclastic genius who transformed the world of physics through his discoveries. Most notably, his theory of relativity and the famous equation “E=mc²” — a formula that helped lay the groundwork for atomic power and the atomic bomb.

A world without Einstein might have left us today without the global positioning system, televisions, digital cameras, the internet, smartphones, and many other technologies.

Born in Württemberg, Germany, the young Einstein developed a deep sense of curiosity about the world. Although he had a hard time adapting to his schooling years in Munich, it’s often mistakenly presumed that he struggled academically. On the contrary, he excelled. However, possessing a rebellious mind, he failed to adapt to the regimented structure of the school.

**HIS WORK AND LEGACY**

Remarking his German citizenship in 1896, Einstein became a Swiss citizen in 1901. Unable to secure an academic position, he picked up work as a patent clerk. The job gave him the space he needed to work on his research. In 1905, he published works in a prestigious German academic journal that would later lead to him winning a Nobel Prize.

Included in his work was the first exploration of what would become his Theory of General Relativity. In 1919, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics and, 12 years later, he fled from the Nazis to America where he took up a position at Princeton University, remaining there until his death in 1955.

Einstein and his fellow colleague, Leo Szilard, wrote a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939, warning him of Germany’s nuclear capability.

They suggested that the United States begin developing its own nuclear weapons, which led to the famous ‘Manhattan Project.’

Although he played a role in its development, Einstein was not involved in the project itself due to his pacifist tendencies.

Following the attack in 1945 on Hiroshima, Japan, Einstein became a strong advocate for restricted usage of the atomic bomb, and believed it should be used solely as a means for deterrent against any future conflict.

After World War II, he focused all his efforts on finding a unified field theory that would seek to explain the very workings of the universe at a fundamental level. In the last few years of his life, Einstein remained true to his reclusive nature, immersing himself in his work and shunning the limelight.

He died of heart failure at the age of 76 in 1955, telling a doctor shortly before his death that he refused to receive surgery, saying: “I want to go when I want. It is tasteless to prolong life artificially. I have done my share, it is time to go. I will do it elegantly.”

Einstein’s work and legacy continues to inspire generations of scientists who build on his work and create many of the advancements we enjoy today in science and technology, medicine and beyond.

**3 EINSTEINIAN QUALITIES**

As I studied his life, I found numerous lessons that leaders today can learn from him.

As a deeply passionate leader in his field, Einstein was obsessed with the work he carried out. This obsession was driven by three main qualities:

1. **Curiosity**
   
   “I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.”
   
   Einstein was constantly asking questions and forever in a state of objective uncertainty.
   
   In fact, he once rejected an invitation to become Israel’s second Prime Minister because of his objectiveness, saying that he lacked “the natural aptitude and the experience to deal properly with people.”

2. **Perseverance**
   
   “It’s not that I’m so smart; it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”
   
   So much of success comes from the ability to keep pushing on in the face of adversity. Often, people fail not because they’re not good or smart enough, but because they give up on their goals.
   
   Einstein was at the opposite end of the spectrum, tenacious to his last breath.

3. **Imagination**
   
   “Imagination is more important than knowledge.”
   
   While knowledge is useful, it’s also limited, and often short-lived when the new replaces the old.

On the other hand, imagination can take us anywhere and develop our minds to ask questions that haven’t been considered previously.

If we want children to be intelligent, Einstein suggested we should help them face fairy tales. If we want them to be even more intelligent, he advised that we read them more fairy tales.

Knowledge can tell us what’s impossible — imagination is what helps to transform the impossible into the extraordinary.

**KNOWING YOU ARE IGNORANT**

All three of his ‘talents’ stem from one simple leadership truth — great leaders know they are ignorant. Yes, you read that right!

Einstein highlights something you generally hear from great leaders — they know they don’t know. And this drives them to keep learning.

Einstein’s insatiable curiosity and perseverance were driven by his belief that he lacked knowledge.

So many times, we read Einstein’s journals and letters stating he didn’t know the answer, hence he had to keep learning.

We learn much in our younger days but, as we age, we often move from gathering knowledge to impacting wisdom. However, our wisdom is as good as the knowledge we have.

As we stop gathering knowledge, we become less wise. Einstein remained wise to the end by constantly telling himself he was ignorant and didn’t know enough.

As leaders, we must learn to emulate Einstein and keep reminding ourselves of our ignorance and lack of knowledge.

**THE UNUSUAL LESSONS I LEARNED STUDYING ALBERT EINSTEIN**

- Do we really admit when we are wrong?
- Do we use these mistakes to build ourselves up?
- Are we learning daily? Are we being over-used, recycling the same unhelpful answers.
- Are we learning from our mistakes and learn from it. They admit it and use it to build themselves up. Do we really admit when we are wrong?
- Do we use these mistakes to build ourselves up?
- Are we learning daily? Are we being simple in all we do? Let’s emulate Einstein and be a leader!
By PRETHIBA ESVARY
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HR: 30% of the company’s not ready for the change plans that we intend to roll out. CEO: What does that mean? CFO: What do we have to do to change that?

If a human resources (HR) practitioner is unable to answer the questions above, then they are not doing their job well enough.

IBM Watson Talent specialist James Hewitt revealed: “Organisations have long been consumed with the employment of their employees, but typically these data sets are stored in siloed systems.”

As Kinsey and others had something similar to say: organisations are just sitting in pools of data and are finding it a challenge to retrieve meaningful and actionable insights from those data.

Why? Is it because HR is unsure of where to start? Or is it simply because they are fearful of delving into the unknown?

Refusal to budge from a fixed mindset isn’t going to help an organisation get to its destination.

So, what is it that must change?

1. COMPOSITION OF THE HR DEPARTMENT
   Accendo’s chief executive officer (CEO) Sharma KSK Lachu believes that HR departments today should be made up of three vital groups. “One-third should consist of HR practitioners who are specialists in particular areas such as performance management and recruitment.”

   The next one-third should consist of mathematicians, psychologists, and statisticians. The last group should consist of people from different parts of the organisation who possess business acumen,” he said.

   Aside from creating a knowledge-sharing culture, Sharma said: “Changing the composition of the HR department allows for experimentation and this builds credibility through more robust science.”

2. METHOD OF GENERATING DATA AND INSIGHTS
   Based on his 13-year experience in the HR technology field, Sharma admits that one of the biggest challenges organisations face is in collecting clean data – data that is accessible and accurate and is able to provide valuable insights to the organisation.

   According to Sharma, the parameters that one sets at the beginning is therefore critical as those will determine the kind of data produced, and consequently, the influence the insights which are generated.

   This is where statisticians, mathematicians and psychologists come into the picture to run experiments, he says.

3. INVEST IN THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY
   According to Hewitt, it is important to note that “analytics in itself won’t solve an organisation’s issues. However, it does shine a light on issues based on data, rather than opinions.”

   Take performance management as an example. The traditional assessment centre (AC) falls short in terms of generating forward-looking data and in meeting an organisation’s need for speed, scale and analytics, Sharma said.

   He gave an example of measuring the performance of a low-performing group versus a high-performing one over a period of one year. The former group is given positive reinforcement, while the latter isn’t. Data from the two groups are then placed against each other to retrieve insights about the correlation between rewards and recognition, and performance.

   He said: “Organisations must understand that in order to create and generate clean data, you need to have a sandbox to play in.

   “You must build an internal capability process that can help you run experiments.”

   “It’s important to remember that technology is an enabler for what you are trying to achieve. If your process is rubbish, technology is just going to enhance that.”

   Thus, the idea of supplementing traditional ACs with virtual assessment centres (VAC) came about.

   In Accendo for instance, their VAC comes equipped with artificial intelligence elements of IBM Watson Talent Insights.

   This enables an organisation to understand the current performance of its existing employees and steps the employer ought to take to reach a particular level of competency.

   Sharma added that this is the kind of information HR teams need to have today.

   IN A NUTSHELL

   Knowing how to gather clean data and how to make sense of it can yield great value for a business. That being said, having the right make-up in your HR department is equally important – without the right talent, it would prove challenging to achieve an organisation’s goals.

   If you’d like to learn more about analytics and find out which tool best fits your organisational needs, Accendo may be able to help.
Do you find it a challenge to assert yourself, either in a professional setting or in your personal life? Asserting yourself means that you stand up for your own rights and defend your boundaries while respecting others, and you express your opinions, needs, and feelings without hurting others.

I love this interpretation about assertiveness: to disagree without being disagreeable. To assert yourself indicates your level of self-esteem and self-assurance. Lack of assertiveness can affect your career prospects and quality of life.

When you are assertive, you communicate more effectively and earn more respect.

Assertiveness is a very critical skill in communication. Within 0.36 seconds, you will find more than 14 million Google results on how to be assertive — think before you speak, don’t apologise if it’s not warranted; remember it is okay to say “no” — to name a few.

Yet, for years, none of them worked for me. I didn’t achieve any breakthrough on assertiveness until I did my own voice study.

In practicality, we relate voices with personality traits, e.g. a deep voice comes across as credible, trustworthy, and authoritative; while a soft voice comes across as friendly, warm, or sometimes unsure.

DEVELOP AN ASSERTIVE VOICE

How does an assertive voice sound? Confident, grounded, and self-assured. To sound that way, you need to know what makes a voice assertive in the first place.

When I first thought about developing my voice, part of me was doubtful while the other part thought: “Why not make some changes and see the results?”

I discovered my optimum pitch, developed resonance and monitored the cadence in my voice. The more I developed them, the more amazed I was looking at the results.

Not only did I tap into the potential in my voice, I also had a realisation in my voice: I also had a realisation in my voice, I also had a realisation in my voice.

By sounding more assertive, I realised that we all have our own desires, feelings, and opinions. Therefore, we should stand up for our own rights and defend our personal boundaries.

The changes prompted me to reflect on why it really worked, and I finally figured it out. You see, changes happen in two ways:

- Change the internal (your mind) and then the external (your behaviours/body) will follow; or
- Change the external (your behaviour/body), and the internal (your mind) will ultimately change.

In essence, changing either your mind or your behaviour/body will influence the other.

That is exactly how yoga works. We practise the external (our body, e.g. different postures) to discover and change the internal (our mind).

As one of the foremost yoga teachers Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja Iyengar (better known as B K S Iyengar) pointed out in his book Light on Life: “It is through the alignment of my body that I discovered the alignment of my mind.”

YOUR TURN

Are you assertive enough? Are you still struggling to be more assertive? Are you disappointed at all your attempts to be more assertive?

Why not reverse the process by making external changes before anything else? Sometimes, the results might come even faster than making internal changes first.

Want a fulfilling life? It starts with what you say — to yourself

Kasnasoff and Blaschka don’t target your rational, logical, orderly side; plenty of books do that. Instead, they trust the power of your brain and heart to come up with amazing possibilities — to let you wander, explore, imagine, and experience as you discover ways to unlock your full potential.

Sound like a tall order? Maybe not. Here’s one of my favourite portions of the book, partly because it’s about willpower and determination (persistence is critical for achieving any huge goal) but also because I tried it — and it works.

“I am persistent.

“I don’t give up easily.

“I fight for what’s right.

For what I believe in and for whom I love and admire.

“I search for the truth. My

truth. And the truths of others, never satisfied with what’s on the surface, always digging deeper, letting my insatiable curiosity drive me. I want — and need — to know.

“I’m tenacious, in all the best ways.

“I don’t get discouraged, even when things don’t go my way. I use setbacks as motivators, criticism as fuel to be better.

“I know deep in my bones that what I’m doing matters and is important not only for my soul but for the lives of others. As I stay the course, I remain sweet because I know I will eventually succeed. And it is that thought of achieving my goals that motivates me to keep going.

Read that passage — out loud — to yourself before you leave for work. Or before you start a difficult task. Or whenever delaying gratification, withstanding temptation, overcoming fear... whenever you need to stay the course and do the things that matter most.

At first it might feel strange (or even uncomfortable) to read that passage out loud, especially if you’re like me and tend to stick to “rational” ways to improve yourself. But give it a couple of days. It sinks in. It starts to inform the way we respond to certain situations... stories matter.

STORIES have power. Stories shape the way we think, the way we feel, the way we respond to certain situations... stories matter.

Especially the stories we tell ourselves.

(That’s the underlying premise of Stoicism. Stoicism has nothing to do with being stone-faced and not showing emotion; Stoicism is a practical philosophy that says while we can’t control everything that happens, we can control how we respond.)

How you decide to respond, to whatever happens around you and to you, is up to you — and responding the right way is a lot easier when you tell yourself the right stories, especially about yourself.

That’s the premise of a cool new book by Bruce Kasnasoff and Amy Blaschka, I Am: Escape Distractions, Unlock Your Imagination! Unlock Your Reality. Their goal is to shift the stones you tell yourself, not just from negative to positive but at a deeper level so you can unlock your imagination, creativity, and aspirations.

By CYNTHIA ZHAI
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Confident, grounded, and self-assured.

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**Why Failure is so Important for Long-term Success**

**BY ERNEST ANTONIO**

In the 1990s, the creator of the leadership game, Dr. John Kotter, said that leaders need to understand their followers and make mistakes for the sake of learning. He believed that leaders who do not make mistakes will not learn from them and will not be able to grow as leaders.

Leaders who are not afraid to make mistakes are more likely to succeed in the long run. In fact, they are more likely to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth.

Dr. Kotter also said that if leaders are not afraid to make mistakes, they are more likely to be trusted by their followers. This is because followers will see that their leaders are willing to take risks and are not afraid to fail.

In conclusion, leaders who are not afraid to make mistakes are more likely to succeed in the long run. They are more likely to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth. They are also more likely to be trusted by their followers.

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**LEADERSHIP TALK**

**Ask a leader:**

*Dr. John Kotter*

*Founder of the Leadership Institute*

*Author of ‘Leadership: The Future is Now’*

“I believe that leaders who make mistakes are more likely to succeed in the long run. In fact, they are more likely to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth. The key is for leaders to be willing to take risks and not be afraid to fail.”

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**Mindfulness Meditation**

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of where you are and what you’re doing. It’s about being present in the moment, without judgment or distraction.

Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on your Breath and observing your thoughts and emotions as they arise. It helps you develop a greater sense of awareness and acceptance, which can improve your overall well-being.

In addition to being a personal practice, mindfulness can also be applied to leadership. When leaders practice mindfulness, they become more aware of their own thoughts and emotions, which can help them to better understand and lead their teams.

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**CULTURE OF LEARNING FROM FAILURE**

According to research by the Harvard Business School, leaders who learn from failure are more likely to succeed in the long run. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

1. **Leaders should recognize and accept failure as an opportunity for growth.**
2. **Leaders should be willing to take risks and not be afraid to fail.**
3. **Leaders should be willing to learn from the mistakes of others.**
4. **Leaders should create a culture of learning and growth.**

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**Reflection**

Leaders who are willing to learn from failure are more likely to succeed in the long run. They recognize that failure is an opportunity for growth and do not fear making mistakes. They are willing to take risks and are not afraid to fail. They also create a culture of learning and growth within their organizations.

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**Resources**

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

6 LEADERSHIP TRAPS YOU DON’T WANT TO FALL INTO

By JOHN EADES
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EVERYBODY loves to focus on the things you must do to be a great leader. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this approach, it’s often our weaknesses or the things we don’t know that end up hurting us the most.

Out of all the information out there, there are things you know (<1%) and things you know you don’t know (max 5%). And then there are things you don’t know that you don’t know (more than 95%).

Here are six of those things that I had to learn the hard way:

1. BEING UNAWARE OF THE POWER OF YOUR EGO

Until recently, I didn’t know how or even why I needed to overcome my ego. I now know ego is simply our own self-centred, self-serving, ambition.

The desire to be more than, to be recognised for, or to be elevated above others. Ego is a conflict all leaders face, but don’t want to talk about.

The problem with ego is that it’s ‘fake’. People see through it; they know it’s inherently wrong with this approach, it’s often our weaknesses or the things we don’t know that end up hurting us the most.

2. LACK OF SELF-AWARENESS

Gary Vaynerchuk, chief executive officer (CEO) of Vayner Media, has been drilling the idea of the importance of self-awareness for years.

Vaynerchuk wrote: “Self-awareness allows people to recognise what things they do best so they can then go hard on those aspects of their life. It also helps you accept your weaknesses.”

Without being immensely self-aware as a leader, you almost stand no chance of having sustained success both in the relationships with people and growth of the company.

3. FORGETTING THE PRINCIPLE OF QUALITY

Callaway Golf Company was founded by a man named Ely Reeves Callaway Jr. For years, when he ran the company, he consistently talked about the need for the company to be “pleasingly different, demonstrably better.”

In the years after his retirement, the company struggled to remember the principles of quality and its products took a major turn for the worse.

4. COMPROMISING YOUR VALUES

Values are simply a person’s principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgement of what’s important in life.

Without question, there will be times you will be tested in your career where you will be tested to either forget your values or push them aside for short-term gain.

As former president of Starbucks Coffee Company International Howard Behar said on the Follow My Lead podcast: “At the end of the day, values are all a company and a leader have. Without them, you are reduced to nothing.”

5. ALLOWING ENTITLEMENT IN THE CULTURE

Brad Stevens, the head coach of Boston Celtics, who is widely considered one of the best coaches in the sport said: “We’re building a culture of accountability, trust, and togetherness. Entitlement will not be tolerated.”

Think about what Stevens is saying. His players make millions of dollars and it doesn’t matter if you are his star player or the last guy on the bench, entitlement will not enter the Celtics culture.

If millionaires aren’t allowed to be entitled, then nobody should.

6. FORGETTING TO LOVE YOUR PEOPLE

When I say ‘love’ I don’t mean any kind of HR violation. Instead we define it as: “To contribute to someone’s long-term success and wellbeing.”

It’s imperative you don’t forget how important the opportunity you have to help develop and contribute to others’ success and wellbeing is.

It reminds me of the great Harvey Firestone (founder of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company) quote: “The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SCHOOLS
SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPART GOOD CHARACTER TRAITS

By WONG EE LING
wong@leaderonomics.com

It is one thing to sit and listen to your moral class teacher, but it's a completely different case to believe in the morals learnt and to put them into practice.

One of the main ways children learn is through play and experience. We learn to solve problems when life throws them at us; we learn self-control when we are provided monthly allowances and are forced to budget. It's safe to say that the best lessons we learn are often from the experiences we go through.

WHAT ARE LEAD CLUBS?
The Leaderonomics (LEAD) Clubs in schools aim to drive improvement in leadership and performance, which focus on character development and project management.

We developed a five-year curriculum based on the 49 character traits under Character First education, a curriculum approved by the Education Ministry to be used as a teaching tool during LEAD Club sessions.

The setting up of LEAD Clubs in schools, also approved by the Education Ministry in 2016, is part of the co-curricular activities where students meet for an hour, bi-weekly for 12 weeks, depending on the schools. In the course of the 12 weeks, besides learning about leadership traits, LEAD Clubs also provide a platform for the students to build communities of love by putting what they learn into practice and carrying out Making A Difference (M.A.D.) Projects. These projects enable students to think, plan and execute a plan for their own projects in their respective schools.

As a LEAD Club Coach myself, I have been part of the LEAD Club team for my alma mater, SMK Taman Desa, since it started in 2016. As our clubs grow, we are also relying on our trusted volunteers to partner with us on this journey. This year, I am looking forward to see the setting up of a LEAD Club in my alma mater, SMK Taman Desa. Being a prefect there in the past, I am thrilled to be returning to my old stomping grounds to impart leadership skills to my prefect successors.

One of the projects, conducted by one of the LEAD Clubs in Schools, is the Making a Difference (M.A.D.) Project we executed. It was a week-long bake sale that raised almost RM1,000 for the school. The money was channelled towards enhancing the landscaping in my school.

"Everyone played their part in the project and that made me feel like we were really making a difference in our school community as well as enhancing our personal growth."

After the students have accomplished their respective M.A.D. Projects, the clubs usually close the year with an annual LEAD Convention.

This is the time when all the schools come together to share on the annual M.A.D. Projects they had introduced.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

LEAD Clubs have grown to 23 across the Klang Valley. This number also includes two new regions: Penang and Johor.

We hope to grow to 40 LEAD Clubs by the end of this year and to have the opportunity to venture into more states. As our clubs grow, we are also relying on our trusted volunteers to partner with us on this journey. We currently have nine volunteers being trained as LEAD Club Coaches to be sent out to schools.

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When we asked Pauline Kok why she wanted to become a club coach and what she hoped to achieve, she said: "I am convinced in reaching out to the young ones through education. "A club coach can make contact and positively influence students which helps them to develop positive characters and life skills. "I hope to bring the students to another level of maturity, allowing them to improve the quality of their communication and interaction with others."

Joel Vergis shared on his experience going for a club meeting: "The experience was good. The kids are really smart, and mostly compliant to all that we had to present to them. "They are participative, and eager to learn more about leadership."

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

As a LEAD Club Coach myself, working with the Leaderonomics Youth team has given me the opportunity to impact youth in the secondary school setting. Students look forward to club meetings, as they enjoy experiential learning, and they learn better while playing games, too.

This year, I am looking forward to see the setting up of a LEAD Club in my alma mater, SMK Taman Desa. Being a prefect there in the past, I am thrilled to be returning to my old stomping grounds to impart leadership skills to my prefect successors.

One may wonder what kind of impact can be made in just a one-hour session. Will students be able to expend their energy during the session? Would students be able to expend their energy during the session? Would students be able to expend their energy during the session? Would students be able to expend their energy during the session?

"It is one thing to sit and listen to your Moral class teacher, but it's a completely different case to believe in the morals learnt and to put them into practice."

Does your school have a LEAD Club? Are you an active alumni? Partner with us to set up a LEAD Club today! Email youth@leaderonomics.com for more information.

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**EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING**

**THE GOLDEN TOOL TO HELP YOU TURN YOUR DREAMS INTO REALITY**

By BARBARA RUBIO

**HAT do Sir Richard Branson, Oprah Winfrey, Tony Robbins and many other successful leaders have in common? They all take time to set personal and professional goals to achieve the results they want.**

A great way to start a new year is by writing down the things that you purposefully set to accomplish during the previous year and determine what actions, skills and/or individuals helped you get there. Looking back at your successes will help you identify ongoing aims, discover unnoticed intentions and visualise a new you for the year ahead. If you have never made time to carefully craft a plan to help you achieve the goals and dreams you would like to realise, fret not. Here is a step-by-step guide to helping you transform the invisible into the visible.

**WRITE YOUR GOALS DOWN**

Writing down your goals will help you identify exactly what you want to achieve. It will make your goals concrete and allow you to review them at all times.

To ensure you are on top of your goals game, it is important to read your goals once or twice a day. You have to be fully committed to ensure all action is for the purpose of manifesting the results you want. Many people write vague goals on a piece of paper, put them away and never look back until the year ends (if they can find the paper!). Then they realise they have not achieved any of their goals and blame the goal-setting tool itself and not for their lack of responsibility towards acting on their dreams.

At work, we learn that goals should be SMART, i.e. for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

**ALLOW YOURSELF TO DREAM BIG**

Personal goals, however, needn’t be so realistic. Sometimes, the best motivation for drastic action and incredible results is being able to visualise something that is unrealistic. Branson said that most of the business ideas he later developed into highly successful businesses seemed ridiculous at the time. Nevertheless, he went ahead. Take this goal, for instance: “I will lose 50kg and enter a body building competition by November 2018.”

At first glance, this goal seems unrealistic because a person who needs to lose 50kg is likely extremely overweight, not used to doing physical activities and probably follows an unhealthy diet. Weight loss goals are amongst the most popular goals set by people all over the world. However, in the first quarter of 2018, clients who had set weight loss goals had achieved some progress.

**SHARE YOUR GOALS WITH OTHERS**

Involving family, friends or colleagues in your goals can help you stay motivated and on track.

You are also less likely to fall off the wagon easily, since your loved ones will help polish your skin and give you the proper nutrients. Being exposed to new and different environments and of developing more meaningful and strategic relationships with others.

**Celebrate your Progress**

You are one month into the year, you have been taking conscious action towards your dreams and you have achieved some progress. Perhaps you have lost 5kg and gone down one dress size or you have just closed a RM20,000 deal. Maybe you have completed your first four intermediate-level German language classes or you have started baking cupcakes in your free time and made enough money to pay a monthly membership to the gym.

All action is progress and it is worth celebrating. It will make you feel good about yourself and reinforce the idea that it is the small steps that make the big changes.

After you celebrate, read your original goal, revisit the action you have taken to achieve this progress and stay motivated to keep doing what you are doing until you get there!
By ZAID MOHAMAD
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If the many father’s Day wishes I saw on social media last year, there was one that really caught my attention. It was a simple poster with a very powerful message. It said:

“Every father should remember that one day his son will follow his example instead of his advice.” — Charles F. Kettering (1876-1958)

Based on a quick search, I learnt that Kettering was an inventor, engineer, businessman, and the holder of 1,866 patents. He was also a founder of Delco, and head of research at General Motors from 1920-1947.

These wise words still ring true today. Bapa borek, anak rintik is an old Malay proverb which correlates to ‘like father, like son’.

Both show the same thing – our children are keenly watching what we do, and not so much of what we say. This should not alarm us because it’s always easier for parents to dish out the do-as-I-say instructions, while many are not readily walking the talk.

Call it leadership by example or role modelling because if parents fail to do it, it will bring about a rollover impact to their kids.

CHECK OURSELVES FIRST

Before blaming anyone else, let’s take a look at our own behaviours when dealing with our kids:

Do we easily lose our temper when they are not behaving the way we want?

Will you remain patient when they didn’t bring home the expected academic results?

What about the times when we subconsciously badmouth others in front of our children?

All these negative examples can only mean one thing – no matter how hard we advise our kids to behave or to think highly of others, they are absolutely meaningless when we ourselves fail to demonstrate those behaviours.

It also means that we have to constantly be aware of our own behaviours because you are being role modelled by your children.

SELF-CONTROL AND COMMON COURTESY

And those moments are plenty. For example, when we reprimand them, avoid the urge to swear or curse. More importantly, avoid physical violence altogether. They may not react much at that time, but deep down, they are learning a lesson that it’s okay to lose control of our emotions when we are angry or upset.

Similarly, when on the road, let’s ensure that we check our attitude and behaviours.

CONCLUSION

That poster I came across was truly a great self-reminder for me to behave better and be in control of my actions and emotions. No doubt, as humans, we will lose it once in a while. But we must do our best not to let it happen in front of our children.

Otherwise, we risk wasting our parenting efforts and leave them with a lesson that it’s okay for them to misbehave because we (the parents) did it too.

Zaid Mohamad, a faculty trainer with Leaderonomics, is a certified parental coach and author of two best-selling books, Smart Parents, Brighter Kids and Smart Parents, Richer Kids. To get in touch with Zaid, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

The fear of failure is paralysing. On this week’s podcast, Leaderonomics Managing Editor Lydia Gomez, shares how teams and leaders should strive to embrace an environment which understands that not all projects will succeed, and that failures can – and should – be manageable and survivable. Listen here: bit.ly/safespacefailure

“\nWell, we all make mistakes, dear, so just put it behind you. We should regret our mistakes and learn from them, but never carry them forward into the future with us.” — L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Avonlea

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