WHY WE NEED MORE SERVANT LEADERS

SUFFERING FROM ‘COMPASSION FATIGUE’?

LEADERSHIP’S GREATEST PITFALL

Available in print every fortnight. We have two bonus pages in our digital copy this week! Download it at: bit.ly/ldrEmag
5 SIGNS OF BAD INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

1. OVERLOADED WITH EMOTIONS
   If you are one who gets frustrated and angry easily, i.e. one who lets emotions get in the way without conscious control, you are more likely seen as an impatient hothead.
   Emotional outbursts can be threatening to co-workers and can result in low productivity in a team setting. Learn how to cool it.
   The next time you feel like you are about to burst, try these:
   • Quickly excuse yourself, walk it off.
   • Calm yourself down by taking deep breaths.
   • Drink a cup of tea or coffee.
   • Be alone for the next 15 minutes.
   Changes are, you would have calmed down by then and able to think clearer by the time you resume your work.

2. LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE
   It’s normal to feel called out when you climb up the career ladder, or when given a big project to manage, or even replacing someone else’s role in a short notice.
   In this scenario, learn to believe in yourself because if you don’t, then no one will. Find out what is causing you to lack confidence and address this area of concern courageously.
   For example, if it’s the lack of training, speak to your superior or arrange a training session to improve what’s needed.

3. TOO QUICK TO QUIT
   If you are one who gives up easily during challenging times, you can expect not to go far. Organisations are always looking for people who are resilient through difficult times, giving their best and encouraging teammates to stay the course as well.

4. RELUCTANT TO COACH
   Those who are willing to help others in their career by sharing their knowledge and skills are seen as team players who can accelerate an organisation’s growth.
   If you are one who can’t coach or mentor your fellow teammates, or worse, reluctant to, then you are more likely to be perceived as a selfish person.
   Helping others through knowledge-exchange and providing feedback will not only accelerate their career growth, it will help enhance yours too.

5. REFUSE TO NETWORK
   If you don’t let people know how good you are at what you do, then no one ever gets to know you. If you don’t network well and connect with the right people, you will be the one losing out.
   Learn to speak about your achievements and skills with people of influence who can help you soar higher.
   When networking, you can practise:
   • Smiling
     People are more likely to warm up to someone who says ‘hello’ with a broad smile than those with serious, grumpy expressions.
   • Asking questions
     Build your credibility by asking questions to the group you are interacting with before barging in with an opinion.
   • Listening
     When asking questions, don’t forget that you need to listen to what they’re saying first! Mastering the art of listening with sincerity can help you build a lasting rapport.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS
   Many of us may have encountered similar situations in our day-to-day interactions, and are only aware of our shortcomings or unintentional behaviours after it happened.
   It’s never too late to learn the importance of interpersonal skills at work, so let’s try to change some of our bad habits. Together, let’s make workplaces a conducive place to thrive and grow as individual and corporate contributors.
WHAT'S UP IN SARAWAK?

SARAWAK CM Dato' Patinggi Abang Johari has a vision to transform Sarawak into a high-income state and digital powerhouse by 2030.

He has been working to lay down plans and initiatives to develop the state.

Here are some of the key initiatives:

1. DIGITAL ECONOMY
   - A mobile app, Sarawak Pay, was launched in Nov 15, 2017 to enable cashless payment. Users merely have to scan a QR code on a bill or as displayed by a retailer to make a transaction.
   - Pilot education labs for science, technology, engineering and mathematic (or STEM) in six schools, 10 competency courses and 10 short courses for technical and vocational education and training (or TVET) were carried out as part of the state’s intervening programme to produce a high quality human capital.
   - The Sarawak Multimedia Authority was established to spearhead and regulate the state’s digital economy initiatives. The Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation implements these initiatives.

2. TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
   - With a purpose to improve connectivity and reduce traffic congestion, light rail transit will be constructed across the state.
   - Dilapidated schools in Sarawak will undergo redevelopment.
   - Residents across the state can now have access to sufficient water through the Water Grid project. The project will commence in October.

3. FINANCE
   - The Development Bank of Sarawak was set up to provide the state with a new financial model that can finance strategic projects crucial to boosting the state’s economy.
   - Petros to be a player in the upstream development of the oil and gas industry.

4. EDUCATION
   - Scholarships will be given to 40 students per year to study medicine in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).
   - The increased revenue of timber will aid Yayasan Sarawak (The Sarawak Foundation) in providing more opportunities to students and therefore develop the state’s human capital.

This is not the end of the list. There is so much more being done to boost the state’s economy. Visit www.cm.sarawak.gov.my to find out more.

—Compiled by Prethiba Esvary

leadership is being brave

what i learnt from datuk patinggi abang johari!

by roshan thiran

A few weeks ago, I was in Kuching, Sarawak for the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Leadersonomics and the Leadership Institute of Sarawak Civil Service. It was led by the institute’s executive director Datu Dr Sabariah Putit – who is also the Deputy State Secretary (Performance and Service Delivery Transformation) – and chief operating officer Segaren Arumugam.

Sarawak Chief Minister Dato’ Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg was also present as a witness to our signing and it was my first time having the opportunity to connect with him and hear him.

It was great to see him so passionate about developing Sarawakians and enabling them to become great leaders through our content and partnership, as he was also keen to see his people grow into digital leaders.

Not only was Abang Johari a leader with clarity of vision, he also provided me with many insightful words of wisdom on what it meant to be a leader. I thought I should share some of his leadership nuggets.

1. LEADERS MUST TAKE RISKS
   Abang Johari truly believes that great leaders can only achieve greatness if they take risk. It is part of a leader’s responsibility. If you are afraid of taking risks and just want to maintain status quo, you are not a true leader.

   He shared how he took a risk to set up Sarawak’s very own petroleum company, Petroleum Sarawak Bhd (Petros).

   “It’s not easy to announce Petros due to factors such as its status and the laws that are involved.

   “But I dare to take the risk because I believe that we have the legal argument in our favour, and I think we are on the right track because we feel that our legal position is very clear in the Constitution and it is the supreme law of the federation,” he stated during his speech at the Leadership Institute’s Appreciation Night dinner prior to our MOU signing ceremony.

   A good definition of risk-taking is as follows. “Undertaking a task in which there is a lack of certainty or a fear of failure.” At the heart of it, the key issue why people fail to take risk is fear – fear of failure, fear of looking foolish, fear of not accomplishing what we set out to do and fear of repercussions.

   Fear cripples risk-taking. A risk-taking leader confronts these fears and are courageous enough to do move forward.

American author Seth Godin once quoted, “Playing it safe and not taking a risk is probably the most dangerous thing you could do in today’s rapidly changing and highly competitive business environment.”

Abang Johari takes calculated risks, just like other great leaders do. They weigh in all matters, and are courageous enough to do the right thing – even though the stakes may be high. To be a leader means being brave.

2. LEADERS PROTECT
   What is the right thing to do when you are a leader?

   Abang Johari believes that leaders must put others before themselves. This means putting the interest of those you lead above your own.

   When he first took office as chief minister, he pledged he would do his best to protect Sarawak and Sarawakians. One key area he needed to put right was to help put Sarawak on the global digital map.

   How does a leader know what are right things that need to be done for others? The answer is obvious as you study great leaders.

   Leaders always ask questions. They always probe. By asking questions like “What should our shared vision be?”, “What are our gaps?”, “What is holding us back?”, “What are the challenges confronting us from greatness?”, we start to understand what needs to be done.

   Great leaders don’t just talk about what needs to be corrected, they go about driving change.

3. LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT CHANGE
   Most great leaders are defined by how they changed the world around them. Mahatma Gandhi changed India, while Steve Jobs changed the music and telecommunications industries.

   Leadership is always about driving positive change.

   Abang Johari echoes similar sentiments. He declared: “I believe I have that responsibility in me and this is what leadership is all about. We must be daring enough to bring changes to ourselves and the country.”

   By asking the right questions, he knew building a digital economy in Sarawak was crucial, saying, “Sarawak needs to move away from convention-al economy and embrace digital transformation, or risk being left behind.”

   The key reason for doing so was that “in Sarawak, where youths comprise about 60% of the population, the shift towards a digital economy would give opportunities to Internet-literate young people to be actively involved in the digitisation of the economy.”

4. LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT CLARITY
   Leadership is about clarity of vision. It is about knowing how far you are from your vision and then ensuring you drive the change needed to make that vision a reality.

   Are you a leader? And what is a clear vision? Are you asking enough questions?

   Are you a brave leader, willing to take risks to bring about a better society or organisation? Are you willing to work hard to make that change a reality?

   Be a leader!
SERVANT LEADERSHIP
THE WORLD’S MISSING PIECE?

By JOHN MOI
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Servant leadership is simply applying leadership principles by serving others before self. It is a leadership practice that achieves results for their organisations by giving priority to the needs of their counterparts and those they serve.

The modern servant leadership movement was launched by Robert K. Greenleaf in his 1970 essay, The Servant as Leader whereby he popularised the terms “servant-leader” and “servant leadership”. Greenleaf expanded on this concept by publishing additional essays on the various attributes of servant leadership.

After his passing in 1990, the concept was further advocated by other thought leaders and experts such as William W George (also widely known as Bill George), James A Autry, Kenneth Hartley Blanchard, James C Hunter, George SanFacon and Larry Spears.

Interestingly, the Royal Military College (Malaysik Tentera Diraja) in Malaysia carries the motto, “Serve to Lead” (Berkhidmat Memimpin) way back in its founding year of 1952!

QUALITIES OF BEING A SERVANT LEADER
Spears, who was once the “chief steward” of the Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership for more than 17 years, described the following 10 characteristics of servant leaders, plus my personal perspectives on each quality.

1. Listening
Servant leaders listen to the people. They exist to serve the flock, not themselves. It works to have excellent listening skills; otherwise, they might find themselves ousted from leadership.

2. Empathy
Sympathy is not good enough for servant leaders. They need to feel more and do more for the followers who empowered them. Otherwise, why lead?

3. Healing
Effective servant leaders can heal relationships; resolve unfavourable situations by being a peacemaker and mend rifts that arise from human conflicts. They can help heal a nation by marshalling the resources against tyranny.

4. Awareness
Servant leaders need to know themselves and the people they lead. They need to be aware that their actions and words can make or break the community. Such leaders strive towards universal values and principles that benefit humankind.

5. Persuasion
Good servant leaders will persuade and not manipulate their followers. They will persuade the congregation by logical reasoning and not by the “don’t ask any questions” statement!

6. Conceptualisation
Must have the insight to look at the big picture and translate it into smaller chunks. Helpful skills include the short, medium and long-term strategic implementation that will meet the common objective(s) of the team.

7. Foresight
Great servant leaders will need to have foresight to learn from the past; looking at the big picture and translate it into smaller chunks. Helpful skills include the short, medium and long-term strategic implementation that will meet the common objective(s) of the team.

8. Stewardship
Servant leaders understand that people’s lives and wellbeing are entrusted to them. Wrongful decisions will betray their trust and destroy them. Even nations are subjected to fall by blatant abuse of stewardship at the highest level.

9. Commitment to the growth of others
Committed servant leaders will grow their followers by setting good leadership examples, helping and nurturing the followers regardless of race, religion or creed. They understand and implement the concepts of “unity in diversity” and we are in the same boat” effectively.

10. Building community
Building servant leaders must endeavour to build communities of love and servanthood despite the multicultural and multiracial background of the people being led. In the near future, we will see more universal values being adopted to build such communities. Interfaith dialogues will be encouraged and inter racial partnerships will enhance community-building.

MODERN PERSPECTIVES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP
Greenleaf, in his essay, has this to say about the servant leader: “The servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first the followers and believes that leading is a by-product of serving, whereas the leader-first believes that one is called to lead by being served and supported by followers.”

The cynical view is that unless the leaders take the initiative to serve the followers, the followers will not listen to the leaders who have not proven themselves by serving the followers first. Such are the expectations in this enlightened age!

MODELS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP
It can be said that some, if not most, leaders see servant leadership as an esoteric philosophy of leadership supported by specific aspects and practices.

Servant leaders are said to be serving stewards of their organisation’s resources – be it physical, financial or humanly speaking

By Kent M Keith, the former chief executive officer of the Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership and the author of The Case for Servant Leadership stated that servant leadership is practical, ethical and meaningful.

He further identifies seven key principles of servant leadership:

- Self-awareness
- Listening
- Changing the pyramid
- Developing your colleagues
- Coaching not controlling
- Unleashing the energy and intelligence of others
- Foresight

IN CONCLUSION
Servant leadership is best summed up by its emphasis on collaboration, trust, empathy and the ethical use of power and leadership.

Servant leadership is all about making the conscious decision to serve by leading others (followers), enhance the growth of individuals, and for the servant leaders themselves in organisations to improve teamwork.

In today’s world of self-centred talkers and tremendous turmoil, the main question on leadership is: Do the present global leaders have what it takes to be servant leaders?
WHY ASEAN COMPANIES NEED TO BE BETTER STORYTELLERS

By GOPI GANESALINGAM

WHEN national agency, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), previously known as Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC), was established in 1996, the aim was to support the development of Malaysian-based technology companies—MOC (Multimedia Super Corridor) Malaysia status companies. Over the years, the number of these MOC-status companies has grown to more than 2,500.

Many of these companies are already market leaders here, and some are ready to take the next step: to succeed in the ASEAN market. To help materialise their expansion efforts, MDEC recently launched the Global Accelerator and Innovation Acceleration (GAIN) programme. We at MDEC saw the potential of these companies to be global players, even to become global ions: and ASEAN was envisioned as the next major stride forward.

WHY MALAYSIA?

Why is Malaysia a fertile ground for emerging companies? Firstly, Malaysia is centrally-located, and for companies based here, many markets are within easy reach. We have gained a deep understanding of buyer behaviour and market dynamics.

Also, Malaysia – with a population of over 30 million – limits the growth potential of any business, especially a technology one.

This fosters a creative tension, a drive to answer the strategic challenge: How does a company stand out from the rest? During the infancy stage, most companies start by selling to customers that they can connect by a sharp focus on competencies, pricing, and delivery. However, as every chapter of the story demands answering the overpowering need to stand out from the crowd. This will always remain a challenge, of course, for most companies throughout the entire lifecycle of the company: the pressure to adapt.

But just to stop the story here: Consider that most companies will only look into this issue when they achieve a certain scale, a certain milestone along their growth journey.

Can you be differentiated by your products and services? Or is there something else?

Looking at a sampling of the successful local technology companies such as iPay88, Fusionex International, N2N Connect, iFly, Sedania Innovators, Letgo, Copaide and Mindvalley, I would say that only a handful have engaged the power of storytelling.

Having worked at several multinational companies such as Lucent, American Express, Telstra, and others, I have had first-hand experience delving into the sales process from the inside out. The truth, the harsh reality lies within. It has become clear to me that the truly successful companies have been able to craft powerful strategic stories to explain their relevance.

Yes, we need to have the right product–value mix, but the deal is definitely lost if our story lacks meat, lacks structure, and misses telling unique selling points.

WHY WORKS STORY?

Stories are powerful differentiators, and for this reason they have always appealed to the human psyche. The first clear stories that remain visible for humankind are probably the Paleolithic cave paintings in Lascaux, France, which are estimated to be 20,000 years old. For centuries our ancestors were captured by stories, and long before the written word, history was passed down verbally through the generations in the form of stories. It was paintings, visual work and the spoken word that captivated our imaginations.

Interestingly, fast forward to the modern era, it was noted American linguist, Noam Chomsky, who in the 1960s said that we are all born with an innate language.

Chomsky went on to say that the primary purpose of language was for thought – not communication! Yet leaders and sales people continue to throw facts and figures at us.

I am not saying that these are not important, but they need to be placed within the engaging, compelling structure that we call an overarching story.

This is something that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) do very well. Talk to any successful NGO and they will explain the reason for their existence without using facts and figures.

Companies, possibly influenced by finance and product specialists, seem to jump straight into why the product is better or cheaper, and the better ones are able to sell the value proposition.

It seems we have deliberately ignored the wisdom of generations to get into a “you can never win” race to prove our product is better than competitive offerings.

Companies that are not able to climb out of this abyss will find it difficult to survive in an increasingly competitive and connected world.

It is already tough to win the ‘features and benefits’ war when you are selling in front of a prospect, and even more impossible when you are not.

And in a competitive world, this is the challenge faced by companies in ASEAN.

STRATEGIC STORYTELLING

There are of course notable exceptions; AirAsia has a great story, represented by its famous tagline, “Now Everyone Can Fly.”

Nadim Anwar Makarim, founder and chief executive officer of Go-Jek, Indonesia’s first billion-dollar technology start-up, is a powerful storyteller and is propelling the company into becoming an Indonesian logistics and payment superstar.

Grab is following suit. The ASEAN market will be open an one, which means that small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need to start thinking about how they are going to compete, not just within the region but against global players.

Alibaba, through Lazada, has already disrupted local e-commerce players, coming in ahead of Amazon.

Alipay and WeChat Pay have already hit our shores.

For SMEs and technology companies, the writing is on the wall. Learn to compete, or face extinction.

This is why storytelling skills are critical, and, for me, an area where ASEAN companies have not mastered.

Let’s take a look at a couple of extraordinary storytellers from the technology world.

Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs’ attention to detail in presenting Apple products is legendary.

In the movie Jobs, you can see the time and effort that go into his presentation – it’s not a matter of running through a few slides with a narrative.

What he says, how he says it, where he stands and sits, how he unvels the product’s functionality – it is all carefully crafted within an overarching story so that he captivates, entertains and most importantly, speaks to each and every one in a way that touches their emotional core.

Why did he do this? Was it his passion or obsession with detail? Perhaps.

But I think he truly understood how important these stories are to the human psyche.

And by casting the story correctly, he opened the door for his sales and marketing people to follow up with the features and benefits pitch.

That’s the art of strategic storytelling.

Simon Sinek, in his most watched video on “The Golden Circle” says that by answering the why question, you can reach into the limbic system, or the “emotional brain.”

We know from biology that it is buried within the cerebrum and is possibly the oldest part of our brain.

The limbic system doesn’t control language, reasoning, coordination, etc., all of which are controlled by the cerebrum.

But because it is the repository of emotions and memories, it can drive actions more effectively than rational thought.

Jobs and others have perhaps intuitively understood this and used stories to set the course of their companies apart from the pack.

Elon Musk

Elon Musk, entrepreneur and leader extraordinary, a man I truly admire and respect, is another example of a great strategic storyteller.

He announced the Tesla Roadster in 2004 and using the chassis and engineering strength of Lotus Engineering, he delivered the first unit four years later.

The cars were sold based on their features and performance.

Potential buyers were told about zero-emissions, luggage space, range per charge, etc.

When presenting his electric car, Musk used the words, “cool, great design and acceleration.”

It was a simple but powerful message targeted at the limbic system.

As a result, Tesla’s Model-S became the bestselling electric vehicle in the United States in 2016 and 2017.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

To end on an important note: Why is storytelling so important to ASEAN technology companies?

I’ve already talked about the competitive environment these companies face.

Instead of pushing more and more information out, we need to learn the art of storytelling.

The emotional engagement that I mentioned earlier is vital to business performance.

Technology today has been democratised, and it has deepened our connectivity and our reach to our customers, competitors, and just about every single person on the planet.

So, let us share the stories of our business propositions, and tell the stories of our entrepreneurial journey globally.

ASEAN companies can stand tall with other global players; we just need to tell our compelling stories!
Bromances and Biting

particularly in Asia, is attractive
with increasing importance, is

In the midst of conflict or large-scale change - an employee's assumptions or expectations. A leader who fails to begin with the end in mind may be more focused on the short-term, or to view their careers as

partly with the leadership's unrealistically high expectations. As a result, some employees may become frustrated, disengaged, and even disloyal to the organization. This can lead to a loss of motivation, decreased productivity, and increased turnover.

In more extreme instances, the leaders who are attempting to implement a servant leadership approach may instead lead to a high degree of burnout or compassion fatigue among their followers.

On the other hand, if leaders strive to maintain balance between the two styles, they can achieve a more sustainable and effective approach to leadership.

Finally, it is important to note that servant leadership is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Different organizations and situations may require different approaches, and it is essential to customize leadership styles to fit the unique needs and circumstances of each context.

In summary, while servant leadership can be an effective approach to leadership, it is crucial to balance it with other styles of leadership and to adapt it to the specific needs and contexts of each organization. By doing so, leaders can foster a positive and inspiring work environment, engage their teams, and achieve organizational success.

LOVE HURTS WHEN YOU SERVE AND GIVE UNTIL YOU BURN

BY DR. EUGENE TEO
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TODAY

Case 2: From beneficent to 'selfish' Bruce

Bruce owns a small market research company, where he employs about 20 people at any one time. As a manager, Bruce is a friend of his staff and celebrates their achievements, showing care for them physically and emotionally.

In fact, it is the style of leadership that Bruce employs and the values he embodies that make his workplace feel like a family.

In Bruce’s case, a servant leader who starts with focusing on relational roles, and then chooses to adopt a more directive style of leadership, may cause discomfort in the minds of his followers.

Servant leaders create the expectation that the leader's role is to serve the development needs of followers, to listen and engage with followers, and to provide opportunities for growth and development.

In conclusion, servant leadership is a powerful approach to leadership that can bring positive outcomes for both leaders and followers. By prioritizing the needs and well-being of others, leaders can foster a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration, and inspire their teams to achieve greater success and fulfillment.
The life we are living right now, the person we are and the things and people we have in our lives, are all the results of the decisions we made in the past.

Think about it. If you had made very different decisions in the past, wouldn’t you be living a very different life right now?

WE ARE THE PRODUCTS OF OUR DECISIONS

In fact, the decisions we make today and the days after will determine how our lives will turn out—20 years from now. The hard truth is that the day will surely arrive.

My question is: when that day arrives, where will you be in your life? Will you be living up to your own expectations and dreams?

Will you be truly happy about your life? Or, will you still be wandering around, seeking what you want and waiting for the right opportunity to turn things around.

THERE IS NO RIGHT MOMENT TO ACT

Ever so often, we come across stories of people who took years to get over their situation or to change a behaviour. However, if you think about it, what made them change is not the countless years they took; it’s usually the decision made in a single moment.

It’s the moment you told yourself that you couldn’t take it anymore, you couldn’t live your life like this anymore, you can’t be in this situation anymore, you couldn’t bear to see the broken pieces of your loved one’s hearts anymore.

That’s the moment you decided to change: that’s the moment when you decided to commit yourself to turn things around.

THERE IS NO RIGHT Opportunity TO COMMIT TO CHANGE

The hard truth is that the day will surely arrive. The days after will determine how our lives, are all the results of our decisions.

If you think about it, what made them change is not the countless years they took; it’s usually the decision made in a single moment.

It’s the moment you told yourself that you couldn’t take it anymore, you couldn’t live your life like this anymore, you can’t be in this situation anymore, you couldn’t bear to see the broken pieces of your loved one’s hearts anymore.

That’s the moment you decided to change: that’s the moment when you decided to commit yourself to turn things around.

For us to win the game of life, we must make conscious decisions that allow us to win one day at a time.

For us to win the game of life, we must make conscious decisions that allow us to win one day at a time.
WEN I was a student, I would often study for my exams during the train journeys on the way to taking them. Procrastination and I were the closest companions. I had an attitude of leisurely indifference towards my education. I did enough with what I had to get the grades I needed.

It was only after I landed my first proper job that I swiftly learnt the importance of keeping on top of things. Nowadays, I appear to be what organisational psychologist Professor Adam Grant calls a “procrastinator” – someone who strives to get their work done well in advance of the deadlines.

In recent years, the debate over the good and evil of procrastination has been fairly lively, with some arguing that procrastination has its benefits while others, like Professor Larry Smith of Canada’s University of Waterloo, detest procrastination in all its forms.

**Benefits of Procrastination**

In his study of original thinkers, Grant worked with some of his students to determine whether procrastinating had any benefits. In one experiment, some participants were asked to come up with business ideas on the spot, while others were assigned to procrastinate for 5–10 minutes before coming up with their ideas.

What the study found was that the “procrastinators” were 16% more creative than the non-procrastinators.

In his TED Talk, Grant suggests that when people are given something to think about, and they procrastinate for a time, they are able to incubate ideas and think of alternative options to a specific problem.

This works when an idea is presented prior to procrastinating – procrastination without priming doesn’t boost creativity on its own.

But if procrastination has its benefits, does it really deserve the bad press? Probably not – but we do.

The trouble with procrastinating is that, as with many perceived conveniences, most of us struggle with the part about moderation.

Even if we are able to procrastinate moderately, it’s usually without the deliberate intention of incubating ideas. In short, we put tasks off because we want to avoid tackling them.

**Pursue Your Passion Proactively**

When giving career advice, Smith might tell students that having a degree is no longer enough to carve out a great career (he points out “there are no ‘good’ careers” anymore).

“And you might say, ‘In that case, I’ll get two degrees and then I’ll be able to stand out’. Which might be a good idea if only every other student throughout the world didn’t have similar intentions.”

In his book, No Fears, No Excuses: What You Need To Do To Have A Great Career, Smith’s advice focuses on what action is needed to make the best use of our potential.

Part of his advice includes finding – and how to find – our passion.

A passion describes something that we can’t stop thinking about; a problem we’re so desperate to solve that it keeps us awake at night; a challenge we would give almost anything to overcome.

We need to find our passion, and we need to find it quickly, says Smith. Otherwise, we will end up feeling dissatisfied and our talents go wasted.

It’s a pretty brutal awakening in a culture that celebrates optimistic and energetic motivation (for the antithesis of Smith’s style, think Anthony Robbins).

But Smith has a point – in much of what we do, there’s a sore lack of urgency and organisation in terms of how we work towards whatever it is we truly desire.

**Don’t Wait Too Long to Start**

I remember giving a talk to some first-year journalism students a few years ago and asking them, “Who here would like to have a great career in media?”

Unsurprisingly, most students’ hands shot up. “Great,” I replied, buoyed by their enthusiasm, “and who here has started to reach out to professionals in their fields of interest?”

No hands.

“OK then, how many of you have begun to network or talk to your lecturers about possible opportunities for work experience?”

No hands.

To hold high expectations of first-year students is, you might argue, somewhat harsh. However, when I graduated in 2005, there were around 70,000 students who had the same qualification.

In three or four short years, that’s a lot of new people to compete with – not counting those who will graduate in the following years, and all those who have graduated over the years.

Most of us will have something in mind that we want to achieve, whether it be a goal set in the near future or establishing some sort of legacy that will continue to be of service to others long after we’ve moved on.

But anything worth achieving can only come from the effort, commitment and dedication that we’re willing to put in.

We don’t have forever to accomplish our goals, and others aren’t going to sit around waiting for us to move. If they spot the same opportunity we have our eyes on, of course they’re going to jump at the chance of making it their success, and why shouldn’t they?

**Productive Procrastination**

“Procrastination is the thief of time, collar him.” – Charles Dickens

While procrastination can be useful to those who are mindful to use it wisely for the rest of us it can be the most corrosive of forces, as we end up with so much time unused, that could have been put towards fruitful endeavours.

Avoiding procrastination doesn’t mean that we should work until we drop, but it does mean utilising our time in a way that’s productive according to our needs, and fulfilling according to our desires.

By making more use of the time we have – and being respectful of the fact that our time is finite – we’ll be able to get more done and be able to rest satisfied in knowing that we’ve worked productively towards the goals that matter the most to us.
**THE CELEBRATION MINDSET**

**TURN ON YOUR ‘GPS’ FOR A BETTER YOU**

By SCOTT FRIEDMAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

"Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning to dance in the rain." — Vivian Greene

YOU already have it! The innate desire to celebrate and be celebrated, in fact, our brains are hard-wired to be magnetically drawn towards a “reward” state, or a state ripe for celebration.

With a little “recalibration” and open reception we can learn to access and enjoy a better state of mind and life.

**EMBRACE THE ‘CELEBRATION MINDSET’**

What can we celebrate?

Milestones. Mondays, one less cup of coffee today, failures, faults, holidays, achievements, finding your keys… and that is just the beginning. Failures can and should be celebrated!

Celebration is about acknowledging all that is good in your life. Even what may appear to be a disaster can be "recalibrated" if we focus on the gifts to be discovered and lessons to be learned.

**HOW CAN WE CELEBRATE?**

Imagine the last great day you had. Everything was going your way, good news flooded in, you were just happy!

Are you happy every day? Why not? You could be – just you need to turn on your "GPS".

In a survey, we asked, "What is essential in making a celebration successful?" Time and again, three words were mentioned: Gratitude, Play, and Surprise. G-P-S!

Let’s start with simple definitions for this context:

**Gratitude:** Appreciation for all the good things we have in our life.

**Play:** Having fun, living in the moment, staying open, curious and playful.

**Surprise:** Including the element of the unexpected. Let’s explore further.

1. **Gratitude**

Every morning ask yourself this question: What am I grateful for today? If you can’t think of anything, check the obituary section of the newspaper. If your name is not there, that’s your "something to be grateful for".

Food on the table, close relationships, health, a job, security, the air you breathe, a sunset, love in your heart – celebrate yourself and your many blessings!

Have a Post-It Party! Write down as many nice things as you can about the person or team you’re celebrating and start posting.

Post it on a computer monitor, a filing cabinet, a map on the wall, a family photo, or anywhere else in the unsuspecting recipient’s space.

When you practise being thankful, you attract more of that which you appreciate into your life.

Life coach Anthony Robbins puts it this way, "When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears."

2. **Play**

A great way to incorporate play is to create humour rituals in the workplace.

I know – you’re busy and don’t have a lot of time to waste. But I also know that if you’re too busy to play, you’re just too busy.

A quick "play" break will pay off in greater creativity and productivity. How to set the stage? Some companies will go out on a limb to bring this philosophy to life.

Jolene Selby tells us that the management of a government agency in Washington DC (WA) was determined to bring back a child-like state in their employees with “Get in touch with your inner-child Day”.

Each year on this day, all employees are encouraged to wear their pyjamas to work – appropriate ones, that is. The day starts with Captain Crunch and Cocoa Puffs. Cartoons run continuously in the break room, where anyone can stop by and tap into his/her inner child.

Candy and kids’ snacks are available throughout the day. Afternoon breaks include games such as “Pin the Tail on the Donkey”, sing-alongs and pillow fights inspire adults to let go of worries and stresses.

This leads to creative brainstorming sessions, looking through the eyes of a child. It’s amazing the amount of good ideas a team can produce when inhibitions are gone.

Some companies take it even one step further. Explore Consulting in Bellevue, Washington has a Nerf gun shooting range, and Google headquarters in San Francisco, California has a built-in slide.

Employees there have no excuse not to play. Fast-growing businesses have found that it’s not just the kids who are having fun, creativity and productivity are up when adults can embrace the inner child.

A case in point. Guests booking the Royal Plaza online are asked if they are celebrating something special. One couple wrote that they were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

The customer relations team tracked down their daughter, got a wonderful photo from their wedding, used Photoshop to improve the picture quality and gave it an attractive frame.

When the couple arrived, Huang invited them up to the Club Lounge together with the general manager, Patrick Fie, and the customer relations team.

There, they sang “Happy Anniversary" and presented the framed photo to the astonished and tear-eyed couple.

4. **Surprise**

Surprise is invigorating! Odette Huang, an accomplished hotelier for leading hotels in Asia, excels at surprising both employees and customers.

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KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM

Can you feel that celebration mindset taking hold yet? Good. Then you have officially turned on your GPS.

Now, how do we keep it running? Start by making it a commitment to face each moment of the day with as much gratitude, playfulness and surprise as you can muster.

Your GPS will help you embrace the positive emotions of curiosity, spontaneity, passion, joy and love for all you do.

Remember, each of us has a choice as we look at things. We can moan in the rain, or we can be thankful for the gift of moisture and carry a bright yellow, polka-dot umbrella.

Practise gratitude, and you will forever enrich your life.

When you operate with your GPS turned on, something good is bound to happen.

Give yourself a turbo boost to unprecedented levels of well-being, productivity, and success… one celebration at a time. ***

Life can make you bitter, or it can make you better. Choose better – choose GPS. And let’s keep the celebration going!

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Proceeds from the event will be donated to NGOs in Malaysia.
LEADERSHIP’S BIGGEST PITFALLS

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF SELF-IMPORTANCE

By DAN ROCKWELL
editor@leaderonomics.com

“Self-importance is the biggest danger in leadership.”

SELF-IMPORTANCE is behind most of the foolish things leaders do. It keeps leaders ignorant and isolated. It blinds you to your weaknesses and distorts your view of strength in others. Even insecurity is a symptom of self-importance.

SELF-IMPORTANT LEADERS...
1. Live with a sense of under-appreciation. Others don’t fully appreciate the splendour of self-important leaders.
2. Love to be noticed and need acknowledgement.
3. Expect agreement. Self-important leaders feel offended when challenged. Self-important leaders always have the answer.
4. Idolise the trappings of power. Corner offices, executive limousines, and being rushed to the head of the line seduce leaders to look down on the little people.
5. Support weak team members who aren’t a threat but compete with competent colleagues. How do you feel when colleagues receive praise but you don’t?
6. Work to advance themselves even if it disadvantages the team.
7. Bristle at being under authority.

Qualified boards are enemies to self-important leaders.

7 SUGGESTIONS TO DEAL WITH SELF-IMPORTANCE
1. Be important enough to make others important. To make a difference in the world, you must believe you have something to offer. But remember, you only have two or three remarkable qualities. Everything else you have is average or below average.
3. Stop comparing yourself with others. Everyone loses the game of “who has the most toys”.
4. Show up to serve.
5. Admire everyone on the team. Reflect on people’s strengths more frequently than you ruminate on their weaknesses.
6. Realise leaders are nothing without the people they serve.
7. Acknowledge the temptation of self-importance.

What other symptoms of self-importance do you see in leaders? In what other ways might leaders overcome some self-importance?

Dan Rockwell is a coach and 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.

When most of us try to help someone, we often get seduced into focusing on the things that need to be fixed, like a person’s weaknesses. In the process, we invoke the Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA) and the body’s stress reaction. Do we then coach with compassion or out of compliance? Check out this thought-provoking article on leaderonomics.com here: bit.ly/RBcoaching.

Studies show that socially intelligent leaders do more than just make people happier at work. In a survey of employees at 700 companies, the majority said that a supportive boss mattered more than how much money they earned. Check out this article here: bit.ly/DGintelligentleader

One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served.
— Gordon B. Hinckley

For other great leadership insights, including those by John Maxwell, visit www.leaderonomics.com. If you missed any of our past issues, go to www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for FREE!

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Leadersonomics faculty Bharat Avalani shares the leadership legacy of T Thomas, former chairman of Hindustan Unilever Limited, and the insights gained from his life. Read the article here: bit.ly/TTdoinggood

Leaderonomics finance and HR leader Laura Yee explains the importance of mentoring and shares a few of her own experiences in being a mentor and being mentored. Listen here: bit.ly/RVmentoring
By ALISON HILL
editor@leaderonomics.com

Do you work with people? Okay, that sounds like a crazy question because I’m sure the answer is yes. Your role is undoubtedly reliant on your ability to connect with and influence others.

It's therefore inevitable that there may be times you will have to have tough conversations at work.

The workplace dynamics dictates that, on occasion, there will be differences in opinions, behaviours that come out of left field, and heightened emotions – all of which require conversations that aren't easy but necessary, to take place.

For leaders and organisations looking to build strong workplace cultures, it is necessary to invest in improving the skill of achieving results from these inevitably tough conversations.

Workplaces of the future will be seeking, now more than ever, individuals who have the skills to carry out these tough conversations.

So, how do you handle tough conversations?

IDENTIFY WHAT ‘TOUGH’ MEANS TO YOU

Firstly, it's important to know which conversations are considered tough for you. The style of conversation that is deemed 'tough' is different for everyone.

For some, the tough conversation is anything that causes you to question your role or to perform in a way that you are not used to. For others, it might be Management of Risk, a process that requires you to articulate your interdepartmental need.

For some, the tough conversation is considered to be when you have to address issues such as poor performance, which require conversations that aren't easy but necessary, to take place.

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Or take the example of a situation where you are trying to address a conflict that has been going on for some time.

Being clear on what conversations are tough for you will help to hone your skills.

GO PREPARED

Having a successful tough conversation starts before you even enter the room. Walking into a situation filled with heightened emotions, unprepared, is dangerous.

Alternatively, turning up to a conversation feeling centred, aware of why the conversation is important, and with enough time to talk through issues gives a stronger platform for the conversation to go well.

As you step into the conversation, recognise that you may not feel completely comfortable or confident. Know that it’s okay.

These conversations are tough because you care about the person and about the outcome, but you can centre emotions to be able to talk through the issues.

USE BEHAVIOUR-BASED LANGUAGE

As you begin the conversation, repeat this maxim to yourself: there are no difficult people, there are only difficult behaviours that can be changed.

During the conversation, focus on specific behaviours rather than generalisations. The conversational waters are often muddied by 'traits' that could mean different things to different people.

For instance, ‘courtesy’ could mean greeting with a smile and a nod to one party, but it could incite visions of firm handshakes to another.

Behavioural change – which is so often the aim of tough conversations – relies on a shared understanding of what specifically needs to be changed.

Both parties need clarity on what new behaviours are required moving ahead.

USE A VISUAL MEDIUM

Where you direct the conversation has an impact on how personally the other party takes the information.

The old adage, "tell 'em to their face," will result in defensiveness very quickly, especially if it’s a heated issue. Instead, direct the conversation to a visual medium.

It could be a whiteboard or a report – using a visual medium allows you to depersonalise the conversation. Even having a walk-and-talk meeting allows you to direct the conversation to the path in front of you.

FINALLY, BE COURAGEOUS

In the human resources world 'tough conversations' might be business-as-usual, but the fact remains that having these difficult conversations takes courage.

Tackling the tough stuff is an act of bravery based on deliberate decisions that require careful planning.

Remember to give yourself a break, and not to beat yourself up even if the conversation did not go as well as you’d hoped.

Instead, take a moment to reflect and think about how you can better prepare for next time.

Because, even if it wasn’t your first conversation, it’s very unlikely to be your last.
Although the principles of servant leadership have been a timeless ideal, the modern understanding of this term was first pioneered by Robert K. Greenleaf back in the 1970s.

Robert K. Greenleaf, the man known for coining the concept of “servant leadership”, had spent years working for telecommunication companies in Arizona, and later for a publishing company in Texas. He arrived at the concept of servant leadership style after interacting with many organizational leaders from a wide variety of fields, from local small-town businesses to national and international corporations.

In his book ‘The Servant-Leader’, Greenleaf defined servant leadership as “a character trait or set of behaviors for which leaders exhibit a genuine desire to understand other people’s needs and problems and to work out realistic solutions. The focus is on others rather than on self.”

Greenleaf also believed that the best leaders serve others, and not about leaders who lead by example and are self-absorbed. By focusing on meeting the needs of others, a leader can create a positive team and family spirit.

Greenleaf’s concept of servant leadership has since been adopted by many organizations around the world, and has become a widely recognized and respected leadership style.

**The Practice of Servant Leadership**

The practice of servant leadership is about putting others before oneself. It is about understanding the needs of different stakeholders, and working towards their success.

In this respect, Gandhi was a man who led by example. As a servant leader, his sense of compassion and empathy connected him to people of all backgrounds.

In his early days, Gandhi devoted much of his effort towards a self-governing democratic India. He led peaceful protests against the British colonial rule, and was eventually imprisoned multiple times. His goal was to bring about independence in a way that minimizes the suffering of his people, while allowing them to preserve their culture and heritage.

When the woman called Zappos to inquire about the return policy, she was told that the company represents what had happened, and Zappos would arrange for a new product to be sent to her in order to offer her their best service.

The Bottom Line

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