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If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
By JEFF BOSS
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I recently had the opportunity to guest speak on team coaching to an undergraduate class at a prominent university.

The class was divided into five teams of four to five people. I gave a simple demonstration of what team coaching looked like by using one of the class teams as a guinea pig and then turned it back on each team in the class to practise on itself.

One member from each team would step outside his/her role as a team member and assume the role of team coach — with the intention being to coach his/her team when “issues” arose such as losing focus on the agenda, unhealthy conflict, or decision-making reluctance.

The challenge for each of the team coaches was thinking as an outsider.

What happened was this: each team coach started off as an “external” coach but as soon as a topic came up within their team that directly impacted them, they forgot their role as a team coach and reverted back to their role as a team member.

CLEAR TEAM DIRECTION
Leadership teams at the top face the same challenge.

They remain “objective” until the moment they don’t — until an agenda item impacts them directly. Then, they fend for themselves.

The first time I saw this was eye-opening because, in my mind, a team is a team, not a group of individuals sharing the same space calling themselves a team.

Yet, that’s often what happens — not just with leadership teams at the top but also with project teams, management teams, sales teams, and start-ups.

Each one of these “teams” is comprised of smart, savvy, experienced people, and the assumption is that because they’re smart and because they’re experienced, they don’t need help or direction in how to come together as a team. They will figure out how to work together on their own.

But they don’t. They rarely do. Without direction, it’s hard to get anywhere.

SOLID FOUNDATION
Start with the basics. In the United States Navy’s Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) Teams, nothing we did was really that advanced. Okay, maybe some things. But the majority of what we practised was fundamental.

You don’t become elite in anything without a solid foundation under you. Get the fundamentals right, and everything else will follow.

The same holds true for teams. In my experience, there are four fundamentals that every team needs to establish to start off “right” — and stay “right.” They are clarity, competence, confidence and curiosity.

In this article, let’s look closer at clarity — because I can’t think of anybody who suffered from too much clarity.

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Here’s how clarity breaks down and how you can find it in your team:

1. **Identity**
   - Oftentimes people assume that groups and teams are the same, but they’re not.
   - One of the main differences between groups and teams is that a team shares the same fate; a group does not.
   - Nor are teams the ideal solution for every problem set. Whether you structure yourselves as a group or as a team depends on the task to be achieved.
   - Another aspect of identity is team membership. You want to clarify those who are directly on the team, those who are indirectly on the team, those who are directly not on the team, and those who indirectly influence the team.
   - One common assumption I see as a coach is equating one’s rank or title with team membership (“I’m a senior vice-president, so of course I’m a member!”)
   - The problem with porous membership is that it disrupts how the team works together — how they meet, communicate, and make decisions — which impacts results.

2. **Purpose**
   - I can’t think of anybody who doesn’t want a purpose in life.
   - Purpose pulls, passion pushes. Purpose is what calls you forward through the chaos, through the uncertainty, and toward the unattainable that you never knew you had the capacity to endure had it not been for purpose calling your name.
   - Teams are no different.
   - There needs to be a compelling reason for why the team exists and what it aspires to achieve.
   - A purpose should be clear, challenging, consequential, and shared.
   - Remember what Friedrich Nietzsche said: “He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.”

3. **Value**
   - On the protocols of having a clear and compelling shared purpose is understanding why pursuing that purpose is important.
   - Oftentimes, people don’t speak up in meetings because they don’t know how they fit in, and the conversations that would identify how they might add value haven’t occurred yet.
   - One of the metrics I like to use when coaching a team is a sociogram. A sociogram maps interactions between members, which is handy when you want to measure social interactions and communications (what gets measured gets managed and what gets managed gets improved, right?).
   - The beauty of a sociogram is that you can use it to understand how people contribute — how they add value or why they don’t — in a team environment.

TYING IT TOGETHER

Whether you’re in a leadership, management, or project team, start with the fundamentals.

Get so good at the fundamentals that the only struggle you face is the day when you have to leave the team.

That’s teamwork.
WHAT SELF-ASSURANCE MEANS

4 PRACTICAL WAYS TO BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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ONFIDENCE can be a tricky subject to broach for some. You either have it or you don’t, and if you don’t have it, then good luck getting on in life... or so the conventional wisdom goes.

Like much of conventional wisdom, the idea that confidence is a quality afforded to the fortunate few isn’t quite as solid as it might appear to be.

Yet, the blind acceptance of any idea (particularly when it comes to limiting beliefs) has the potential to make or break us.

The Scottish novelist and creator of Peter Pan, James Matthew Barrie, once wrote, “The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it.”

WHAT’S YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM?

So much of success comes from self-belief. And it’s not entirely down to believing in who you are now.

A large part of self-belief is knowing that the potential you have within you can lift you to greater heights than you’ve ever imagined.

Know that you have in you to do great things and make a memorable, positive dint in the world.

Recently, I was speaking to a young entrepreneur who had just embarked on his start-up journey. He had watched a talk I had given on developing the leadership skills necessary to transform your business dreams into reality, and later asked me how I was able to project myself with confidence and ease in front of a crowd.

I immediately reminded him that I had been doing this for a long time, and here he was just starting out.

That’s the first rule of entrepreneur-ship:

No one starts off with all the necessary tools needed to be a success. Your toolkit is cultivated over time and updated as times change and new challenges present themselves.

As any seasoned entrepreneur will tell you. You’re never at the stage where you’re complete – there is always another challenge on the horizon as well as new ideas and concepts to learn. That’s partly what makes it so exciting. You’re never done, you’re always growing.

THE ART BEHIND CONFIDENCE

Nevertheless, I was pressed to offer a few pieces of advice on how to develop confidence. To me, confidence isn’t a tool; it’s an art form.

Think of the people you admire who seem to have it. They make it look so easy.

And yet, when you try it yourself, you’re left wondering why something that was apparently effortless suddenly seems so impossible.

Well, that’s because there’s nothing effortless about confidence.

It’s like learning how to dribble a football (or ‘soccer in some countries). At first, it can feel uncomfortable – unnatu- ral, even – but with enough practice, perseverance and determination, the dribble soon becomes second nature.

How does one develop the confidence to walk into a room like a veteran chief executive officer (CEO), confident in their abilities, and unlike a startled entrepre- neur caught in the headlights?

4 WAYS TO BUILD CONFIDENCE – RIGHT NOW

These are four key practices I’ve developed for myself over the years, and they’ve served me well. I hope they’ll be of use to you, too.

(As a side note, I should mention that feeling confident does not mean never again feeling nervous. If you walk into a room to deliver a major pitch or present a commencement speech to students and there’s no nervousness, that can be a worrying sign.)

1. Get your posture right

This means standing straight, holding your head up, moving with purpose, and making eye contact.

People who are self-assured, walk purposefully with an open posture that tells the world they’re ready for anything. Conversely those who have hunched shoulders, a bowed head and walk slowly often come across as uncertain and apologetic.

Whoever is in the room, you have to believe that you have as much right to be there as they do. Meet and greet them with this conviction in your mind and you’ll automatically open up and stand tall.

2. Talk your talk

We’ve been in the situation (at school, university, a network event) where one or two people naturally become the main contributors while the others remain passive listeners.

This happens every time a teacher asks, “Any questions?” and most students remain silent, lest they screw up or ask the ‘wrong’ question. Don’t be that person.

Without trying to overshadow everyone else, any time you have a thought you want to share or a question you want to ask, speak up.

Not only will this help to develop your speaking skills, there’s also a good chance that others would have had the same thought or question in mind, but were afraid to speak up.

With this in mind, people will come to see you as a natural leader, someone who is not afraid to be out in front.

3. Present yourself well

Research suggests that people who dress for success are more likely to be successful. This doesn’t mean that you have to wear the most expensive clothes.

However, donning a well-put-together outfit gives you both the look and feel of a confident person.

When you take your appearance seriously, that’s exactly how other people will take you. On the other hand, if you’re always turning up to meet people in a T-shirt, shorts and flip-flops, your image is likely to give the vibe of “easy-going” rather than “ready for business.”

Of course, context is paramount: don’t turn up to a beach barbecue in your best suit!

4. Make gratitude a habit

Take a moment to think about what you don’t have yet but would really love to own. You might experience feel- ings of longing, regret, despair, perhaps even hopelessness.

This is exactly why gratitude is so important when it comes to develop- ing confidence, because it focuses your attention on appreciating what you have now.

Gratitude inspires you to walk courageously towards the next achievement, assured in the knowledge that you’ve been blessed with so much already.

Focusing on what you don’t have, on the other hand, leads to you becoming insular, closed-off, and (literally) smaller as those hunched shoulders project a “poor me” image.

Walk tall and be thankful, and you’ll attract all the right people and opportu- nities as a result.

Roshan Thiran is the founder and CEO of Leaderonomics – a social enterprise work- ing to transform lives through leadership development. Connect with Roshan on Facebook and Twitter (@Etpaker) for more insights into business, personal development, and leadership. Share your story on building your confidence with us at editor@leadero- nomics.com.
MOST of us have difficulty articulating our struggles in a public forum, especially in the presence of our boss and peers.

This probably stems from history we may have with bosses who said things like: “Don’t come to me with a problem, come to me with a solution!”

When you think about it, this creates the opposite of the environment an effective leader wants.

If people have problems, they want to get them out on the table so you can help them find solutions.

CONSIDER EXECUTIVE COACHING

The practice of executive coaching introduced corporate culture to an exciting new idea: the end of shame when it comes to needing help.

Under the guidance of a coach, it’s okay to admit what you don’t know and ask for help.

My coaching process brings my clients’ shortcomings into the light, through a process of accumulating confidential feedback from their key stakeholders (colleagues, direct reports or board members, for example).

If that sounds terrifying, it’s because most of us have been conditioned to hide our flaws for fear of punishment, reprisal or a rival seizing a competitive advantage.

A good coach takes away that fear and uses feedback and self-analysis to guide clients toward positive and lasting behavioural change.

The process works – which is one reason I have seen the perception of coaching shift over the last three decades: instead of a punishment, it’s now a mark of prestige to have a coach. It means you’re probably going places in your career.

LESSONS FROM ALAN MULALLY

What I find so remarkable about my friend and colleague, Alan Mulally, is that he put these ideas into practice across an entire organisation — and in an intense, high-stakes setting.

When he took over as Ford’s chief executive officer in 2006, the company was in dire straits, with market shares down 25% since 1990 and its very existence threatened by the great recession.

The story of how Mulally turned Ford around is now well-documented. The company was the only big-three automaker to emerge from the recession without a government bailout.

When Mulally retired from Ford in 2014, Fortune magazine ranked him as the third greatest leader in the world, behind only Pope Francis and Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel.

1 Target transparency and applaud when you get it.

One important thing that Mulally did early on was to effectively eliminate shame. He never said, “Don’t come to me with a problem!”

Up to that point, meetings at Ford were notoriously vicious. Mulally rooted out those problems through his Business Plan Review programme, which made meetings highly structured.

Executives had to introduce themselves and report on their progress according to a precise formula (and no cell phones were allowed).

In this much calmer environment, he encouraged his reports to be honest about their problems. Instead of bravado, he encouraged them to show humility and admit where they needed help.

2 Lead by example.

He did this by modelling the behaviour himself — the hallmark of a truly great leader. Mulally was not ashamed of what he didn’t know, or what he had or hadn’t done.

He simply reported on the condition of the company with an attention to detail befitting his background as an engineer.

When he didn’t know how to fix a problem, he wasn’t afraid to ask for help.

IN CONCLUSION

It sounds simple, and it is. But it takes tremendous courage to be so forthright — so unashamed — especially in a situation like the one he faced at Ford, on the brink of collapse at one of the nation’s biggest companies in an industry that serves as the backbone of the nation’s economy.

When the world is watching and the stakes are high, a lesser leader would have armed himself in ego. Mulally chose the other path.

This approach has the potential to do tremendous good in settings beyond Ford.

Are you implementing or could you implement it in your organisation, with your team? Could you share it with your boss? I’d love to hear what you think about this approach!

■ Marshall Goldsmith is the author of 35 books, which have sold over two million copies and have been translated into 30 languages. Email us your thoughts on asking for help in the workplace at editor@leaderonomics.com.
Creating a Service Culture

6 Mindsets to Build Customer Relationships that Stick

By Jaquie Scammell
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We are more connected than ever before thanks to technology. But at what cost does this hyper-fast connection come? Our employees provide products and services to customers without ever having a face-to-face conversation.

We type questions or issues into live chat feeds on websites, Facebook Messenger and other online conduits. It’s actually our desire, our need, for speed and convenience that is compromising our customers’ greatest and basic needs as humans: care, kindness and one-on-one attention.

Make it Emotional

Other than speed, efficiency and consistency, there is a less tangible measure that we talk about and critique when we are served as customers: the emotions that we experience with an employee in the moment of service.

Consider the inherent power of a service provider in their relationship with the customer:
- An employee will make a customer feel important or will not.
- An employee will make an interaction feel personal or will not.
- An employee will be 100% attentive to the customer or will not.
- An employee will give meaning to the customer’s purchase or will not.
- An employee will be 100% attentive to the customer or will not.
- An employee will give meaning to the customer’s purchase or will not.

How a customer feels when they interact with your brand relies on how your employee makes them feel, while serving them at the front line.

Yes, customers can feel a connection to your brand by watching a great video in-store or on your website, or experiencing your brand when they use your products; however, it is how they are treated that lingers long after this. Humans have the unique capability, unlike any robot or automated solution, to provide an interpersonal interaction that creates the social bond that all of us look for when seeking connection.

The real challenge is to, therefore, embrace technology and automation without compromising emotions and customer relationships.

Win their Hearts and Minds

When it comes to winning the hearts and minds of your customers, it’s the behaviours of your frontline employees that influence your whole organisation’s performance and results.

How customers feel when they interact with your employees determines how they feel about your company itself. This is what determines whether they will be a one-click wonder or a customer for life.

Procedures and steps of service may be great for robots and androids, but it’s the ways in which your service staff act and the emotional connection they create with your customers that will determine your ultimate success.

Rather than look at complex customer service strategies and ways to engage your staff, you must look to the most powerful and influential people in your business – you and your frontline employees.

Adopt a Service Mindset

So, even if everyone in your business is already excellent at what they do, sharpening their behaviours at work will contribute to a service mindset that will give you and your organisation an extra edge.

When we are highly tuned in to the people in front of us, we start to frame questions differently, pause before we speak and even start to see things from someone else’s perspective.

Small business owners and leaders who operate with a service mindset help build a service culture: a high-performing culture where customer loyalty is constantly increasing.

In fact, if we were to replace the word ‘customer’ with ‘humans’, we could say that our goal in business is to create greater loyalty with other humans.

Your 6 Service Mindsets

The best, simplest and easiest way of developing this successful service culture is to work on your service mindset.

This is a continuum of behaviours that impact your employees’ performance, which in turn impacts your customer interactions and loyalty, creating a virtuous circle that enhances your whole business.

The six mindsets you need are:

1. Empathy – Practice empathy to create a team of employees who feel understood.

2. Questions – Show sincere interest in your employees as humans to help them grow into their role.

3. Energy – Shift the focus and energy onto supporting all employees to deliver great service. What you give attention to, grows.

4. Heart – Trust and appreciate your staff and they will have a greater willingness to serve, which automatically increases their discretionary effort. This creates a cumulative advantage for a business.

5. Purpose – Make staff feel valued and that will motivate them further.

An engaged workforce interacts with your customers more positively and this creates customer loyalty.

Practice – Seek information, develop your people and helping them grow in their working roles.

Knowing that you are only as good as your last performance is key to continual growth and improvement and business longevity.

Tying it Together

What you need to see is that human capital is just that: a capital investment in your organisation and your brand. When we yield better actions from our employees, we will yield better results in our business.

When you do this, when you build this service mindset (instead of an automatic one), then and only then, do you start to move the needle in your business and watch your profits soar.

Questions:

1. How important is it to you to know your customers?

2. Do you interact with your customers on a personal level?

3. How often do you ask your customers what they think of your service?

4. Do you train your employees to be empathetic?

5. How do you measure the success of your service team?

6. What steps are you taking to improve your service delivery?
HUMILITY

Let’s start with humility, one of the enduring but elusive traits found mostly among honourable heroes today. Somebody loves humble leaders and supportive colleagues, but today’s Twitter trigger-happy age – led by the United States (US) President Donald Trump – no more of us would prefer to be the star of the day (these women included).

Humility is also probably what makes modern-day heroes, unsure to begin with. They are not likely to post their achievements on Facebook to get the most likes. Modern heroes are more likely to sit quietly and let their dedication to their cause win such sorts of admiration and respect in the part of society.

Other times, extraordinary efforts of ordinary heroes just go unnoticed because of the status of their task or lack thereof. This formula was applied to Donald Trump’s Countless or Congress Women during the Independence period of Nigeria. (My tyres for that).

“So she’s on another”, one may ask. But modern humble female leaders were unheralded heroes of Nigeria’s early-1960s reconstruction process.

Armed with nothing more than their love for Nigeria, their skills and talents, these women led boldly and shine brightly in the 1950s and 1960s, championing Nigeria’s reconstruction process. As the Sultan Airport, the Parliament and today’s National Assembly, Humble people are also seeking to change the world, too. They are glad from them learn to know that humility is the best way to alter and make the organisation they work for function properly, promptly and steadily. Of course, there are many leading ladies who have also exercised humility when warranted.

What a Malay woman can forget the role she played in which our Prime Minister Tan Dr Mahathir Mohamad was made, explaining to a young child why he still has to go to school. Under Sarah’s motherly care, Abe and the US, remembered for his extraordinary and wise leadership, It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader.

Working with his boss – a wife – rabidly backed each other up – he turned his political mark into allies and earned them respect almost identical to him as a constant in-cabinet (his leader who listened to everyone’s points of view, before making decision for the country.

COMMITTED TO A CAUSE

Unsung heroes are celebrated to give more than they take. They are focused on the big picture and are willing to sacrifice time and effort for the good of others, whether in their family or the organisation they work with.

Case 1: Teachers and volunteers

The first example is a teacher who, instead of answering all the questions in her notebook, her teacher focuses on the big picture and are willing to sacrifice time and effort for the good of others, whether in their family or the organisation they work with.

Case 2: Teachers and volunteers

The first step that every teacher must do is “Are you still writing?” Or just looking after the kids those days?”

Despite holding a Master’s degree in biomesphere and being an award-winning writer, she gave up her career as a medical writer to focus on her small children when they were born three years ago.

“Her favourite question is “Are you still writing?” Or just looking after the kids those days?”. But after being asked to the question, she turned to answer the question.

Case 2: Teachers and volunteers

The second step is to answer the question directly, asking the, “Are you still writing?”. This is how they would turn to answer the question.

Case 2: Teachers and volunteers

The third step is to answer the question correctly, “Are you still writing?” Or just looking after the kids these days?”

Case 2: Teachers and volunteers

The fourth step is to keep answering the question, “Are you still writing?”. This is the correct way to answer the question.

Forgetting that these two women played crucial roles during Abe’s development years. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. It enabled the unassuming, self-effacing lawyer from Illinois to become the US, the world’s most powerful leader. 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WASTE NOT, WANT NOT
HOW TO USE YOUR FIRST AND LAST 10 MINUTES AT WORK

By NG YOU JING
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WHAT’S the first thing you do when you arrive at the office? Do you grab a cuppa or rush to work because you’re one of the usual latecomers?
Experts believe how you handle the first 10 minutes at work pretty much sets up the rest of your day, so it’s best to start it on the right foot – clean slate, refreshed and focused.

Let’s not forget how you spend your last 10 minutes before leaving the office too. While there is an urge to wrap up earlier than your official clock-off time, stay disciplined and use your time wisely. Choose to be productive aside from waiting for the time to pass and prepare for the next working day.
To ensure a productive day, follow these simple approaches at the start and end of your day at work.

THE FIRST 10 MINUTES

1 Say ‘Hello’
Unless you’re the first one to arrive at the office, initiate small talk with your colleagues first thing in the morning. It is an effective way to build better work communication at work.

Employees will be more motivated and engaged if this is practised regularly. A huge benefit will be for internal communication whereby colleagues can become each other’s support system at work and even foster friendships outside of work.

That said, you shouldn’t be too persistent with morning office chats because not everyone will be eager to participate, so be alert and read their body language well.

Factors like a lack of common interests or introversion of an individual may be reasons behind it. Be mindful, have respect and leave room for personal space.

2 Arranging your emails
Organising your emails before you start working on your main task is a great way to get yourself in tune to what’s to come in the day. Move your urgent emails, old emails, spam and junk mail into their respective folders.

It’s good to keep your email space clear and organised so you can focus on one task at a time. You might want to keep some old emails for future reference, so take some time to separate them accordingly.

Other than receiving new emails from your peers, clients and other work-related matters, the biggest clutter in your inbox and spam list is probably the e-newsletters you’ve subscribed to – voluntarily or involuntarily.

What you can do is unsubscribe materials you no longer need, so you can save time from deleting them constantly.

3 Expand your knowledge
This is similar to becoming a thought leader, but you will be recognised for your expertise in your field of work.

Use your spare time early in the day by reading up on industry news and business trends. That way, you will be able to share knowledge with your colleagues or participate in open discussions with like-minded individuals.

Your presence will add value to your organisation and colleagues, making you a trusted asset and a good example.

Moreover, you can volunteer as a professional mentor to guide new employees in familiarising themselves with the organisation.

THE LAST 10 MINUTES

1 Self-reflection
When was the last time you asked yourself about the things you have accomplished no matter how trivial the task was? Most of us wouldn’t bother reflecting and prefer to look forward to the things to come.

There is no issue to keep moving forward, but what if there are vital lessons and improvement areas for your career or personal life that you missed from past encounters? Self-reflection helps.

Use the last 10 minutes of your work day to reflect on the things you did throughout the day. Jot them down on paper and go through them one by one. Chances are you will notice the positive and negative things clearer compared to before.

2 Set your goals
Picking your everyday battles in order to avoid a burnout should be part of your career goals.

If you want to accomplish something greater or learn from your past experiences, we recommend making goal-setting a frequent activity of yours. Make a list and place it prominently at your workstation as a daily or monthly reminder to motivate you.

Examples of realistic goal-setting include: to achieve 70% sales target monthly, write two articles a day, or plan a marketing and public relations campaign three months in advance.

Waste not, want not! How to use your first and last 10 minutes at work.

Studies have shown that goal-setting increases your overall performance, well-being and improves your managerial skills.

3 Organise your work files
As a working adult, keeping your documents and digital folders neat and tidy is a plus point. It makes for an accessible and fuss-free workstation and allows you to be more productive at work.

While it sounds easy, many people don’t take enough time to maintain theirs. With a few clicks at the end of each day, organise your digital folders and sort out saved documents into respective folders.

It’s advisable to do this at the end of the day because you’re most likely to have more time and would have a chunk of work tasks completed from the day which needs filing.

If you need to save your files on your desktop, bear in mind that it can be very messy and hard to locate. What you can do is create one general folder and save named files there before segregating them eventually.

Also, don’t forget to permanently delete irrelevant files to save storage space. This tip is also applicable to your cloud storage.

4 Organise your work desk
A cluttered desk is a recipe for disrupting your productivity and focus. The physical clutter from your desk will confuse and overwhelm you whereas your mental clutter will derive from the constant anxious caused by the physical mess.

Based on a study, it was found that an individual faced a severe constraint to focus and lacked attentiveness if they had variables placed all over their field of view.

With 10 minutes in hand, tidy up your desk and give it a good sprucing up. Put your important paperwork on the side or use file trays to organise them.

Place your stationery in your drawer or holder on your desk. Try the KonMari method of clearing your space if you find it difficult – most people claim it does wonders!

The key here is to keep the things that hold value for you. Look around your desk, pick one item and determine if the item is worth placing on your desk. If it does not, you can put it away. Repeat the step for each item on your desk until everything is clear.

Spend way less, learn way more
Learning for your organisation now costs you less than one cup of coffee for every user, every month
Why is mentoring so crucial in today’s workplace?

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

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PRAH Winfrey, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Bob Dylan and Quincy Jones owe their success stories to a shared experience—all of them had mentors to guide them in their careers.

It’s easy to think of such people as being “self-made.”

To a degree, they were, but none of them, talented as they each are, could say for sure that the same success they have enjoyed would exist without the guidance from someone who had been there before them.

WHY ARE MENTORS SO IMPORTANT?

Mentors are invaluable, as they push us to see our latent potential, and encourage us to unleash our talents and capabilities to the fullest.

What’s more, they offer us glimpses into their past experiences, so that we may avoid the pitfalls they’ve encountered along the way.

That doesn’t mean that our journey will be plain sailing. However, having someone to show us how to side-step common mistakes certainly makes the path ahead much smoother.

Mentors also provide us with a solid sounding board, off which we are able to bounce ideas. They also help us to navigate our struggles and frustrations, and at the same time, fuel the fires of our curiosity and passion.

When we have someone beside us who has travelled a similar path to the one we are on, it’s like having our own personal library at hand whenever we need a quick reference point to help us overcome obstacles.

The actor Will Smith, once alluded to the importance of mentors when he talked about reading (mentors may also come in book form).

Smith said, “There have been gazzions of people that have lived before all of us. There’s no new problem you could have—with your parents, with school, with a bully. There’s no new problem that someone hasn’t already had…”

THEY ARE A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY

In these increasingly competitive times, mentors can become the whetstone (sharpening stone) that gives us the edge over the competition.

They are the ones who offer us the inside track, hone our critical thinking skills and tackle challenges head-on, ensuring that we are well-equipped for the job that lies ahead.

Most importantly, mentors help us to build beyond who we are, and to see the things we are capable of.

The power of mentoring is perhaps summed up best by Winfrey, who said, “A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.”

As many successful people know, hope is a mighty force that can lead us to our greatest achievements and build a powerful legacy.

5 QUOTES ON THE POWER OF MENTORING

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.” – Plutarch

“Leaders should influence others in such a way that it builds people up, encourages ages and edifies them so they can duplicate this attitude in others.” – Bob Goshen

“An employee made a mistake that cost the company $10 million, he walked into the office of Tom Watson, the CEO, expecting to get fired. ‘Fire you?’ Mr. Watson asked. ‘I just spent $10 million educating you.’” – Adam Grant

LET'S DO OUR JOB TOGETHER

Mentoring improves networking.

A mentor will inevitably introduce their mentee to acquaintances who will be relevant and useful in their journey of development and growth.

A vital part of career success is the relationships we are able to build, and a resourceful mentor will likely have cultivated a wide network of connections within their industry.

Mentors who are introduced to other figures in their field can only stand to gain from the additional pearls of wisdom.

3 BENEFITS OF MENTORING

1. Helps people to focus and take charge of their career

Many drivers learn to drive without an instructor. How many pianists are self-taught to Grade 8 level?

While it’s not impossible to learn these skills without instruction, it’s much more beneficial to be shown the ropes by someone who’s already been there.

For a start, fewer mistakes are made, and obstacles are easier to overcome when someone who has travelled the same path shows us how it’s done.

We take instruction in so many areas of our lives—it makes sense that we should give our careers the same level of consideration, given how important it is to us.

2. Mentoring improves networking

A mentor will inevitably introduce their mentee to acquaintances who will be relevant and useful in their journey of development and growth.

A vital part of career success is the relationships we are able to build, and a resourceful mentor will likely have cultivated a wide network of connections within their industry.

Mentees who are introduced to other figures in their field can only stand to gain from the additional pearls of wisdom.

3. Builds confidence and interpersonal skills

Interacting with others and establishing relationships naturally develops communication and interpersonal skills.

With “soft skills” said to be lacking in fresh graduates and young professionals, this is one of the key benefits that come with having a mentor.

Besides the interactions with others, mentors tend to routinely nudge mentees out of their comfort zones, which helps to build confidence quickly as new challenges are tackled.

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• 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/RTcoaching

• Every effective leader is inevitably a mentor and a coach who strives to raise the competency level of others.

Leaderonomics has comprehensive coaching and mentoring programmes to help individuals develop relational skills that build a strong mentor-mentee relationship.

Through this workshop, participants will learn about the different types of mentoring relationships while setting mentoring goals and strategies to achieve intended results within and outside the organisational life.

Participants will also learn about the importance of character and qualities of successful mentors to create the right mentoring dynamics for a win-win relationship.

To find out more, email info@leaderonomics.com.

• Sandy has been blessed to have found a few mentors—in person and in book form—that have made a considerable impact on his life, mainly through the tendency to ask more questions than they answered. To connect with Sandy, you can follow him on Twitter @RedsClarke. How was your mentoring experience like?

Were you a mentor for someone, or were you the one being mentored? Share your experience at editor@leaderonomics.com.
MOST of us have experienced that sinking moment when you realise you've made a serious mistake. Perhaps it was a typo that threw off a financial forecast, or maybe you forgot to reserve a venue for an important meeting that's scheduled for the following day. The details are different for everybody, but at some point, all of us have felt that rising tide of dread and panic. Mistakes and pressure are inevitable; the secret to getting past them is to stay calm.

New research from the Harvard Business School shows that most of us go about staying calm the wrong way. People who welcome the challenge of a crisis – so much so that overcoming the challenge excites them – perform far better than those who try to force themselves to be calm.

Study author Allison Wood Brooks says: “People have a very strong intuition that trying to calm down is the best way to cope with their anxiety, but that can be very difficult and ineffective. ‘When people feel anxious and try to calm down, they are thinking about all the things that could go bad. When they are excited, they are thinking about how things could go well.’” Staying composed, focused, and effective under pressure are all about your mentality. People who successfully manage crises are able to channel their emotions into producing the behaviour that they want.

In other words, they turn their anxiety into energy and excitement.

LOGICALLY SPEAKING

This can’t happen if you don’t engage your logic. Yes, making a big mistake is embarrassing. You might get yelled at by your boss, and the mistake might even show up on your next performance appraisal, but, in all likelihood, it’s not going to result in your getting fired, losing your house, living out of your car, or in any of the other catastrophic thoughts that fuel anxiety and keep you from getting focused. If you struggle with putting things into perspective, just ask yourself two simple questions:

- What’s the worst thing that could happen as a result of this?
- Will this matter in five years?

Your answers should put a stop to cataclysmic thinking. You’ll probably realise that you’re panicking due to the anticipation of public embarrassment more than anything else. Once you get over that, you can build confidence by picking up the pieces and making things better.

PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Think about situations that were worse than yours. More than likely, the people at your company who have made serious mistakes are still there and doing just fine. Those legendary mistakes usually have few long-term effects on otherwise good employees.

Remind yourself: “There’s more to me than this situation. One honest mistake won’t define me.”

TAKE ACTION!

Once you’ve figured out the facts and screwed your head on straight, it’s time to own up to the situation. Putting off the hard work of cleaning up the mess just gives your sense of dread more power. Pouring your energy into making things better is both empowering and a wonderful distraction from any anxiety that might surface. Remember, getting excited by the challenge of rising from the ashes will improve your performance dramatically.

NOBODY’S PERFECT

To keep things humming, don’t be so hard on yourself. Even the most successful people make serious mistakes. Henry Ford’s first car company failed after just 18 months. Oprah Winfrey was deemed “unfit for television” in an early reporting job, and Walt Disney was fired from the Kansas City Star for his lack of creativity. Beating yourself up might be a tempting option, but it never accomplishes anything, and it certainly doesn’t make you any calmer.

Instead, keep your energy focused on the future and the things you can change.

BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

The ability to manage your emotions and remain calm under pressure has a direct link to your performance. We’ve found that 90% of top performers are skilled at managing their emotions in times of stress in order to remain calm and in control. Nobody likes making mistakes. But no matter how big the mistake is, succumbing to panic isn’t going to help.

Giving in to catastrophic thinking undermines your ability to make good decisions and to move forward effectively. Instead, use these strategies to stay calm so you can assess the situation, develop a plan, be accountable, and get busy making things right so you can move on.

What’s the worst crisis you’ve ever dealt with at work?
WHEN YOU NEED TO GIVE A HUG

By REBECCA MORGAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHEN I stepped into the hotel elevator on the second floor, the only other person inside was a 20-something-year-old woman. She was crying but working hard not to. Yet she couldn’t stop.

I have been there – something hurts so badly you can’t control the emotion, even when you’re in a public place and you feel embarrassed at not being able to stop.

I paused briefly to look at her, unsure whether to ignore her and mind my own business to my 14th floor room. I noticed she’d pushed the 6th floor button so I knew we would share this space only briefly.

LEADERS DO THE RIGHT THING

But ignoring someone in pain did not seem like the right thing to do. I had no idea what caused such agony and had no idea if she had someone to comfort her on the 6th floor. But when I see human pain like this up close, I feel compelled to respond.

“I can give you a hug,” I asked.

She nodded yes.

So I hugged her until we arrived on the 6th floor, without saying a word. Whatever awkwardness there was from two strangers silently hugging was dissipated by being authentic with each other in real time.

The elevator stopped at 6 and she exited. I never saw her again.

POINTS OF REFLECTION

Later, I wondered if I should have reached out further: “Do you have someone to talk to in your room? Or someone you can call?” Then, if she said no, would I have felt compelled to be the one she poured out her angst to? Would I then be embroiled in this stranger’s life when I had other things on my docket for the day?

I’ll never know what caused her such strong emotion. But I am glad I offered the hug.

Rebecca Morgan is a bestselling author, and one of America’s sought-after adviser to many global executives. She is the architect for focused, tailored solutions designed to meet an organisation’s needs. To connect with her, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

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/igTop10cheerup

Throughout your lifetime, you’ve probably given away (and received) one of the most profound gifts – hugs. You wonder how such an insignificant act can lead to any difference at all. Well, apparently it does. Check out this article on how hugs can make a huge difference in a person’s life: bit.ly/LDRhugs

Online Exclusive

Can you name all the players in your favourite football team? How about the people providing behind-the-scenes support to the team? Let’s take a look at five people who help make football successful without actually scoring a goal: bit.ly/footballheroes

In marketing, there’s never a set way of doing things and there’s always something new to learn. Leaderonomics content marketing leader Sarah Lim discusses how organisations can keep up and leverage the changing nature of the marketing industry. Listen to the podcast: bit.ly/RYYLeveragingOnMarketing
Understanding Your Customers

Why This is Crucial for Business Growth

By EVETTE CORDY
editor@leaderonomics.com

In a 2017 Harvard Business Review article, Are You Solving The Right Problems?, a survey of 106 C-suite executives across 17 countries uncovered that 85% strongly agreed or agreed that their organisations were bad at problem diagnosis. Furthermore, 87% strongly agreed or agreed that this flaw carried significant costs.

Author, Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg remarked, “The pattern is clear: spurred by a penchant for action, managers tend to switch quickly into solution mode without checking whether they really understand the problem.”

THINK LONG-TERM SOLUTION

The challenge of every business is the incredible pressure placed on short-term results, with constant deadlines looming. We are always chasing outcomes, which creates a culture of doing. So, when a business problem arises, we quickly jump to solution-finding and implementation. When things aren’t going well in our business, our instinct is to ‘fix’ whatever we perceive to be the problem, as quickly as possible.

We jump ahead and try to solve what might not be a problem in the first place. This results in fact, cheap solutions that do not last long and do not have much impact for your customers. If we don’t take the time to dig deep, observe and figure out what is really going on, then we throw time, money and resources into something that will fail to have any impact on our business at all – except wasted time, money and resources.

GET CURIOUS

In today’s business world, you need to be able to walk in the shoes of your customer. To find clues and collect artefacts that build a whole picture of your customers’ experiences.

That means sitting with them in their lounge room, shopping where they shop, drinking where they drink or eating where they eat. You must spend time discovering their hopes, fears and values, and viewing the world through their eyes. Noticing what delights them and observing their irritations, frustrations and pain points.

You need to curiously observe what people say, and what they do, and seek to understand deeply what matters to them. This is the best starting point to finding the right problems to solve.

Curiosity is the tool we use to find our most valuable problems; to turn our insights into opportunities.

You need to become curious about identifying what problems you need to solve. You need to be curious about the opportunities that become possible when you are open to change.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Having this deep understanding of your customers’ problems is essential to inspiring growth.

When you understand the real problems your customers’ face (not the perceived ones), then you start to solve their deepest problems – you start to stimulate breakthrough innovation and implement initiatives that will truly benefit (not drain) your bottom line.

Evette Cordy is curious – and she’s passionate about making you curious, too. As an innovation expert, registered psychologist, chief investigator and co-founder at Agents of Spring, she identifies opportunities and facilitates new ways of thinking in organisations. She is also author of the book Cultivating Curiosity: How to unearth your most valuable problem to inspire growth.”

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AT LEADERONOMICS, we believe leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of communities they belong to. And we believe that all human beings have the potential for leadership. No matter who you are, what you do and whatever challenges are hampering your progress, Leaderonomics can help you and your organisation achieve maximum potential.