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THE RISE OF THE GEEKS...

BUT DO THEY MAKE GOOD LEADERS?

By JENNI BIRCH
editor@leaderonomics.com

"Be nice to nerds. Chances are you’ll end up working for one."
– Bill Gates

This particular quote is usually discussed in schools to encourage students to avoid bullying or speaking up if they are the victims of this cowardly act.

While it’s certainly a feel-good statement, people often question its accuracy. Is it really the destiny of every nerd to take on a leadership position, or is the quote a way of asking people to play nice?

A LOOK AT SUCCESSFUL NERDS

Certainly, there is an abundance of successful nerds who can be looked upon for inspiration. Under 30 CEO provides a list of 10 successful nerds who have managed to accumulate a large fortune in a short space of time.

The list includes Bill Gates (Microsoft), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), Jack Dorsey (Twitter), and Jeff Bezos (Amazon). Certainly, not all of them earned Latin honours – Gates and Zuckerberg are college dropouts – but they still qualify given their proficiency in the field of technology.

Part of the success of nerds can be attributed to a paradigm shift in the development of technology. The Independent suggests that the rise of Silicon Valley, as well as the emergence of the dotcom industries, saw computer science graduates emerge from their shells.

From being the unpopular, often-bullying kids in school, many have become financial powerhouses – thanks to their innovative ideas and coding skills.

Given that the digital industry seems to be showing no signs of slowing down, it is likely that more nerds will provide more success stories. Furthermore, nerds tend to work hard. Their work ethic helps drive them towards success, especially because they don’t usually let challenges stop them from finding solutions to defeat any roadblocks that stand in their way.

DOES FINANCIAL SUCCESS EQUATE GOOD LEADERSHIP?

At the other end of the scale is the argument that the abovementioned cases are more the exception than the rule, even if their numbers have been increasing over the years.

While there are nerds who have made it big in their respective niches, there are also those who remain ‘nerds’ in their organisations.

Additionally, there are also those who put nerds in a stereotypical box – arguing that nerds are socially awkward, and therefore will not be able to cope when they are placed in a leadership position, as they won’t be able to inspire and deliver strategies the same way an extrovert leader can.

CAN NERDS MAKE GOOD LEADERS?

With all that being said, can nerds be good leaders?

There is no hard and fast rule with regard to what makes a good leader, because it really depends on the individual.

Certainly, there are nerds who struggle to handle themselves in social situations, while there are those who thrive in such circumstances. This doesn’t have to be in the context of a formal leadership position. In fact, interactions with other members of the team are also important factors to determine how good a leader can be, particularly in terms of their contributions.

Something nerds tend to have in their favour is their ability to learn quickly.

Gene Marks wrote in a Forbes article that business itself is not that difficult to learn, which means that understanding its ins and outs will not be as challenging for professionals who have the capability to absorb substantial amounts of information.

Furthermore, Marks argued that nerds running a company are likely to be respected and helped by other nerds within the industry, because they essentially have the same language, experienced the same kind of challenges, and also have similar interests.

He added that they can always hire other experts to help them out, including salesmen with the gift of the gab who can compensate for their limited social skills.

In fact, shying away from the social interactions can also be remedied. A good example is Marissa Mayer, the former chief executive officer (CEO) of Yahoo! Inc.

Fast Company spoke about her Vogue interview in 2014 where she revealed that she forces herself to attend parties and other social events so that she has salesmen with the gift of the gab who can compensate for her limited social skills.

This in turn means that she is always learning new skills on how to adapt to various situations.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The bottom line is, being a nerd does not automatically make someone a good leader. However, the traits nerds nurture can help them to perform well in leadership roles.

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WHAT THE LEADEROMICS MEDIA TEAM HAS TO SAY

There was a time when nerds were known to work behind the scenes to make information technology work in an organisation.

They were the cog in the wheel – often the ‘unseen’ faces of a business, except maybe for technology veterans such as Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Michael Dell, and the likes.

Then came the age of social media and disruptive technology where data security, cloud technology, financial technology, and digitalisation became more prominent and too hard to ignore. The world we know today has changed rapidly since. Businesses that are not catching up with technology are putting themselves in a position of dire irrelevance.

Love it or loathe it – with Industry 4.0, the Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI) are ‘invading’ our lives, homes, and workplaces.

The rise of the geeks behind technology giants such as Facebook, Amazon, Google, Twitter, Uber, Tesla, and Alibaba has caused the leaders behind these big names to be greatly admired as ‘heroes’ of our future.

People are looking up to these game-changing leaders for solutions to our everyday problems – from the way we consume information to our mode of transportation (of course, they have their haters too because of their disruptive ideas and ventures into the unknown).

According to the DailyMail UK and E-News, the geeks are also winning the hearts of many beauties, including Emma Watson (with tech geek William Knight), Miranda Kerr (with Evan Spiegel, Snapchat CEO) and Amber Heard (with Tesla boss Elon Musk). Is the geek getting chic? Have you noticed how many young professionals are donning thick-rimmed spectacles to look like nerds? Could this be the ‘revenge of the geeks’ as they begin to take on the world and shape our future?

We’ll let you be the judge.
Making It Happen

Why Progress Belongs to the Dreamers

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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What truly leaves an impression on us is what they’ve achieved, what kind of legacy they’ve built, and how they’ve worked to make the world a better place. People who are comfortable don’t have the motivation to move forward. People who focus solely on the short-term will lack the ability to move forward. Progress belongs to the dreamers who can see what can come from their passion, perseverance, hard work and commitment and then do everything to make sure their dreams come alive.

What makes short-term gains so tempting, even when we recognise that the benefits are fleeting? While it feels good to have five or ten extra minutes in bed, if it means that we miss out on our morning coffee or breakfast, we could find ourselves suffering the negative consequences of our decision throughout the day. Similarly, when it comes to making life-style changes such as deciding to exercise regularly, many people eagerly commit to the idea as it pops into their head. However, when the time comes to put their idea into practice, those poor new sports shoes are often used just a few times before finding a permanent home at the back of the cupboard.

Making decisions for our long-term benefit is tough, particularly with all the immediate temptations and distractions that offer us a way to enjoy ourselves now and with minimal effort. Who wants to drag themselves out of the morning alarm, for just ‘five more minutes’ of sleepy comfort?’ After a few times, those accumulated ‘five minutes’ add up to a significant amount of time lost that can mean all the difference between having a good start to the day and being exhausted from rushing around at the last minute.

Making the Decision to Change

What is it that makes short-term gains so tempting, even when we recognise that the benefits are fleeting? While it feels good to have five or ten extra minutes in bed, if it means that we miss out on our morning coffee or breakfast, we could find ourselves suffering the negative consequences of our decision throughout the day.

Similarly, when it comes to making life-style changes such as deciding to exercise regularly, many people eagerly commit to the idea as it pops into their head. However, when the time comes to put their idea into practice, those poor new sports shoes are often used just a few times before finding a permanent home at the back of the cupboard.

Making decisions for our long-term benefit is tough, particularly with all the immediate temptations and distractions that offer us a way to enjoy ourselves now and with minimal effort. Who wants to drag themselves out of the morning alarm, for just ‘five more minutes’ of sleepy comfort?’ After a few times, those accumulated ‘five minutes’ add up to a significant amount of time lost that can mean all the difference between having a good start to the day and being exhausted from rushing around at the last minute.

Making Things Happen

Part of the challenge lies within the battle between our narrative self and our experiencing self. Our narrative self paints a picture of what could be: “Exercise regularly and you’ll grow stronger and fitter, not to mention you’ll be happier and have more energy!” Meanwhile, our experiencing self focuses on our immediate satisfaction: “You said you were going to exercise, and that’s a great goal you should totally commit to... but now? When you’re so comfortable? When there are more important things to do? You can exercise any time you want – why rush?”

“Willpower might enable people to override impatient impulses after they’re formed, whereas imagining future consequences might affect the formation of the impulses themselves.”

When we make decisions, whether they relate to our personal or professional life, we should ask ourselves: “What will this mean for me in the long run?” Choosing chicken over fish isn’t going to make a difference, but if we’re presented with a choice that clearly has long-term consequences, that’s when we need to be more considerate and think through the pros and cons of each option.

Thinking About Long-Term Consequences

In a fascinating study at the University of California, researchers Adrianna Jenkins and Ming Hsu found that we make better decisions when we think about the long-term consequences compared to when we try to use our willpower to overcome impulsive behaviours.

In their study, the researchers offered participants a choice between taking a certain amount of money within 24 hours and waiting one month to receive a larger amount. This choice was presented as a ‘this-or-that’ option to some of the participants.

At the same time, a second group were presented with the choice in a manner that highlighted the chain of events that would follow for each: take a small amount now but receive nothing in a month’s time; or, hold out for a month and receive a bigger sum of money.

As found in the study, those in the second group who received the nuanced message were more inclined to hold off for the extra reward.

Brain scans from a later experiment found that areas of the brain associated with willpower were more active when we’re presented with an either-or choice.

On the other hand, when we’re encouraged to consider a chain of events resulting from the choices we make, brain activity increases in areas associated with our imagination.

Following the study, Jenkins shared an interesting insight from the findings:

“Willpower might enable people to override impulsive impulses after they’re formed, whereas imagining future consequences might affect the formation of the impulses themselves.”

The study is intriguing for a number of reasons, not least of all with regard to the importance of how we go about making choices. I can recall conversations with budding entrepreneurs who were surprised to hear me counter their argument that business is all about making money and becoming a success. “But surely that’s the whole point of starting a business – to make money?”

The whole point of starting a business, I would tell them, is to create value. This could be done by solving a particular problem or offering a high-quality service. Maybe they have a fantastic product that can change the lives of many people – the whole point of any business is to enable those behind it to answer the questions: “Why am I doing this? What purpose am I serving?” If those can be sufficiently answered, everything else will follow.

By keeping the focus on the purpose of what we do – the vision of the long-term result – we invest ourselves deeply in working as hard as we can to transform that vision into a reality. It keeps us in line with our mission and our values, and the meaning that’s derived from there is what drives us to delivering exactly what we set out to achieve.

Looking at the long-term and imagining the possibilities, we’re happy to sacrifice short-term comfort for long-term gain and to create a legacy. Steve Jobs didn’t care so much about the money he made; he was instead obsessed with transforming an entire industry that would create life-changing experiences for people around the world. He was a master visionary, and it was his ability to imagine what could be that allowed him to shape the future as he saw it.

This is the foundation of success. People might look up the net worth of Warren Buffet or Mark Zuckerberg, and those numbers might impress them briefly. However, the numbers are soon forgotten.

Progress belongs to the dreamers who can see what can come from their passion, perseverance, hard work and commitment and then do everything to make sure their dreams come alive.
THE ANTs IN YOUR MIND

IDENTIFY AND SQUASH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

By SONIA MCDONALD
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Do you have ANTs running freely in your mind? ANTs, or Automatic Negative Thoughts, are dangerous creatures.

ANTS are those negative thoughts that always seem to be in the back of your mind, regardless of the situation. ANTs make it impossible to relax and enjoy the moment, because they manage to snuff out the negative aspect of any event.

Negative thoughts rob you of being able to feel joy or happiness in the present. When you are unable to control your thoughts, negative thoughts leave you feeling worried, cynical, frustrated, drained, depressed, and defeated.

Over time, negative thoughts can have a dreadful impact on your physical and mental wellbeing, and your ability to achieve your life goals.

The good news is that despite how destructive ANTs are, most of us can learn how to regain control of our minds and retrain our brains to overcome the power of negative thoughts.

HOW ARE ANTS FORMED?

According to the Centre for Redevelopment Psychology, all of our thoughts – whether they are memories of actual events or simply random musings and dreams – come to mind as the result of nerve impulses.

Usually, there is some sort of internal or external event – such as a person, place, or thing – that triggers the firing of a nerve impulse to make our minds aware of the thought.

The nerve impulses generated by both positive and negative thoughts travel along the same pathways in our brain.

These pathways are flexible, so they can be shaped and controlled, allowing us over time, to literally reprogramme our brains.

No matter how painful, or negative some of our past memories might be, we can each learn to become aware of negative thoughts as they occur, and choose to replace these thoughts with more positive ones.

Over time, as we actively practice substituting positive thoughts for negative ones, we can break the power that negative thoughts and memories have over our lives, and move towards a more positive and healthier, frame of mind.

HOW TO SQUASH YOUR ANTS

1. Look for positives. To begin conquering your ANTs, you will first need to have some positive thoughts ready at hand so that you can substitute and focus on them rather than the negative thoughts, when they come to mind.

2. Identify your triggers. Once you have several positive thoughts to use in place of the negative thoughts, learn to identify the triggers of your negative thoughts.

Are there certain events, places, or people that seem to increase the likelihood of their occurrence? Learn to remain calm when you come into contact with one of these triggers.

3. Learn to relax. Learning relaxation techniques, such as mindfulness and meditation, and focusing on your breathing, can help you remain calm when you encounter a trigger for your ANTs.

As you become aware of a negative thought, remain calm – focus on your breathing or other relaxation technique – and then, consciously substitute a positive thought in its place.

4. Preparing for the trigger. Let’s use an example. Do you often feel nervous before you have to give a speech? Does your mind become filled and eventually overwhelmed with images of the mistakes you just know you will make?

By the time you actually give your speech, the ANTs have full control. Your negative thoughts become a self-fulfilling prophecy and you make the same mistakes that you obsessed over.

In a situation like this, it is important to realise beforehand that you feel anxious in such a setting. Before the day of your speech, practice remaining calm, focusing on your breathing and then substituting your positive image in place of the ANTs.

In this case, you might imagine your positive image in place of the mistakes you just know you will make?

By the time you actually give your speech, the ANTs have full control. Your negative thoughts become a self-fulfilling prophecy and you make the same mistakes that you obsessed over.

In a situation like this, it is important to realise beforehand that you feel anxious in such a setting. Before the day of your speech, practice remaining calm, focusing on your breathing and then substituting your positive image in place of the ANTs.

You can apply the same techniques to virtually any negative thought or memory that comes to mind.

By identifying your negative thoughts and memories, actively watching for them, and substituting a positive thought in their place, you will squash your ANTs and unleash your true potential.

Over time, you will overcome more obstacles, reach more goals, improve your sense of self-worth and wellbeing, and even improve your overall health!

Sonia is the CEO of LeadershipHQ, and has vast experience in organisational development, learning and development, facilitating, and leadership development. She is also passionate about building long-term partnerships with her clients and making sure she achieves the best results for their business and people. To get in touch with Sonia, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

TRAVEL, LEARN AND LEAD IN CHINA
An Exclusive CEO Trip

This 22-26 October, we’re heading to China to learn from one of the world’s top and fastest growing businesses, and you’re invited!

Exclusively for CEOs and founders only, the trip will bring you to Alibaba’s headquarters and also include visits to other companies in Hangzhou and Shanghai, where you will be able to meet and learn from both Chinese and global leaders who are at the top of their game in today’s business world.

This special trip will be led by Roshan Thiran, who will also be teaching and bringing insights to you throughout the journey. Only 15 spaces available. Registration closes on 31 August 2018.

For more information and to book your place, please contact Thian at info@leaderonomics.com.
I n this age of digital disruption, many organisations are making transformational changes to keep up with the ever-changing needs of their customers.

A highly engaged workforce is essential in helping organisations remain relevant in increasingly competitive markets. However, keeping employees engaged is no easy task — many factors come into play, such as current salary and benefits, opportunity for career progression within the organisation, and appreciation from the management.

In fact, a 2018 report by Aon on global employee engagement trends showed that career opportunities was one of the top three factors that affected employee engagement levels. A 2017 LinkedIn survey that sought to provide insight into the minds of professionals in Malaysia revealed that while salary is a major consideration in career decisions, intrinsic motivators — such as cultural fit within the organisation and growth opportunities — are also essential.

Why employees switch jobs (excluding the salary factor):
- More challenging work (34%)
- Better skills and interest fit (32%)
- More growth opportunities (32%)

Why employees stay:
- Opportunities for challenge or to improve skills (58%)
- Opportunities for promotion (19%)
- Confident about company’s future (38%)
- LinkedIn Talent Solutions, Inside the Mind of Today’s Candidate, (April 2017).

Leaders often have no clue when their employees are dissatisfied in their current roles, and are taken by surprise when the employee tenders his or her resignation. However, how can the leaders of an organisation possibly know what their employees are really thinking?

The answer is simple: Leaders need to start having open, honest conversations with their employees.

**CAREER CONVERSATIONS**

Career conversations can be described as any deep and meaningful dialogue between leaders and their reports, paired with action plans around measurable goals.

These conversations are not to be confused with performance reviews, which generally reflect on the past and help employees understand how they can do better moving forward. Career conversations on the other hand, are forward-looking.

The outcome of these conversations should take into account the employee’s motivations and their vision for the future, before setting concrete and measurable actions that the employee can take towards achieving their goals. This is crucial for both employees and leaders alike. Our careers form a large part of our lives, and giving proper thought to our goals and how to achieve them can greatly impact our success.

Career conversations are one of the best ways for leaders to learn what motivates their employees and build a strong working relationship with them. These conversations not only help leaders understand how to help their employees grow, but more importantly, how to help them grow towards what matters to them.

Remember, employees are interested in growth as well as fit within an organisation. No matter how much professional and personal growth they experience in their current role, it may not be enough to keep them engaged if it does not match their long-term goals.

“Career conversations are one of the best ways for leaders to learn what motivates their employees and build a strong working relationship with them. These conversations not only help leaders understand how to help their employees grow, but more importantly, how to help them grow towards what matters to them.”

**THE CHALLENGE**

Many people think that they are already having career conversations, but more often than not, what they are doing are performance reviews. Even for those who do have some form of career conversation, it’s usually done with a check-the-box mentality.

Here’s a prime example: the individual development plan (IDP). When we’re asked to come up with an action plan in the form of an IDP, how many of us would start by asking ourselves: “What do I need to do next?”

Many leaders tend to focus on what they think will help their team members, rather than asking for their input. This is where career conversations come in.

We believe that when an individual joins us, he or she becomes part of the family. This is why we launched career conversations — to take care of our employees and their goals, in line with our EVP,” says Chui.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

“We’re surprisingly unstructured when it comes to our careers — the one thing that we spend the better part of our lives on (besides sleep). We spend time planning family outings, gatherings with friends, and holidays, but why do we rarely put in the same amount of thought in planning our careers?”

It’s time we stepped up and took charge of our career development. If your organisation isn’t having career conversations yet, take the initiative to start one with your team leader. It is, after all, your future.
Crisis: Any situation that is threat- ening or could threaten to harm your company, your people or property, seriously disrupt your business, significantly damage reputation and/or negatively impact the bottom line.

Crisis Communications: The process of managing communications during an actual crisis. Crisis Communications Team: A small team of senior executives and internal or external spokespersons who will lead the organisation during a crisis. Crisis Communications Plan: A document that outlines the organisational and operational communications during a crisis situation must have:

PRE-CRISIS

1 Anti-crisis planning
2 Spokesperson training
3 Identifying and training spokespeople
4 Notification systems and monitoring
5 Establishing notification and monitoring systems
6 Identify and know your stakeholders
7 Effective ways to disseminate information

Assessing the crisis situation is, therefore, the first critical communications step you can’t take in advance. If you haven’t prepared ahead of time, your reaction will be delayed by the time it takes your staff or quickly-hired consultants to run through steps 1 to 7.

Crisis Communications Team:

A small team of senior executives should be identified as the primary internal team responsible for crisis communications on all levels of the organisation. This team should be composed of a representative from each area of the organisation (e.g. customer service, human resources, legal, planning, marketing, public relations, etc.). The Crisis Communications Team will work together to develop a crisis communications plan that is specific to their organisation and will be implemented in the event of any crisis.

Crisis Communication Plan:

A crisis communication plan is developed to address specific crisis events and situations. The plan should include the following elements:

1. Identifying potential crisis situations
2. Developing communication strategies for each situation
3. Identifying spokespersons and their roles
4. Establishing notification systems
5. Identifying key stakeholders and their needs

Crisis Communication Best Practices:

1. Be prepared: Develop a crisis communication plan and train spokespersons.
2. Communicate clearly and frequently:
   - Use clear and concise language.
   - Provide regular updates.
   - Use multiple communication channels.
3. Be transparent:
   - Provide honest and accurate information.
   - Admit mistakes and take responsibility.

Crisis Communication Examples:

1. When a natural disaster occurs:
   - Establish a communication plan to address the situation.
   - Use multiple communication channels to reach stakeholders.
2. When a product recall is necessary:
   - Develop a communication strategy to inform customers about the recall.
   - Work with stakeholders to limit the impact.

Crisis Communication Case Studies:

1. Google’s data breach in 2017:
   - Google quickly communicated with its users about the breach.
   - The company took responsibility and offered steps to protect users.
2. Toyota’s recall of defective vehicles in 2010:
   - Toyota communicated with customers about the recall and the steps they were taking to fix the issue.
   - The company worked to build trust and regain customer confidence.

Crisis Communication Tools:

1. Crisis Communication Software:
   - Provides tools for developing communication strategies.
   - Enables quick and easy distribution of information.
2. Social Media:
   - Provides a platform for real-time communication.
   - Enables monitoring of public sentiment.

Crisis Communication Tips:

1. Be prepared:
   - Develop a crisis communication plan.
   - Train spokespersons.
2. Communicate clearly and frequently:
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   - Provide regular updates.
   - Use multiple communication channels.
3. Be transparent:
   - Provide honest and accurate information.
   - Admit mistakes and take responsibility.

Crisis Communication Lessons:

1. Communications failures:
   - Failure to communicate effectively with stakeholders.
   - Failure to take responsibility for mistakes.
2. Communications successes:
   - Effective communication with stakeholders.
   - Taking responsibility for mistakes.

Crisis Communication Resources:

1. Crisis Communication Books:
   -提供了危机沟通策略和步骤的指南。
   -帮助建立信任和恢复客户信心。
2. Social Media:
   - 提供了实时沟通的平台。
   - 允许监控公众情绪。

Crisis Communication Success Stories:

1. Google’s data breach in 2017:
   - Google迅速与用户沟通数据泄露的问题。
   - 该公司承担责任，并提供步骤保护用户。
2. Toyota’s recall of defective vehicles in 2010:
   - 丰田迅速与客户沟通召回问题。
   - 该公司采取措施解决该问题。

Crisis Communication Tools:

1. Crisis Communication Software:
   - 提供了开发沟通策略的工具。
   - 允许快速和轻松地分发信息。
2. Social Media:
   - 提供了实时沟通的平台。
   - 允许监控公众情绪。
THE POWER OF ROLE MODELS

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP SENSES OF PERSONALITY

By ROSHAN THIRAN
AND EVA CHRISTODOULOUL
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A T 19 months, Helen Keller suf-
f ered an acute congestion of the stomach and brain which left her deaf and blind. She struggled with life until she met Anne Sullivan, who became her role model.

Anne challenged her to greatness and she succeeded, becoming an inspiration to millions, including me (Roshan) as a young boy. I also had a football coach, the late Datuk Mohd Dahari, who became a huge role model – he kept pushing me out of my comfort zone.

Role models are critical for a child’s growth and development. At Leaderonomics, Eva and her research team recently conducted a survey amongst parents to find out who were role models to children in Malaysia and to explore insights on these role models.

The majority of respondents had more than one child, ranging from infants to young adults.

ROLE MODELS

The question asked in the survey in relation to role models was “Does your child have a role model?”

To this question, 49.5% of respondents answered yes, 6.8% answered no and 43.4% answered maybe.

From those who responded yes, 32.7% mentioned parents (either the father or mother as a role model), 9.7% mentioned uncles, grandparents and other extended family members, 7% mentioned people that their kids interacted with (i.e. teachers, community, colleagues), 3.7% mentioned a specific famous personality (Cristiano Ronaldo, Angelina Jolie, Jack Ma) or a film character like Rocky Balboa.

Two percent mentioned religious figures. There were many in line with other studies conducted in other countries on choices of role models.

Some parents explained on why and how they think their children came to have these role models.

For example, the parent whose child looks up to Ronaldo explains: “My son loves to play football and watches football on [the] Internet most of the time.”

“He idolises Ronaldo because he is not only at good at playing football, but also helps people in need, visits sick children and inspires people that dreams do come true, especially since he comes from a poor family himself.”

“My son would follow Ronaldo’s life story and he knows Ronaldo’s hard work – from poverty to stardom.” Another stated Rocky Balboa is a huge role model – from poverty to stardom. “He never gave up.”

The story with the ducks and the swan is another classic. It is a popular story and it inspires people that life’s possibilities becomes dramatically transformed.

Gibson, an academic researcher on role models, categorises role models into eight categories: positive, negative, global, specific, close, distant, up and across.

Figure 1

Positive
Individuals emulate the role model

Negative
Individuals avoid being like the role model

Global
Individuals admire all qualities of the role model

Specific
Individuals admire specific qualities of the role model

Close
Individuals learn about specific task from close role models

Distant
Individuals admire the conduct of distant heroes

Up
Individuals’ role models are in superior positions

Across/ Down
Individuals’ role models are in equal or junior positions

So, the story goes on and on about how sad this ugly duckling’s life was until, by chance, he saw some other swans flying overhead and his vision of life’s possibilities becomes dramatically transformed.

He observed his new role models (the swans) and talked to them. He soon realised he had the ability to do so much more. The story ends with the ugly duckling transforming into a beautiful swan in his new environment with the other swans.

Why did this transformation happen? Not because the ducks didn’t train him well. They did, but he could never achieve his full potential. Having the right role model matters tremendously, just as it did for The Ugly Duckling.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT INFLUENCE

In the survey, parents whose children had no role models, about 3.5%, explained that this was due to age (too young) or lack of importance in the family of encouraging role models for their kids.

Many parents want their kids to have role models but did not know how to go about identifying one. Parents play a huge role in encouraging and intentionally matching role models for their kids.

Role models provide learning and inspiration, which helps individuals to define themselves. Individuals choose their role models and the qualities that they wish to emulate.

This makes role models distinct from mentors (who may be allocated) and models of behaviour promoted by organisations or communities.

Individuals’ use of role models often comes in the form of judging themselves against the standards role models set and thus seeking to become more similar (or different) to them.

Gibson, an academic researcher on role models, groups role models into eight categories, (see Figure 1).

Children and youth watch and imitate people around them and the people they look up to. They observe and learn from those they deem successful adults, including their parents and teachers.

It is critical that we not only surround our children and youth with positive role models, but that we also check ourselves and model the behaviours, beliefs and character traits that we wish to see grow and develop in our kids.

But we may not always be able to control who our children choose to look up to or emulate. They may become beholden by a celebrity for example, or they may admire a fictional character or a popular student in school, which we may not approve of.

Anderson and Callavaro (2002) looked at children as young as 10 years in the United States and tried to understand who these children chose as their role models.

In their study, more respondents described a person they knew (65%) rather than a person they did not personally know (45%).

Parents, followed by other family members, were the most popular choices. Role identification theories explain that people are attracted to and motivated by those similar to themselves (Kohlberg, 1963).

Regardless of how awesome Justin Bieber or Ramelle Lukasi are, most of the time, you are a bigger influence to your child’s growth and development than any celebrity or superstar will ever be. So, play your part wisely.

Anderson and Callavaro explain: “One feature of role modelling is that children tend to choose role models whom they find relevant and with whom they can compare themselves.”

What parents can do is discuss with their children the characteristics that make these role models so desirable and encourage them to reflect on what makes them attractive and whether these are worthwhile traits to emulate.

It is also important to remember that there is no such thing as a perfect person – if you think of all the famous leaders of the world you will soon find at least one area in their life that is dark; perhaps it was their temper, or their infidelity, or their focus on their work to the detriment of their family.

Discussing with children both the positive and negative aspects of their role models will help them understand that there are certain aspects that would be great to emulate, while avoiding others.

It also helps them to realise they cannot attain perfection and should not feel bad and should forgive themselves when they fall to meet high standards.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Can parents determine the choice of their child’s role models? Whilst it would be great to control the exposure our children have to various people and personalities they meet, watch, or read about, it is often impossible to push them into aiming at someone as their role model.

What parents can do is intentionally surround and introduce their children to people with great values and qualities. Follow-up by constantly discussing the people they interact with, their values and good qualities as well as the role models comprise people when your kids know personally.

Celebrities and politicians are usually poor role models as you don’t see their lives up close and personal and they generally disappoint at some point.

Tiger Woods and Ryan Giggs were role models to many but their infamy caused great grief to many followers.

IN CONCLUSION

Generally the best and most enduring role models are people you know – people your children encounter in a real way. Like you.

That is why, as parents, being able to provide exposure to and options for role models, and being willing to provide a dialogue that is open enough for children to make sense of the people and personalities they come across, will have great impact in ensuring your child does not end up as an ugly duck but as a beautiful swan that can soar to greatness.

This is the second part of a series of articles based on the Leaderonomics’ 2018 Parenting Survey.

Missed the first article? Fret not! You can find it on pages 6–7 of our August 11 issue at bit.ly/ldrEmag. Be sure to keep a lookout for subsequent articles in print.

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SUBSCRIBE TODAY at bit.ly/subscribeld and get our e-mag delivered to your inbox weekly!
By SARAH LIM
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HOSTAGE TO THE MIND
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN A LIFE OR DEATH SITUATION?

There seemed to be no right or wrong answers to these questions, adding more weight to our decisions as it reflected on the kind of leader each of us might be in a similar situation.

There was no best practices or a lead- ership manual to refer to, not even sound counsel. It was down to his own personal values and leadership instincts to man- age a situation that no one else was will- ing to take responsibility for.

Like J.P. Mottu, many leaders do not have the luxury of being prepared before a crisis takes place. But through a collaboration between film director Edouard Getaz and former hostage negotiator and leadership expert George Kohlrieser, business leaders are now exposed to the kind of leadership dilemmas that J.P. Mottu had to face, through an immersive experience based on his true story and presented in cine- matic-thriller style.

THE EXPERIENCE
Together with a group of selected business leaders, I recently had the opportunity to experience InsideRisk for the very first time in Malaysia. The high-quality production allowed us to immerse ourselves in the case study and empathise with the main character. As the events of the story unfurled onscreen, our session moderator put us in the shoes of J.P. Mottu: probing us with questions that called for a deeper understanding of our values and belief systems and how they affect our decisions regarding people within our care.

What would you do, if there was no choice but to save a life by physically transporting a suitcase of cash into a country where the penalty, if caught, is up to seven years in prison?

What about the ethical implications that come with indirectly support- ing the business of extortion even if that wasn’t your intention? How do you determine the price of someone else’s life and then negotiate for it?

What if you had to rely on a stran- ger to complete the job – how do you deal with trust? How do you face insurmountable odds and keep yourself going? At which point are you allowed to give up, and at what cost?

Move into the world of immersive learning

Based on the true story of Swiss executive J.P. Mottu, who in 1988 found himself in charge of saving an employee kidnapped by Colombian rebels, the program thrusts participants into real-life negotiations that had been kept secret for over 25 years.

As individuals and in groups, participants are immersed in an interactive experience incorporating film, multimedia, and live moderation. The high-stake situation experience allows them to exchange invaluable insights and forge memorable relationships with peers.

If you’re interested in learning more about InsideRisk, you can watch the trailer at bit.ly/InsideRiskLDR.
What is the difference between a leader and a politician? It is the attitude towards personal popularity. Instead of focusing on potential votes, the leader focuses on the rightness of his cause and his mission. Here’s the truth – followers who form the majority do not usually welcome any changes to their comfort zone. Yet, leaders – by definition – are those who have a righteous discontent with the status quo and seek to achieve that which is yet to be understood by others – a definite recipe for unpopularity.

This is the case when an organisation goes through a ‘culture transformation initiative’.

More often than not, the emphasis is on cascading programmes rather than building a strong team of change agents who are not afraid to be unpopular.

The success of your organisation’s culture change depends on whether you act as an unpopular leader or play the role of a popular politician.

The Benefits of Being an Unpopular Leader

1. You will achieve long-term goals

Leaders see a vision which others do not. This is because most people are only focused on immediate gratification and are not willing to commit themselves to a greater cause. Sure, there will be opposition to your goals, but when you experience the fruits of your labour, you will have the final satisfaction.

2. You will gain authentic friendships and relationships

Nothing sweats your fair-weather friends better than a time of testing and hardship. In the workplace, are you constantly aiming to meet the goals of your employer or are you more concerned about what your colleagues might say? Do not sacrifice doing what is right for the sake of pleasing the crowd.

3. You will offer wisdom to the next generation

Your employees, your children – they are all watching you. Character is more often taught than taught. If you live your life by popular opinion, then there is no real value-add from you that will impact lives.

The degree of your unpopularity is directly proportional to the single-mindedness of your vision. Practically speaking, you do not need to go around looking for unpopularity – it will come as a result of the strength of your vision for the culture transformation.

Focus on Your Vision

Your job as a leader is to keep the focus clear and avoid distractions at all costs. Your effectiveness as a leader is to determine that your followers also understand and accept the clarity of that vision. There is no such thing as an over-communication of vision.

Here are three leadership actions that vision. There is no such thing as an over-communication of vision.

1. Recognise contribution

Be attentive to what others are doing – in particular, employees need to see a correlation between their effort and the ensuing results.

Even indirect tasks like administration need to be recognised and praised. Do not spend so much time behind closed doors that you are no longer aware of what others are doing.

2. Reprove deviance

Let’s face it – there are plenty of distractions during the day. The seriousness of your vision is tested by your courage to reprimand those who do not contribute to the overall goal. If those who deviate are not brought back to line, you will be taken as a weak leader and lose the respect of your team.

3. Reinforce communication

Silence is not golden. In fact, unless the leader speaks up, others will take advantage and misinterpret your silence to their advantage.

In other words, if you do not speak regularly to your team, who will? The one whom people listen to ends up being the one they follow.

Be a Visionary

A manager, when promoted, looks forward to better perks and compensation. On the other hand, a leader who is promoted seeks greater challenges and a higher vision.

Companies are seeking visionaries who are clear about where they are going. As they get there, the prospect of opposition does not hinder them – it only motivates them to do better and become stronger. If it means being unpopular along the way, then so be it.

The way to achieve your vision of culture transformation requires leadership courage rather than just leadership competency.
ARROGANCE OR CONFIDENCE?

10 SIGNS THAT GOOD LEADERSHIP IS SLIPPING AWAY

By SCOTT COCHRANE
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THERE’s a fine line between confidence and arrogance, but it’s a line that effective leaders dare not cross if they want to be a leader worth following. Confidence is achieved when a track record of competence, experience and wisdom all comes together. The result is a compelling sense of boldness that teams love to follow. But if you’re not careful, your sense of confidence can begin to slide over the line into arrogance. The arrogant leader is not just someone with a strong sense of self-assurance; it’s someone with an unhealthy sense of self-importance. When that happens, teams begin to pull away. Loyalty becomes harder to achieve. And inevitably, results begin to suffer.

ARE YOU ARROGANT?

Although the danger to slide from confidence into arrogance is very real, it can be avoided. And the best way to avoid the slide is to watch out for these 10 arrogance indicators:

Instead of an open-door policy, you are using an invitation-only policy.

Instead of deflecting praise, you are absorbing praise.

Instead of shielding your team from blame, you are exposing your team to blame.

Instead of setting a good example, you are setting a bad one.

Instead of deferring to feedback, you are deflecting it.

Instead of focusing on team goals, you are starting to focus on personal achievement.

Instead of engaging your team, you are starting to drive your team.

Instead of being the first to listen, you are starting to become the first to talk.

Instead of learning and developing, you are starting to rest and stagnate.

Instead of leading from your passion, you are starting to lead from your position.

CHECK AND BALANCE

Give yourself this simple assessment test from time to time, or better yet, ask a trusted colleague to give you their perspective of you through the lens of these assessments.

At the first sign that a hint of arrogance is creeping in, do whatever it takes to make a change. Because people want to follow confidence, not arrogance.

Scott is the vice president (International Ministries) of Willow Creek Association, an association that serves leaders through world-class leadership experiences and resources. To connect with him, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

EXPLORING THE MIND OF A FILM-MAKER

Ever wondered what it would be like to save someone from a hostage situation? Leaderonomics CEO Roshan Thiran sat down with InsideRisk founder and film-maker Edouard Getaz (left) on The Leaderonomics Show to discuss his transition from law to film-making – among other topics.

Stay tuned for this exclusive interview which is coming your way soon. In the meantime, head over to our YouTube channel for more leadership videos: bit.ly/LDRmedia

To connect with him, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

To read all about InsideRisk as told by Leaderonomer Sarah Lim, who recently experienced it for the first time, visit www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for FREE!

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

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There are certainly many positive types of pride. But pride isn’t always positive. It can also mean conceit, arrogance, or superiority. This kind of pride is based on self-centredness, and it’s destructive. How do we solve the problem of pride? Read it here: bit.ly/INIPride

Humility cannot be a substitute for leadership skills and capabilities, and your skills as a leader cannot compensate for the absence of humility. Check out this article at: bit.ly/LDRhumility

How much of a good listener are you? There is more to listening than you think. Our digital learning content specialist Nik Najihah shares her views on effective listening. Listen to the podcast: bit.ly/EffectiveListeningSkills

GUIDE IS POWERED BY

The Science of Building Leaders

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 18 August 2018
In the face of so much contradictory information, what are you supposed to do if you want to live a happier life? Just forget about all that subjective advice and focus your energy and attention on science-proven facts. Dr. Travis Bradberry shares five tricks to relieving stress here: bit.ly/StressStrick

In conclusion
As the challenges faced in today’s world become more complicated, the solutions are remarkably simple. Focusing on the five pillars of health – sleep, breathe, nourish, movement and thought – gives a simple and sustainable framework with which to take control of one’s health.

There has never been a better opportunity for leaders to lead and affect this profound and positive change. A healthy company is a company that people will want to work in, and a company that people will want to work with.

If business is truly the foundation on which our society is built, it’s a great time for leaders to step up and lead the change that is so badly needed.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich is a corporate health specialist and author of A Life Less Stressed: The Five Pillars of Health and Wellness. Share your wellness tips with us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

Want to get a handle of your stress? On the Success Circuit, Karen shares ways to identify sources of stress and touches on the role of leaders in building an environment conducive for employees to perform well. On an individual level, she also shares some practical tips on how to alleviate stress. Check it out here: bit.ly/Schandlingstress
DEALING WITH ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT

By Eric Lau
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L

T me begin by stating the obvious. We are all different from each other. One can do an exercise with a group of about 100 people where each person holds a piece of paper with a picture on it. These papers are all different. If you place all these papers on a table, you would be able to see a range of pictures. This exercise signifies the fact that we are all different. When we show the pictures, we see that most of the pictures are of what we consider to be beautiful. However, if you ask the same group of people to show you a picture of what they consider to be beautiful, you will see a completely different picture. This exercise signifies that we are all different in our perceptions of what is beautiful. This is true not only in the world of art but also in the world of music.

There is a saying that says, “If you don’t agree with something, it’s because you haven’t thought enough.” This is true in the world of music as well. In the world of music, there are different genres of music, each with its own characteristics. Furthermore, there are different styles within each genre, each with its own unique characteristics. This is true not only in the world of music but also in the world of art. In the world of art, there are different styles of painting, each with its own unique characteristics. This is true not only in the world of art but also in the world of music.

The above is just one example of how different we are from each other. When we consider the world of music, we see that there are different genres of music, each with its own characteristics. Furthermore, there are different styles within each genre, each with its own unique characteristics. This is true not only in the world of music but also in the world of art. In the world of art, there are different styles of painting, each with its own unique characteristics. This is true not only in the world of art but also in the world of music.

Each of these is not addressed promptly and directly, it can eventually lead to an organizational breakdown. Resolving workplace conflicts is a serious matter. Once conflicts are identified, they must be “wiped out” as if they never existed. This is called conflict resolution.

According to our experiences, it is not easy to engage in a healthy way. As a result, it is important to have a good understanding of the different stages in conflict resolution. In this article, we will explore the five stages of conflict resolution.

The five stages of conflict resolution are:

1. **Avoiding**: This is when you simply avoid and choose not to engage in the issue. You are not going to get involved in the other party’s problem. You are not addressing your own needs.

2. **Compromising**: This is when you compromise on your position to reach a middle ground. You are trying to find a solution that is acceptable to both parties. This is often a good approach to take when the conflict is not very significant.

3. **Collaborating**: This is when you work together to find a mutually beneficial solution. You are trying to find a solution that is acceptable to both parties. This is often a good approach to take when the conflict is significant and requires a collaborative solution.

4. **Competing**: This is when you are determined to win the conflict. You are not willing to compromise on your position. This is often a good approach to take when the conflict is very significant and requires a competitive solution.

5. **Avoiding**

Conflict resolution is an important skill in the workplace. It is essential to learn how to resolve conflicts effectively. In this article, we will explore the five stages of conflict resolution and how to identify the most appropriate stage for a given situation.

**CONCLUSION**

Conflict resolution is a skill that can be learned. By understanding the different stages of conflict resolution, you can identify the most appropriate stage for a given situation. This will help you to resolve conflicts more effectively and efficiently. In conclusion, conflict resolution is an important skill in the workplace. By learning the different stages of conflict resolution, you can identify the most appropriate stage for a given situation. This will help you to resolve conflicts more effectively and efficiently.