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How should the media portray women? Shouldn’t the media’s power be harnessed towards changing society’s perception of women and in doing so, must be sensitive enough to strike that balance of portraying women in more diversified roles and capacities? Read our thought-provoking article on Leaderonomics.com. Go to bit.ly/leaderonomics

POWER AND CULTURE AT PLAY

The problem found a name for itself. So, what is it about sexual harassment (SH) that has dominated conversations today?

Much has to do with why it has been ignored, and if there is a permanent solution. It also has to do with power and culture where sexual perversion and sexism are allowed to thrive.

Two common themes have developed for SH.

1. Power dynamics in institutions

In Silicon Valley for example, this is a big challenge. It is a location where technology, talent and tension thrive. It’s a place where chauvinism seems to be the culture. It inhibits victims from speaking up. Those who have looked the other way especially if the perpetrator is some one rich, powerful and talented.

Victims are often young and in need of economic support, and the fear of reprisal prevents them from speaking up.

2. Who should we blame?

When we look deeper, the HR profession was the first to take the big hit. This was most evident in Fowler’s case. Liane Hornsey, the new chief HR officer at Uber received a lot of criticisms and the support of Arianna Huffington who is also on Uber’s board.

So, with months of media frenzy on the topic of SH, how should individuals and organisations move on from here? The Time magazine Persons of the Year 2017 – The Silence Breakers brought together a bunch of strange bedfellows. Why did it create so much solidarity in such a short time? Have the complaints gone too far?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In the 1980s, when I was an employee of a leading Asian airline, a couple of us – employees who were working on ground and flying – happened to have a chat on the nature in which our pre-employment medical check-up was done.

We realised that when we were examined for “fit for employment” by a male doctor, he touched our breasts and examined us in the absence of a nurse or hospital assistant.

We didn’t have a label for our problem then. Today, we could have probably sued the clinic and our organisation for not protecting us.

My then air stewardess colleague also affirmed that she once went in for a common cold but was told to strip down to nothing. So, the problem is systemic and we young ladies were at an advantage of this experience and conversation bothered me for many years. It was only when I became a HR head later in my life that I knew I had the power to speak up and eventually do something about it.

Back then, jobs were scarce, and many young girls were vying for a career in the airline. You would see hundreds of them queueing up at hotel lobbies for interviews to join an airline.

Our elders also didn’t guide us much to speak up against the medical profession. We were compliant.

HR PROFESSIONALS CAN TAKE THE LEAD

When Fowler’s story broke, I had a couple of calls from non-HR professionals and was in chatrooms where the HR profession was beaten up. Badly.

Why didn’t we do something? Why have we failed to protect women in the workplace? Are we here to protect the company or the employee? So, here’s my take.

1. Expansion of women’s influence in HR

Traditionally, HR jobs have been male-dominated. Women’s domination of HR only escalated in the 1990s when HR services grew in demand especially with outsourcing and offshoring.

To be very good in designing HR policies and advocating them to the senior leaders, you would need to have worked for large multinational companies or government-linked companies that subscribe to forward-thinking HR practices.

You would also need to be exposed to good practices and have a very strong educational foundation. Introducing policies would be both top-down and bottom-up approaches and often, we are impacted by regulatory changes or pressures from external environments.

Change is needed to stay sustainable and to remain competitive in the eyes of a dynamic workforce.

You would also need to be a company that promotes diversity and inclusion (D&I) and equal employment opportunities (EEO). This is a new ‘term’ in some of our organisations.

Those who have not worked in such an environment would not know how to initiate such a conversation, write and advocate such policies. And peers are hard to influence. They are busy doing other things.

I see young HR managers struggling and the journey is lonely as they are often expected to fight many battles on the HR front – people attraction, retention, business growth – while trying to keep everyone ‘happy.’

McKinsey Global Survey 2015 indicated that the presence of women in the C-suites and boards was lacking and had a long way to go.

HR has been struggling to get a voice in the boardroom for many years. It was Dave Ulrich and his book ‘HR Champions’ in 1996 that began to bring HR back to its respectable place.

2. Clarity and ownership

Organisations that want to start looking at EEO and D&I must know where to park these initiatives in their leadership structure.

Uber’s HR head was not reporting directly to Kalanick. The previous head was not Hornsey but Renee Atwood, and she reported to Ryan Graves who was the head of operations.

Should this be an initiative under the CEO’s office, HR’s ambit, the chief culture officer, or the chief sustainability officer? Most local organisations have an Industrial Relations/Employee Relations department to promote and handle SH-related matters.

However, such issues might not be as rampant and as such, SH prevention initiatives might not garner the attention it warrants.

3. Availability of support and processes

Once this policy is rolled out, it should be reviewed.

Like the whistleblowing policy, there must be governance and processes built in place in the organisation, and how the organisation is keying on such reliance.

Actress Ashley Judd who was one of Weinstein’s complainants said, “There wasn’t a place to report such experiences.

4. Champion the cause

Will organisations champion SH at this time or will they be too embarrassed to handle it? Over in the United States and Asia, stories of SH continue to emerge daily.

Many are jumping on the bandwagon and running state-by-state programmes on how to manage and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

We also need to look deeper as SH happens in every sector, industry and function. From young gymnasts to hardworking nurses in the healthcare business, perpetrators have attempted to cause harm to them.

IN CONCLUSION

If you are new to this, just look for Eric H. Holder’s recommendations on how Uber can be a better place to work.

Most of all, leadership at the top and HR must find a new partnership, agree on its culture and find a moral compass to navigate this. Only then will SH receive the attention it warrants.

Like Liane, many of us in the C-suites and HR have our work cut out for us.
SUFFER NOW, ENJOY LATER?

THIS IS NOT THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

In order to make a real go of something, we need to taste small victories along the way to get a sense that what we’re doing is worth something and, just as important, heading in the right direction.

We really need to rid ourselves of the suffer-now-enjoy-later mindset – it’s unnecessary at best, and rarely leads to success.

To make a real go of something, we need to taste small victories along the way to get a sense that what we’re doing is worth something and, just as important, heading in the right direction.

As the Psychology Today article notes, the children who took part in Mischel’s test didn’t simply stare at the marshmallow in front of them and stoically overcome their desire to eat it.

They found other ways to substitute one kind of gratification for another: in other words, they didn’t subscribe to the suffer-now-enjoy-later mindset. Instead, they embraced the approach of “enjoy a little now, enjoy more later”.

SMALL SUCCEEDS LEAD UP TO BIGGER ONES

Success is all about making progress. The aspiring chief executive officer (CEO) who actively prints business cards and makes contact with potential clients is in a much happier and advantageous place than the aspiring CEO who spends most of their time dreaming about the big house and fancy cars that are sure to follow their triumphant foray into the business world.

Which of these two do you think will last the pace? The first guy, of course – he’s making things happen while the other is wishing for things to happen.

Whatever goals you want to set yourself, be it professional or personal, the path to achieving them isn’t one that is free from gratification or pleasures.

On the contrary, it is necessary to feel good about what you’re doing – it’s what helps to sustain your motivation and maintain discipline.

It’s about working hard for what you want without forgetting to enjoy the small rewards.

Too often, we look at our goals in a clinical manner. We believe we should work hard, deny ourselves, never sleep, keep going, maintain focus and achieve perfection.

This approach is suited to machines, not humans. Having said that, even machines get to have some downtime now and again.

We have to see our goals within the framework of life, which is something rich and varied to be experienced, learnt from and enjoyed.

If you look at the most successful people, you’ll find that they relish what they do – they gain a lot of pleasure from it. Sure they work hard and deny themselves whatever it’s useful, sensible and necessary to do so, but they never avoid partaking in the pleasures of life because they know that approach doesn’t work.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

If you truly want to be successful, don’t shirk the small victories and the joyous moments along the way – embrace them. Nurture whatever drives your progress and use it to propel you closer towards realising your vision.

Most important of all, don’t forget to enjoy yourselves!

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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OST of us have heard of the Marshmallow Test, a series of studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s led by Walter Mischel on delayed gratification.

The marshmallow test and follow-up studies aimed to discover whether children who could exert self-control and resist eating the marshmallow enjoyed greater success than those who quickly gave in to their desires.

In the follow-up studies, researchers found that the children who delayed their desire to eat the marshmallow did indeed go on to have better results in terms of education attainment, healthy living and other measures.

Exerting self-control came in a number of ways. Some children turned away from the marshmallow, possibly thinking about being rewarded with a second treat if they could hold off eating the first for a short period of time.

Other children sang to themselves, played games in their heads or distracted themselves by other means.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Recently, a colleague of mine pointed my attention to an interesting article, The Marshmallow Myth, which counters the long-held misconception suggested by Mischel’s studies that the way to succeed was to deny ourselves pleasure in the present in order to reap future rewards.

Researchers at the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business found that immediate rewards can help keep us motivated along the way to achieve our goals.

For example, if we want to start our own business, small things such as printing a new business card, making contact with potential clients or getting our hands on the first batch of our products serve to sustain our commitment to the vision of owning office space and running a small, successful team.

What doesn’t work is having an idea of starting our own business, and then doing little more than thinking about how great being a renowned chief executive officer or an industry thought-leader will be.

This is likely to reduce our motivation precisely because wishes and desires and dreams can become soul-suckers the longer they remain nothing more than wishes, desires and dreams.

A CHANGED MINDSET

The secret to success, then, is to find ways of moving forward in ways that are consistently gratifying.
If you’ve read To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee, you’d know that Atticus Finch (the main character) had in several instances used this phrase to assuage his children’s fears, namely Scout’s, in the ville face of 1930’s southern United States racism.

In the face of adversity, worry is a reaction that comes all too easily. So, why do we worry?

Worry is simply a normal reaction to stressful situations and can actually play a part in helping us avoid dangerous situations.

Research has found that individuals often worry when faced with uncertain situations and the worrying that follows is a direct response to imagining the various negative outcomes that may be the result of these uncertainties.

It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that worrying can be counterproductive. It can potentially foster and develop into debilitating anxiety, resulting in physical and mental health problems. If you’re a seasoned worrywart like me, attempting to even stop worrying might seem like an outlandish notion.

While my attempts to completely stop worrying have not been quite productive, I’ve simply diverted my focus into controlling these thoughts, and actively choosing to manage them at a time that is more convenient to me.

The key here is to try and stall the obsessive thoughts from taking precedence of my day, and instead talk myself out of paying attention to them right away and hold them off till later.

Here are some tips:

1. **Tell your worries to hold on**

   Say you’re due for a huge presentation and you’re naturally not comfortable being in front of a huge crowd. As you’re mulling over the impending doom, it’s easy to let your imagination run away with the worst.

   With every terrifying thought that passes through your mind, you stop and ask yourself what’s the worst that could happen in each of these scenarios. Write them down or sketch them on a piece of paper. Make a mental note and let these worries know that you acknowledge their existence and that you will deal with them in time but engage no further.

   Set aside a comfortable place to worry, and refocus on the present. Look back at the sheet of worries you’ve been carrying with you. If you’re worried about not being prepared for the big presentation, do the right thing and prepare ahead of time.

   The worry periods can be for up to 20 minutes a day, but it will require much practice and discipline to prevent the worrying from progressing beyond this period.

2. **Set aside some time to do the actual worrying**

   Once you’ve put off worrying, experts suggest setting aside fixed periods of time in a day to actively worry.

   Your worry periods can be for up to 20 minutes a day, but it will require much practice and discipline to prevent the worrying from progressing beyond this period.

   Every holding off worrying successfully for 10 minutes is significant progress and you can gradually work on increasing the “waiting period.”

   Set aside a comfortable place to worry, but refrain from doing so in a place where you regularly work – perhaps the garden would be better suited for this purpose.

3. **Stop worrying and refocus on the present**

   Procrastination is your enemy here and planning your time well will certainly help, so manage your time accordingly for each subtask.

   If it’s a technical issue that’s worrying you, get the right people to back you up. Call the venue beforehand to ask for assistance or for necessary equipment so you can put these fears at bay.

   Refocus all your energies away from the worries and put them to good use into the tasks you have at hand. Once you’re done, you can put worrying on hold until the moment of truth itself.

**Dealing with it head-on**

**How to?**

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Ownership, Not Enough

LEADERSHIP IS STEWARDSHIP, TOO

By SARAH LIM and LIM LAY HSUAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

I n a society which often determines a person's value and sense of identity by the amount of possessions and titles that a person owns, introducing the concept of "ownership" may be closer to home than we think.

For example, owning an item or a position enables us to have a perspective of power, control and a feeling of independece. Whether it's simply owning a fleet of luxury cars or you've been bestowed with titles of the highest order, people generally treat you differently when you're in a prominent position.

Culturally, we place huge importance on being able to possess some form of credibility and reputation, which give us sense of pride — good or bad — depending on how you choose to channel it. In the business context, for a company to remain progressive and innovative, the organisation would need not only its core leadership team to have a sense of ownership, but across its employees, too.

However, can employees truly 'own' that piece in their heart and soul? Let's consider an alternative.

STEWARDSHIP VS OWNERSHIP

"Stewardship" is a word that's hardly in our vocabulary. It may not be a very popular term here as it's often associated with the feeling that you have less control because there's no official ownership on your part.

Instead, you have to give account to someone in a higher position of authority — the real owner.

The truth is, we don't actually own a lot of things in life, simply because we don't have much control over many things, even life itself. Both "ownership" and "stewardship" are built on principles of accountability and a sense of responsibility. Yet the differences are quite distinct.

In his book Stewardship, author Peter Block defines it in the business context as: "The willingness to be accountable for the wellbeing of the larger organisation by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance."

CHOOSING ONE OVER THE OTHER?
The challenge we face today at work and perhaps even at a national level is that our understanding of ownership and stewardship is elementary. People find it easier to claim ownership over things that benefit them, projects and positions that elevate their status and reputation.

However, when it comes to dealing with harder issues, we often assume the role of what we understand a 'steward' to be, in the hope that we can absolve ourselves from the responsibility of finding viable solutions to a problem.

That's because we are only "stewards", and someone else is more responsible for solving the problem. This would be a perfect example of "selfish ownership" and "bad stewardship". It's no wonder that even though the concept of "ownership" is widely known, the blame-game culture is still rampant in corporate governance and sound practices.

STRIKING A BALANCE IS KEY

Good stewardship requires a balance of humility and confidence. It calls us to embrace an understanding that we are only caretakers, and our role — whatever it might be — is temporary. Yet, we must have confidence in ourselves, knowing that the task at hand is important because the outcome affects others.

If you wanted to argue that its application is situational, you could say that it's only required for tasks where the outcome of your actions affect someone else other than yourself. But if you really think about it, it covers a wide aspect: your family, your company, your country, the environment, etc.

TYING IT TOGETHER

A combination of selfless ownership and good stewardship need to co-exist for any organisation or nation to thrive.

How do you interchange between these two? Simply remember that when it comes to work that is entrusted to you, be a good and faithful steward.

Find every possible way, with the little or great authority given to you, to grow and nurture it so that it paves the way for the next generation to reap the fruits of your labour.

After all, you're here on this Earth for a purpose. Let this purpose tie your assignment drive you forward to build something for the greater good of mankind, instead of building your little kingdoms of material wealth, fame or reputation.

When it comes to recognition, be the last to claim it, if it comes at all. That's good stewardship. And when it comes to problems that crop up along the way, be the first one to own and rectify it. That's good ownership.

Therefore, take ownership of the responsibility and the outcome — no matter what it might be, because you understand that you have been given the privilege to be a good steward of this task.

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

— Winston Churchill

Sarah is the content marketing leader with Leaderonomics.com. She loves the art of good storytelling in all kinds of ways and wants to make a difference wherever she goes. When she's not at her desk, you'll find her behind the lens, exploring a new country, or just in her front yard... trying to keep her plants alive.

Lay Huan is the content lead for Leaderonomics.com. She writes occasional insights on the go at leaderonomics.com. She loves the art of good storytelling in all kinds of ways and wants to make a difference wherever she goes. When she's not at her desk, you'll find her behind the lens, exploring a new country, or just in her front yard... trying to keep her plants alive.

Our culture and upbringing has influenced us to think that our sense of identity is tied to the things we own in life. On the other hand, stewardship has the connotation that you have less control because you have to give account to somebody higher than you. What's the difference between ownership and stewardship? Can we ever live up to one without the other? How can we apply these principles in our workplace? Check out its corresponding podcast to this article here: bit.ly/RGVStewardship

It is easy to communicate numbers for performance but how do you get employees to own the numbers? If you don't know yet, numbers can numb people. Also, most organisations struggle not with the lack of expectation but the lack of engagement. Listen to this podcast here: bit.ly/RGVOwnership

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

This is a 6-day camp for secondary school students between the ages of 13-16 who want to be great leaders of the future! Come and be a part of this experience as we take your leadership to the next level with the help of Roshan Thiran -- CEO and Founder of Leaderonomics.

REGISTER YOUR CHILD TODAY!

leaderonomics.org/diodecamps

For more info and to register, email diode@leaderonomics.com or Whatsapp Nicholas at 017-2299288

Judge 5th Annual Leadership Insights at the go at leaderonomics.com
SILENCING YOUR THOUGHTS

HOW MINDFULNESS CAN HELP YOU OVERCOME ANXIETY

When it comes to our emotions, we usually sort them into one of two categories: pleasant or unpleasant. But we tend to view our mental states, such as anger or fear, as either enjoyable or unenjoyable. On the other hand, when we think about the way we process emotions, and negative emotions especially, we often see them as “negative.”

We might have the idea that unpleasant emotions are bad and must be avoided, while pleasant emotions are good and should be sought after. But our emotions are much more nuanced in how they serve us. Consider for example, anxiety.

Mindfulness helps us to first be aware of emotions, and then to observe them without judgment. To do this, we can try the following exercise:

1. Sit in a chair with your back straight (but not rigid) and place your hand on your body on the position, for example, folded on your knee or across your chest, so that you can feel your breath.
2. Take a few deep breaths, and then reduce your breathing to a comfortable rate.
3. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings as they arise, and try to observe them without judgment.
4. When you notice your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
5. Continue for about 5 minutes.

After the meditation, you might notice that your mind is more calm and that you feel more relaxed. You may also find that your thoughts are less distracting and that you are more able to focus on your present moment experience.

It is important to note that mindfulness meditation is not a substitute for professional treatment. If you are struggling with anxiety or depression or any other mental health issue, please seek help from a qualified mental health professional.
My MAD-Nificent Journey

A Story of Discovery and Purpose

By Benedict Yeoh

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EVER would I have thought that someday I would be a part of the Leaderonomics family. These people, despite not having superhuman strength or psychokinesis, are the capable superheroes of our community today. Not only are these young individuals multi-talented, they dedicate countless hours daily to the underprivileged with the promise of a better tomorrow.

As soon as I entered the office on the first day of my internship, I knew I could be proud. I would be the word to represent me best for the next five weeks.

DIODE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP (YLC)

The journey began near the end of 2015 when my mother insisted that I participate in a seven-day long leadership camp she had come across online. Her reason: I was spending too much time on computer games during my school holidays and needed to find a more “beneficial alternative” before school reopened.

Being the typical teenager, I rebelled and dismissed the idea of ever leaving the house.

Nonetheless, my rebellious act was in vain and I was reluctantly “volunteered” to join the camp anyway.

1 You build your network

The first thing that came to my attention when I entered my dorm at YLC was the affable demeanour of the participants.

People were greeting each other and introducing themselves even before they unpacked their luggage.

It was evident that the participants were here to learn and make new friends; no one had the intention of isolating others.

Everyone was ready to share if you were ready to ask, hence I made the best out of my time in camp.

I went up to talk to as many people as I could, regardless of their age, ethnicity, language, and background.

2 You learn about new cultures

DIODE stood out as a whole new stone” stance did work out in the end because our community today.

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3 You pick up new skills

It was at the same camp that I was introduced to the art of pitching.

Every team was assigned a project to take charge of. My team was given the task of organising a reunion for the participants after the camp. We decided to add a little twist to it.

Since we had our refugee friends from Pandawara Academy, our team unanimously agreed to have the reunion there.

Our reason was twofold: We wanted to offer camp participants an opportunity to meet up once again and we wanted to perform a charitable act for those who were less fortunate.

I guess our “killing two birds with one stone” stance did work out in the end because our team won the pitch-out!

4 My takeaway

This DIODE camp was different as it offered activities that were fresh from the oven. Throughout the seven days, we constantly reflected on our physical and spiritual aspects to mould ourselves to become the leaders we were meant to be.

Out of the numerous camps that I’d been to, this was the first time that I cried at the end of it, not because I was upset, but blissful instead. So much so, I was crying and laughing at the same time.

It was blissful because I felt like I’d acquired a deeper insight into things that are not taught in school or at home, “things” that ought to be experienced personally. That was the wrap of DIODE YLC.

LET IT SPARK!

Next up: SPARK Leadership Programme!

Although this wasn’t something new for me, the prerequisite for SPARK left quite an impression on me.

For the public to register, they needed to attend an audition because a majority of the seats were allocated to the underprivileged community – similar to DIODE.

Coincidentally, I wasn’t a fan of auditions because I thought it would be too much of a hassle to prepare a pitch. The title If You Could Change the World for One Person, What Would You Do? was already cumbersome just by the sound of it.

I had ceased rebuking my negative self-talk while I could. Lady luck smiled on me when Leaderonomics announced that they were in search for new interns!

I submitted my application immediately, because let’s be honest, what could top the offer of being part of a team that possesses the capability of igniting the exponential growth among today’s youth?

Gratefully, I was granted the privilege of internships not long after my application.

FROM CAMPER TO AGENT

My M.A.D.-ificent journey didn’t end there. As soon as high school was over, I was back for more.

I signed up to be a M.A.D. agent and promised myself to commit wholeheartedly to as many Leaderonomics events while I could.

I was really grateful to have a friend who persistently urged me to give it a go since it didn’t cost me anything at all.

Being the reluctant individual, I decided to give SPARK a tough go.

The audition was only a day away after I had ceased rebuking my negative self-talk and began drafting my script.

Thankfully, there was sufficient time for me to complete and go through my script before I was ready to head to bed that night.

Well, I performed well enough to qualify for the Golden Ticket to SPARK (what a miracle!). Though I’ve not physically expressed my gratitude, deep down, I was really grateful to have a friend who pushed me to go for this.

It was positively, M.A.D! SPARK was challenging because teams were required to execute their respective M.A.D. (short for Making A Difference) projects during camp and then pitch out later on the same day.

Everything went by at such a rapid pace – I recall how strenuous it was to simultaneously handle the preparation, execution and pitch-out.

Things turned out relatively well. We did our best and could only hope that I didn’t fail my team.

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Though I know there are individuals out there who have more intriguing anecdotes to share regarding their M.A.D. odysseys, I hope you’ve enjoyed mine just as much as I did.
We seem to be outsourcing our humanity to technology, mindlessly depending on it to be human to one another.

The question of how a new technology will affect us and our children in the future should never settle for less in humanity, wisdom and values found on Google. As communities become alive through the sharing of knowledge and experiences, the hope lives on that we will never forget our identity. We should not allow our physical, mental and emotional state to be affected and transformed through the advances of technology. After all, it is our humanity that shapes our thoughts and feelings, let us not lose!
Corporate culture is still a hit and miss to many organisations today. Added to that are the increasing generational gaps created as more Gen Ys and Gen Zs enter the workforce. According to Aashna Ramanathan the steps to getting the corporate culture right may be simpler than we think. Check out her podcast on bit.ly/RYGCorporateCultur
e.

When he is not rummaging through CD bargain bins, Adrian divides his time between managing talent for organisations, observing and commenting on human behaviour on his blog, building nonsensical music playlists and being a “falu” on Twitter - @adrian yap. To share your thoughts about corporate culture crisis, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

F an organisation is likened to a mas-

sive chugging machine with thou-

sands of movable parts and intricate 

equipment, then most people 

would agree that corporate culture is 

the oil that greases the bolts. 

Without it, the machine would still 

run, but not as smoothly as you want it 

to. Also, it would certainly be unsus-
tainable in the long term. 

To say that a company does not have a 

corporate culture is fallacy of sorts. Every 

company has a culture, it’s just a matter 
of whether it’s the one you intended to 

have or the one that’s naturally sprung 

up from having no intentional one in the 

first place.

The recent examples of Samsung’s 

cheetah culture travails and Uber’s free-

for-all part-gladiator coliseum, part-

National Lampoon ‘Baller’ culture have 

only served to remind us that we have to 

take corporate culture very seriously, or 

we risk putting our entire organisation’s 

reputation and relevancy at serious risk.

CORPORATE CULTURE HEALTH CHECK

Let’s assume you’re in a situation 

where your corporate culture is in ta-

ters. You’ve not paid enough attention 

to it and like a pack of wild horses, it 

will run away from you and is basically 

destroying everything in its path.

How do you arrest the situation and 
turn the situation around? Can it even be 
turned around?

Companies such as Microsoft (under 

the leadership of Satya Nadeka) and Ford 

Motor Company (under the leadership of 

Alan Mulally) have shown in recent 
times that you can turn your organis-

cation around by simply shifting your corporate 

culture to something more productive 

and positive.

So, it can be done. But how do you do 
it?

As is the case with a lot of things we 

accomplish in life, it begins with a few 
good first steps. I outline three crucial 

things you need to do initially to begin 

the process of recovering from a culture 
crisis.

1. Start from the top

It may be a cliché in organisational 
speak but it does not make it less true 

when it comes to corporate culture – the 

fix has to start at the top.

Corporate culture activities that are 

“delegated” to down lines are destined to 

fail. A corporate culture is only as real as 

its ability to affect crucial decisions that 

make a difference to the lives and careers 
of employees.

It is not a pet project that leaders start 

on and then farm out to their employees 

as a stretch. Don’t get me wrong, you can 
certainly do that with other projects.

But if you want to turn a company’s 
corporate culture around, the change 

must be embraced and achieved at the 
top first, and then cascaded downwards. 

That is the only way it will work.

Bear in mind that a corporate culture 

is often the byproduct of what the com-

pany’s leadership is like. So, leaders need 
to embody that change first before they 

expect their employees to pattern after it.

2. Allow hard, honest conversations to happen

One of the many symptoms of a 
toxic culture is that certain subjects are 
hushed because it is taboo to talk about 
them. No one is inclined to talk about 
them because it may either anger some-

one in authority or be met by general 

apathy.

It could be anything – from a process 

that was designed by the boss, or a 

product that was suggested by the chief 

executive officer’s son or a practice that 
cannot be touched because that’s “how we 

have always done it.”

If you want to be serious about turn-

ning around a company’s culture, then 

all cards have to be on the table. That 

means everyone, company-wide, has to 

be empowered to talk about anything 

that has a bearing on the organisation’s 
culture.

3. Be prepared to have a fire sale

After being able to properly dis-
cuss and debate on all facts linked to the 
corporate culture, including previously 
taboo topics, all decision-makers or stake-

holders have to also be prepared to lose 

anything to help turn the culture around.

Nothing and no one should be above 

reproach.

The “fix” could be a complex one 

involving processes, vendors and compa-

ny focus. Sometimes, it could be as sim-

ple as shedding a few dissenting voices 

from decisions.

No matter what the solutions are, the 

leadership of the organisation has to be 

prepared to “put everything up for sale” 

so to speak, to make the painful and 
tough decisions that may involve remov-

ing things or people they personally may 

be fond of.

Sometimes it may involve the leader 

having to change a practice or habit he/ 

she may be used to or comfortable with. 

If you’re really serious about turning it 

around, then you have to be prepared to 
do it. It’s definitely not easy, but it some-

times has to be done.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

To recover from a culture crisis is 

probably no different from untangling 
yourself from a long-term relationship. 

It’s often messy and requires resilience 

and brutal resolve to properly move on 

from it and into the new culture you have 

designed and intended.

There are going to be sticky pockets 
of issues struggling about all across the 

organisation: people you need to win 

over and obtain buy-in for the new cul-

ture, new processes that people are going 

to have to get used to, etc.

It is almost never a quick fix. It requires 
layers of solutions and most importantly, 
time. A culture won’t turn around over-

night, but if you start off quickly with the 
three steps suggested above, you can at 
least start analysing what went wrong, 
and how you can begin the process of 

fixing it.
**W**e all know we should be kind to others — our families, co-workers, neighbours, strangers. Everyone benefits. It turns out though, that the one who benefits the most is probably you.

Spanish-born cellist and conductor Pablo Casals once said, “I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance. Indeed, kindness has a big impact on the lives of others, and it makes us feel good. But you may not know how much being kind benefits your mental and physical health.

**Kindness Benefits Your Brain**

To start with, kindness makes our brains happier. A study done by University of California required people to do five random acts of kindness per day for six weeks. At the end of the study, it was found that the happiness levels of the participants increased by 41.66%.

Consider these researched benefits of kindness as well:

- **Implements the maintenance of good health.**
- **Diminishes the effect of physical and psychological illness.**
- ** Releases endorphins, your body’s natural painkiller.**
- **Improves emotional well-being.**
- **Changes brain chemistry.**
- **Elevated levels of dopamine.**
- **Produces oxytocin which protects your heart and reduces inflammation.**
- **Slows down the aging process.**
- **Improves relationships.**
- **And best of all, kindness is contagious.**

**How Can You Share Kindness?**

When we look at kindness through the lens of neuroplasticity, we are reminded that brains get good at what they do. The more we are kind, the easier it is to produce that behaviour in the future. So here are a few suggestions to try out:

- **Smile more.** It makes a strong impression of kindness.
- **Compliment others more, and really mean it.**
- **Look for small opportunities.** A few words may seem insignificant. They’re not. Little things take you far in life.
- **When you get up in the morning, pick one person to focus on. Make it a different person as often as possible.**
- **And be kind to yourself.** It’s hard to help others unless you are kind to yourself.

So here are a few suggestions to try out:

- **“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”** — Desmond Tutu

Happiness is actually the prerequisite to success, writes Shawn Achor, author of the book *The Happiness Advantage*. According to Achor, happiness and optimism are the fuel that drives performance and achievement. To gain insights from this book, check out: [bit.ly/EShappynadvantage](bit.ly/EShappynadvantage)

Is there a colleague who is feeling low due to unmet personal and professional expectations? Here are 10 things you can do to cheer him/her up. Check out this infographic: [bit.ly/gtopitchcheerup](bit.ly/gtopitchcheerup)

**Terry Small** is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster, and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire. To connect with Terry, write to editor@leaderonomics.com.
RESEARCH shows, interpersonal warmth explains the self-fulfilling prophecy of anticipated acceptance; study participants who expected to be accepted were perceived as more likeable. (Or in non-researcher speak, when you think another person will like you, you act more naturally and come across as friendlier — which then makes people like you more since we tend to like warm, friendly people.)

All of which sounds great, but the trick, when you're shy or insecure, is actually believing that other people will like you. When you're in an unfamiliar setting or an uncomfortable position, it's a lot easier to assume people won't like you — which research shows creates a self-fulfilling prophecy all its own.

So how can you convince yourself that people will like you? Positive self-talk (“They're going to love me!”) won't cut it. Instead, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and commit to taking a few steps that ensure almost anyone will like you.

(When results are basically guaranteed, it's easier to act more naturally and come across as friendlier.)

Be prepared to:

1. GIVE A GENUINE COMPLIMENT

Everyone loves to be praised, especially since no one gets enough praise. So be prepared to tell people what they did, or do, well. Find out whom you will meet and then do a little research. If coming prepared isn't possible, no problem. Show interest by asking questions. But go past, “What do you do?”

Ask what it's like to do what the person does. Ask what's hard about it. Ask what the person loves about it. You'll soon find things to compliment. And then not only will the people you meet appreciate the praise, they'll feel more accomplished. More important, they'll like you for making them feel that way.

2. FOCUS ON LETTING PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES

People love to talk about themselves. (And even if they didn't, they can't help it.)

Research shows approximately 40% of everyday speech is spent telling other people what we think or feel — basically, talking about our subjective experiences. (Not just that you took a spin class last night, but whether you liked the spin class. And whether you liked the instructor. And the studio. And the other people in the class, etc.)

In fact, we almost can't help sharing our thoughts and feelings. Research also shows that talking about ourselves, whether in person or on social media, triggers the same pleasure sensation in the brain as does money or food.

Self-disclosure causes increased activity in brain regions associated with the sense of reward and satisfaction from money, food, and even sex.

By helping people talk about themselves, you're seen as a great conversationalist even when you actually say very little.

And in the process, you also make other people feel better about themselves, which makes them like you. That's another win-win.

3. CHANGE ONE WORD

Think about the difference in these statements:

“I had to go to a meeting.”
“Or

“I got to meet with some great people.”

No big deal, right? Wrong! We like to be around happy, enthusiastic, and motivated people. Do you want to be around people who have to do certain things or who want to do certain things? Keep in mind choosing the right words also affects how you feel. Don't say, "I have to go to the gym." Say, "I want to go to the gym." In time, you'll believe it. You'll look forward to it.

Which you should, because improving your fitness will improve your overall health, performance, and even make you happier.

4. SHOW A LITTLE VULNERABILITY

Great teams are often led by people willing to admit weaknesses and failures. Great friends are also willing to be vulnerable.

Want to make a great first impression? Don't try to impress. Instead, be humble. Share your screw-ups. Admit your mistakes. Be the cautionary tale. Laugh at yourself. When you do, other people won't laugh at you. They'll laugh with you. And they'll immediately like you better for it — and want to be around you more.

Jeff Haden is a speaker, ghostwriter, and author of The Motivation Myth: How Highly Successful People Really Set Themselves Up to Win. To share your tips on how you can be more likeable, email your thoughts to editor@leaderonomics.com.
LEADERS WHO STICK TO THEIR PRINCIPLES NO MATTER WHAT, ARE OF A KIND

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

When I was asked to write about political leaders who—driven by their principles—have ultimately left an indelible mark, I naturally fell utmost shock. Principles and rules are notions that don’t hold together in the same sentence. Yet, it’s easy to focus on the flaws and failings of those tasked with managing a complex organization, and overlook the impact that the lives of millions, it’s easier to forget that political leaders throughout the decades have forged peaceful relationships, achieved substantial change for the betterment of the world, and saved the planet from potential disasters.

While human nature continues to strive, political leaders will always exist—but some world leaders have been able, for the greater good of humanity, to alter their plans accordingly. From his prison cell, Mandela observed that numerous leaders who, despite their union, peace and progress to the world, have already rejected the truth. The mark of true leaders is that they impact the lives of millions, it’s easier to forget that political leaders throughout the decades have forged peaceful relationships, achieved substantial change for the betterment of the world, and saved the planet from potential disasters.

What are leaders to do when “the people” say, “You have our support” and “You have our vote” – but as a result, they end up doing violence and repression? How do they continue to walk the tightrope of service, thinking and action? What do they do when the world around them is hostile and seemingly ready to do them harm? What do they do when their principles can often be betrayed? What do they do when the price for standing up for what is right is a constant threat to their lives? What do they do when they are in conflict with what we know to be true, and what we think is right? What do they do when they are in conflict with what we believe should be and we act according to our standpoints, more often than not, without question. However, it’s when we say about the fixed values and the dogmas—whenever we are in conflict with what we believe to be right—that we have the best of our humanity and our innate desire to do good to others whenever we can.

In his autobiography, he wrote, “As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I could just stay on my path and avoid the pitfalls and misattribution, I might be able to make a difference. As I did so, I realized that the way I behaved at that moment, and that was when I knew whom I was going to be, was that if I was going to be a leader, I would have to be a voice for the voiceless, a friend for the friendless, and a light for those who seek it. And that was when I knew whom I was going to be, was that if I was going to be a leader, I would have to be a voice for the voiceless, a friend for the friendless, and a light for those who seek it. As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew how things should be and we act according to our principles, more often than not, without question. However, it’s when we say about the fixed values and the dogmas—whenever we are in conflict with what we believe to be right—that we have the best of our humanity and our innate desire to do good to others whenever we can.

As a leader—both as we know it—are motivated by their failures and mistrust, and that, for the most part, I find it easy to look at the things that happen and use them as my path by my own standards. As a leader, we do it. It’s easy to criticise when we look at a person from our perspective and prejudice, but when we take the time to know a person’s story, we often find reasons to explain why they took a particular course of action and—most importantly—we find out just how unreasonable our judgment was. I was always an admirer of Mandela, but after he became President, I realized that he already had a reputation for being a man who lived up to the principles he espoused. This man who already has an impact to the lives of millions, it’s easier to forget that political leaders throughout the decades have forged peaceful relationships, achieved substantial change for the betterment of the world, and saved the planet from potential disasters.

This is exactly what made Mandela a giant among men. A leader with inherent in abundance, his wisdom and compassion can truly heal the wounds of the past.