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Selamat Hari Merdeka
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When you are stressed and worried

By ASEEM PURI

WHEN you are stressed and worried, you’re working hard and your results are on fire. And then in the middle of an otherwise raving performance review, your boss brings up the conflict you continue to have with another high-performing co-worker.

“You’ve got to work on being a better team player.”

Ouch.

You’ve always prided yourself on building healthy relationships. But you’ve got to admit, the tension isn’t good. And mention, your team can smell it too. How can you expect them to work as a team, when you can’t get along with your peer?

We see it all the time—the conflict, drama, and wasted energy between otherwise highly-competent high-performance co-workers. Stack-ranked performance management systems can aggravate tension, but we often find it’s more complex than an artificial competition.

If you’re neck deep in conflict with a high-performing co-worker, watch out for these behaviours.

1. Stress

The Problem: You’re passionate about your work and you’re nailing your role. You’re working hard and your results are on fire. But then in the middle of an otherwise raving performance review, your boss brings up the conflict you continue to have with another high-performing co-worker.

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2. Doctor another’s errors

The Problem: You’re trying some wild and crazy ideas, and you don’t want your peer to see how you’ll fail. Or, you got busy and forgot to share. I know you’ve never purposely withheld your great ideas, but your peers may not have the same interpretation.

The Solution: Peer feedback is best given off-line. Give your input early, and then you can nod in full support of the enhanced plan.

3. Avoiding conflicts

The Problem: You’re trying to resolve conflicts, but you can’t. What if you thought it through and turned to your colleagues to help?

The Solution: Conflict systems can aggravate tension, but you can help. The more you take a step back to consider and recognize your co-worker’s contribution.

4. Reactive feedback

The Problem: The surest way to lose friends and alienate people is to reject their feedback. If you stop hearing, they’ll stop talking (well, at least to your face).

The Solution: Be gracious and open to what they have to say. Pause to consider. If it’s stupid, shake it off. But always take the high road and thank them for their input.

5. Visible conflict

The Problem: When the praise is coming your way, it’s easy to get caught up in the emotion and just say “thank you”. And your co-worker is watching all this thinking, “Are you kidding me, he’s not even going to mention all the work I did?”

The Solution: This one is easy. Say “thank you” AND take a step back to consider and recognize your co-worker’s contribution.

7. Identity issues

The Problem: Alienating people is to reject their feedback. If you stop hearing, they’ll stop talking (well, at least to your face).

The Solution: Be gracious and open to what they have to say. Pause to consider. If it’s stupid, shake it off. But always take the high road and thank them for their input.

By KARIN HURT

7 WAYS TO CALL A TRUCE WITH ANOTHER HIGH-PERFORMER

7 COMMON SOURCES OF HIGH-PERFORMER CO-WORKER CONFLICT (AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD)

1. Stress

You’re bored more than stressed, worried and upset over whatever issue is troubling you. This might be shown in the form of anxiety, headache, angry emails and heated arguments with your better half at home. Its net benefit is zero. Its net cost is your health and happiness for the day.

2. Problem-focus, not solution-focus

All the worrying in the world cannot solve the issue. It can only create mental cobwebs that make things worse.

WORRYING ABOUT YOUR WORRIES

HOW WORRY AFFECTS YOU

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WORRYING ABOUT YOUR WORRIES

HOW WORRY AFFECTS YOU
By ROSHAN THIRAN
roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

F or as long as I can remember, my life has always been about taking action. I don’t like to talk about something for too long – I prefer to put my energy and motivation towards doing.

Actions don’t just speak louder than words – they push you towards whatever you’re working to achieve.

One of the most memorable conversations that I have stuck with over the years isn’t the most profound, but it has been deeply affecting. During a networking event some time ago, I got to talking with a public relations (PR) executive. She told me that being ‘put in the media’ and finding ‘the right effort’ into doing the best he could at university. When it came to the various stages of production, he was a veritable whiz kid.

SET SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS
In an effort to overcome her shortcomings, our budding PR executive (let’s call her Sarah) decided to set four ongoing actions when she realised how much she wanted to establish a career in media.

1. Attend two social events per month and initiate at least three conversations with strangers about their passions and why those passions exist.

2. Read the biographies of three to four people she admires in the media/ business world per month, setting aside two hours of reading every day. (14 hours of reading = one or two books per week.)

3. Contact agencies and individuals in PR/Media and offer to work for them for free in exchange for real-life experience of the industry. (This would be from week to week and during semester breaks.)

4. Try one new experience each week. This could be attending a conference or looking at your life in a different way. (Once a week, during the weeks of reading.)

Alongside her studies, Sarah began to put these four actions into place. It wasn’t easy, but she realised that her field of interest was one that required a ‘can do’ attitude.

OWN YOUR FUTURE
So many people have a tonne of great ideas about where they want to go and who they want to be – but ideas are useless if they remain as ideas.

Sarah realised that in the world of media, reading books and being technically skilled are important, but it takes more than just reading books to get by.

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE – START NOW!
During my conversation with Sarah, I asked her, “What made you set those actions for yourself?” There was a particular moment when a sense of urgency set in.

She replied, “My friend, who wanted to make films, would talk a lot about what he planned to do and where he’d end up. A lot of people were like that: their futures were like fantasies played out in their minds, but some of them seemed neither willing nor able to reach beyond the fantasy. I knew then that I had to do something different. Anyone can talk a good game, but I realised that – especially when it comes to media careers – it’s not enough to show up to class and score good grades, although I made sure to get that part down! But if you wait until the end of your degree to start gaining experience and building a strong network, you’re already four years behind. Four years is a long time in any industry – so many changes happen in that space of time.

Sometimes, I can drive people crazy with my ideas. It’s not that I talk so much about what I want to happen, but that I want to make it happen, now. If someone tells me that a particular idea could be rolled out within six months, I want it done in three. It’s not that I want to put myself or others under more pressure than necessary. It’s because, like Sarah, I realise that ideas are rarely unique: people will often have the same or similar ideas as you. The defining factor then becomes about who does it first. You might argue: “Doing something quicker could increase the risk of making mistakes.” That’s a valid point, and one that’s especially important to consider if you’re building aeroplanes, self-driving cars, or creating innovative medical treatments.

Nevertheless, being quicker off the mark doesn’t necessarily mean sacrificing quality. In my experience, people almost always overestimate the time it takes to get something done. A lot of people are cautious and they want to make sure every single detail is perfect, and then, they want to check them all ten times over – and then, they want to wait for the right moment – which rarely arrives when you expect it.

Sarah could have waited a year or two and hoped that she would grow more confident and self-assured as university prepared her for life in the media industry.

She could have networked and gained experience during her various place- ments, which would have included trying out new things. And she surely would have been required to read a number of books and articles for her assignments and exams.

Like her aspiring filmmaker friend, she could have focused her time solely on her studies and hoped it would be enough to send her on to her dream job.

DREAMS WITHOUT ACTIONS ARE WORTHLESS
The aspiring filmmaker ended up working in advertising. His technical brilliance and knowledge of the medium landed him a reliable, relatively secure job where he likely makes a comfortable living.

Certainly, that’s not a bad outcome, and maybe he’s helping to create great ads that are creative, bold, entertaining, and enticing. Maybe he’s forgotten about his dream of making films for the silver screen. Maybe he’s not.

My conversation with Sarah made me wonder: what might have happened if he had set in place similar actions to hers in order to maximise his chances of mani- festing his passion of making films?

What if he’d realised that talent alone doesn’t take you all the way? What if he’d taken the time to reach out to industry figures, or attended networking events, organised an amateur film festival, or started up a film-making group?

That’s a lot of ‘what-if’s’. I know the conversation wasn’t one that made me feel sorry for the budding filmmaker-cum- advertiser.

Instead, the conversation increased my gratitude for being someone who always works to push the boundaries, and reaffirmed my belief that ideas are nothing without action.

IN CONCLUSION
Our future is our own.

People may guide us, support us, and offer help along the way, but the biggest factor in how our life plays out is in the choices we make and how we consciously deploy the best of who we are today to provide the best opportunities for our- selves tomorrow.

This moment, right here, is where your future is shaped, and what you do – whether you’re active or passive – will determine how your journey unfolds.

Talent alone isn’t enough to help us realise our ambitions. To manifest a vision, we have to dream, to transform a dream, we have to be consistent in taking deliberate, determined actions that will lead us closer to the career and the life we want. No one else can take those actions for us.

Some people can have everything they need in life to achieve success, and yet they miss the mark. Others fight and strive against incredible odds to make more of themselves than even they could have imagined.

In the end, it’s not what you have or what you say that counts: it’s what you do with what you have, and how badly you want to succeed that paves the way for your dreams to be transformed into reality.

RealiSing yourDReam RequiReS taking Bold action
REALISING YOUR DREAM REQUIRES TAKING BOLD ACTION

F ollowing are my thoughts on why I think we sometimes fall short of our dreams.

1. She knew her potential and her weaknesses but refused to let those shortcomings define her. She knew ‘I am not’ is worlds apart from ‘I can never be’ – the first is rooted only in the present, and is change-able; only the second has a finality to it. The words we use in our self-narratives are more powerful than we realise.

2. She owned the potential of her future, but not the one that she refused to let those shortcomings define her. She knew ‘I am not’ is worlds apart from ‘I can never be’ – the first is rooted only in the present, and is change-able; only the second has a finality to it. The words we use in our self-narratives are more powerful than we realise.

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The onset of the digital era has had a major impact on consumer behaviour, purchasing patterns, payment methods, consumption habits and increasingly high expectations of service. These changes in behaviours are happening in both the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) environment, across industries and geographical borders. In essence, every organisation irrelevant of size and location will have to transform to remain relevant and competitive.

Data and analytics are major enablers in the digital era. It is a well-proven fact that organisations that ignore or fail to employ data and analytics will inevitably cease to exist.

**CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST**

Two of the major components of leveraging data and analytics in your organisation are culture and strategy.

Getting your business strategy or vision right will set your organisation’s flight path which, in turn, drives the operating and performance frameworks for your employees.

It is not an easy task and in most cases for small organisations, it is never completed mainly due to the inability of owners or managers to step back from the operational aspect of running the business.

However, without documenting the strategy or vision, it is near-impossible to map the data and analytics strategy beyond operational needs. Take for example, a specialist screw manufacturer.

The strategy could be, ‘The only screw manufacturer in Malaysia’, ‘The best screw manufacturer in Malaysia’, ‘The most value for money screw manufacturer in Malaysia’, ‘The biggest screw manufacturer in Malaysia’ or ‘The most reliable screw manufacturer in Malaysia’.

Each of the statements will point to a different data and analytics strategy and approach from what data you should collect to how to visualise the data to data science application.

However, without changing the culture of the organisation, we know that no matter what strategy we put in place, it cannot be executed. Small business owners need to acknowledge that they are the major and, in some cases, the only driving force of the organisational culture.

Resistant to change, hesitation in adopting new technology, suspicious of the benefits of data and analytics and a reluctance to investment are all hallmarks of an unhealthy culture. Also, be prepared to change your existing business model.

**IT IS NOT, BIG WILL EAT SMALL, IT IS, FAST WILL EAT SLOW**

Wise words from Rupert Murdoch the media mogul – never has this been truer.

The availability and affordability of data and analytics technology makes it a level playing field between large and small organisations when it comes to leveraging data. It means that small organisations can adopt the same technology as the bigger players.

**“IT’S THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE BUSINESS”**

Having the right data and analytics talent in the organisation is an important consideration when you are looking to leverage the data that you have.

It is crucial that you understand the roles within the data eco-system; namely, the data engineer, the data analyst, visualiser and the data scientist.

In a large percentage of small businesses, you will not have a need for a data scientist at the adoption stage.

The key role you should focus on is the data engineer. Getting your data right is your main priority. The data engineer will be responsible for the capture, transfer and storage of your data.
Happiness comes in so many different forms that it can be hard to grasp. Unhappiness, on the other hand, is easy to identify: you know it when you see it, and you definitely know when it’s taken a hold of you.

And let’s face it — happiness and work do not always go hand in hand. A 2013 Gallup study, which reported data from more than 180 million people, found that just 13% of us consider ourselves to be ‘happily engaged at work’.

Those who do rate themselves as happy are 36% more motivated, six times more energised, and twice as productive as their unhappy counterparts.

Happiness actually has less to do with your circumstances than you might think. A University of Illinois study found that people who earn the most (more than $10 million annually) are only a smidge happier than the average Joe and Janes who work for them, and psychologists from the University of California found that genetics and life circumstances only account for about 50% of a person’s happiness. The rest is up to you.

Life circumstances have little to do with happiness because much happiness is under your control — the product of your habits and your outlook on life. Happiness is synthetic — you either create it, or you don’t.

When it comes to making yourself happy, you need to learn what works for you. Once you discover this, everything else tends to fall into place. And making yourself happy doesn’t just improve your performance, it’s also good for your health.

A critical skill set that happy people tend to have in common is emotional intelligence (EQ). At TalentSmart, we’ve tested the EQs of more than a million people and what makes high EQ people tick. So, we went digging until we found some great ways that emotionally intelligent people create their own happiness.

1 THEY DON’T OBSESS OVER THINGS THEY CAN’T CONTROL
It’s good to know how the Brexit might affect your country’s markets or that your company could merge with its largest competitor, but there’s a big difference between understanding the larger forces and worrying about them. Happy people are ready and informed, but they don’t allow themselves to fret over things that are beyond their control.

2 THEY CHOOSE THEIR BATTLES WISELY
Emotionally intelligent people know how important it is to live to fight another day. In conflict, unchecked emotion makes you dig your heels in and fight the kind of battle that can leave you severely damaged and unhappy for some time to come. When you read and respond to your emotions, you’re able to choose your battles wisely and only stand your ground when the time is right.

3 THEY GET ENOUGH SLEEP
I’ve beaten this one to death over the years and can’t say enough about the importance of sleep in improving your mood, focus and self-control.

When you sleep, your brain literally recharges, removing toxic proteins that accumulate during the day as by-products of normal neuronal activity. This ensures that you wake up alert and clear-headed.

Your energy, attention and memory are all reduced when you don’t get enough quality sleep. Sleep deprivation also raises stress hormone levels on its own, even without a stressor present. Happy people make sleep a priority, because it makes them feel great and they know how lousy they feel when they’re sleep deprived.

4 THEY NEED THEIR MORTAL COMPASS
Crossing moral boundaries in the name of success is a sure-fire path to unhappiness. Violating your personal standards creates feelings of regret, dissatisfaction and demotivation. Know when to stand your ground and express dissent when someone wants you to do something that you know you shouldn’t.

When you’re feeling confused, take some time to review your values and write them down. This will help you to locate your moral compass.

5 THEY EXERCISE DURING THE WEEK
Getting your body moving for as little as 10 minutes releases GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), a soothing neurotransmitter that also limits impulsivity. A University of Bristol study showed that people who exercised on workdays reported improvements in time management, mood and performance. The benefits of exercise always outweigh the time lost in its pursuit.

6 THEY HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET
People’s core attitudes fall into one of two categories: a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. With a fixed mindset, you believe you are who you are and you cannot change.

This creates problems when you’re challenged, because anything that appears to be more than you can handle is bound to make you feel helpless and overwhelmed. People with a growth mindset believe that they can improve with effort.

This makes them happier because they are better at handling difficulties. They also outperform those with a fixed mindset because they embrace challenges, treating them as opportunities to learn something new.

7 THEY CLEAR THE CLUTTER
I don’t need to remind you how much time you spend at work. Take a good look at your workspace. You should create a space that’s soothing and uplifting. Whether it’s a picture of your family, a plant, or an award that you’re proud of, display them prominently to keep them on your mind. Get rid of the junk and clutter that hold no significance and do nothing positive for your mental state.

8 THEY LEND A HAND
Taking the time to help your colleagues not only makes them happy, but it also makes you happy. Helping other people gives you a surge of oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine, all of which create good feelings.

9 THEY LET THEIR STRENGTHS FLOW
A University of Chicago study of peak performance found that people who were able to reach an intense state of focus — called flow — reaped massive benefits. Flow is the state of mind in which you find yourself completely engrossed in a project or task, and you lose awareness of the passage of time and other external distractions.

Flow is often described as an exhilarating state in which you feel euphoria and mastery simultaneously. The result is not just happiness and productivity but also the development of new skills through a heightened state of learning.

The key to reaching flow lies in organising your tasks such that you have immediate and clear goals to pursue that play to your strengths. As you begin working on these tasks, your focus increases along with your feelings of adequacy.

In time, you reach a flow state, in which productivity and happiness flourish. Set clear goals each day and experiment with task order until you find the secret formula that gets you flowing.

10 THEY BELIEVE THE BEST IS YET TO COME
Don’t just tell yourself that the best is yet to come — believe it. Having a positive, optimistic outlook on the future doesn’t just make you happier; it also improves your performance by increasing your sense of self-efficacy.

The mind has a tendency to magnify past pleasures to such a great degree that the present pales in comparison. This phenomenon can make you lose faith in the power of the future to outweigh what you’ve already experienced. Don’t be fooled. Believing in the great things the future has in store.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER
Applying these strategies won’t just improve your happiness at work; most of them will also improve your emotional intelligence. Pick those that resonate with you and have fun with them.
12 COACHING PRINCIPLES ALL MANAGERS SHOULD PRACTISE

A manager can be as effective as externally hired coaches. Managers don’t have to be trained formally as coaches as long as they stay within the scope of their skill set, and maintain and add value, and help develop their people’s skills and abilities as long as they understand what they are creating.

The consequences of not changing their behaviour:

1. To this, you must specify the behaviour and clarify the consequences.
2. Coaching is something that’s right.
3. A coaching session is a high-compliance, low-pressure environment. You should ensure that the behaviour and the outcomes are clear.
4. Be clear in your own mind about what you want the other person to accomplish. You must specify the behaviour and clarify the consequences.
5. Coaching is different.
6. A coaching session is a high-compliance, low-pressure environment. You should ensure that the behaviour and the outcomes are clear.
7. The reason is that you need to hold up specific alternatives to create a future state of what’s possible.
8. In a coaching session, the commitment here is around the processes that you’ll follow. The coach does not need to provide a specific solution. They need to help you understand the consequences of not doing what they’re suggesting.
9. Thinking about thinking is an important part of the coaching process, so remember to ask open-ended questions.
10. Be clear in your own mind about what you want the other person to accomplish. You must specify the behaviour and clarify the consequences.
11. A coaching session is a high-compliance, low-pressure environment. You should ensure that the behaviour and the outcomes are clear.
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What’s holding you back from the action?

Questions that you want to accompany and to clear about your expectations. Consider giving your employees a model of what their end goal looks like or specific criteria for what the outcome should be.

Alignment with your values

The easier it is to identify your values, the easier it is to identify your goals. Additionally, you cannot identify your personal values without aligning with your values.

Coaching is focused on the future.

Coaching is about teaching skills and abilities, and helping people to develop. It can also help deal with issues and challenges before they become crises.

A coaching session will typically be an easier process.

As a manager, getting your employees to jump into a problem-solving mode and rescuing the situation is still seen as a corrective tool, but coaching is considered to be a positive tool.

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Senior leaders often identify these roles as being on the same level when they talk about coaching and mentoring, but they are very different. Coaching and mentoring are distinct roles. Coaching is about helping the person improve their skills and abilities, while mentoring is about helping the person develop their skills and knowledge.

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Starting Young is a column featuring stories written by individuals who have been part of Leaderonomics Youth, our community arm which focuses on developing youths through various leadership initiatives. If you have participated in any of our programmes – be it as a student or a facilitator – and would like to share your experiences, do write in to us at editor@leaderonomics.com

Starting Young: A Mother’s and Daughter’s Story

By RUPA SIVANOLI and SHRIYA SHAN

OMe of our greatest experiences are those that stemmed from the people and experiences of our youth – role models, coaches, mentors, failures and successes. Over the past decade, Leaderonomics has placed the development of young people at the heart of our vision and mission. With this in mind, our Youth Leadership Camp was born. This week on Starting Young, we feature a mother-daughter duo who experienced these camps over several years.

A DAUGHTER’S STORY

Being a typical kid growing up in Kuala Lumpur, I had no interest whatsoever to develop my leadership skills – or understand whatever that meant – at the age of 12. DIODE Tweens Camp was the first camp I had ever attended that wasn’t affiliated with my school. Just after Ujian Percubaan Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) and transferring to a new high school, the camp was such a blessing to me. From having the same group of friends for six years, to a completely new set of unfamiliar faces, I was completely out of my comfort zone. However, participating in that camp opened my eyes and made me realise that I did have the capability to not be afraid and make friends with new people. Two years later, I found myself being coerced into attending DIODE Youth Leadership Camp (YLC). I was reluctant at first, but I figured that I would give it a shot.

The six fun-filled days had completely knocked my socks off – I had taken away so many valuable lessons on leadership, public speaking, breaking out of my comfort zone and communication. I felt like I knew myself better and that made me more confident in my daily life. Along with the wonderful group of friends I had made, we were keen to continue and attend more camps, but this time as facilitators.

The following year, I filled up half the time of my precious December school holidays to volunteer as a facilitator for both YLC camps. Being the youngest facilitator at that time was a minor struggle that I had to overcome, it was a fun and new experience. I learnt a lot, and my leadership skills were put into practice. Facilitating youth camps makes you grow significantly as an individual; patience and learning the right balance between being stern and friendly were the key takeaways from that time.

In June 2016, my friend Zach had invited me to audition for a place in the SPARK Leadership Camp. I knew that was a big deal as only 10 people get the golden ticket for an all-expenses paid week-long camp held in Epsom College, Malaysia.

ECM Libra is a corporation which sponsors the camp yearly. It is held mainly to benefit underprivileged youths around Malaysia. At the end of the camp, we as participants were meant to execute a charity project. I found it so interesting to interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures yet, from the same country.

A MOTHER’S STORY

Growing up, Shriya had always been bold; she held strong views about her likes and dislikes. In 2014, I felt like she was ready to take the next step in her leadership journey. So, I did my best to convince her to join the YLC, highlighting to her the importance of developing her leadership skills. I had ensured her it was going to be a fun experience.

Since then, I have seen her character develop and strengthen as she progressed from a tween to a teenager, and now on the brink of adulthood. Three of the most important qualities I feel she had been equipped with as a result of participating and facilitating multiple camps were the ability to make friends, show empathy and cultivate a sense of purpose. Sometimes, a lesson conveyed by a third party can be much more impactful to a child, in comparison to a mother’s nagging.

I find that the camps work as a nice complement to parenting when it comes to building a child’s character and essential soft skills. The camps help youngsters tackle the challenges that they would typically face when they embark on their journey through the various stages in their pre-teen and teenage years, with emphasis on capabilities and topics relevant to their real-world experiences. Shriya always comes back feeling positive and energised. The experience reinforces her sense of self and helps her have a sense of purpose larger than herself.

I have found that clearer she is about her life goals, the less I have to follow up with her completing assignments and schoolwork. She does what she needs to do in order to be successful in her own definition. These camps have given her a taste of making an impact on our society, and she has taken the initiative to seek opportunities to give back. Earlier this year, she went on of a 10-week expedition with Raleigh International in Borneo to participate in community, environment and adventure projects. Shriya has also excelled academically, having secured a place in the university and professional course of her choice.

Her dad and I are very proud to see our daughter realise her dreams, give back to society and make a difference.
By DR STAN AMALADAS
editor@leaderonomics.com

ROWING up in Taiping, Perak, a small and unsurprising town, my bicycle was my main mode of transportation. I would ride to school, to church, to drop in on my ‘girl friends’; no, not something we would share with our parents – at that time, up to the casual market, to tuition, and, to paraphrase John F Kennedy, sometimes for no other reason than simply to enjoy the pleasures of a bike ride. If a picture is worth a thousand words, does Albert Einstein appear to be simply having a pleasurable and joyful time on his bike?

For Einstein, however, it was more than that. He shared that he thought about the theory of relativity while riding his bicycle. That was his ‘aha’ moment!

So, there is more to riding a bicycle than meets the eye! Discoveries can be made. Lessons can be learnt.

**LESSON #1: KEEP LEFT HAND ON LEFT HANDLE AND RIGHT HAND ON RIGHT HANDLE**

I recall the urge to sometimes ride my bike hands-free—somewhere there was a feeling of freedom in doing something like that! ‘Look Ma, no hands!’ That was more like boasting! But that wasn’t so bad when compared to what I attempted next.

I recall one and only attempt to ride my bike by criss-crossing my hands, namely, placing my right hand on the left handle of the bike and my left hand on the right handle! That was not a smart thing to do. It felt, it was a dumb thing to do. It was even dumber when I started to pedal faster while attempting this feat—somehow believing that hanging on tightly and pedaling faster would keep me in balance. I mean, who did I think was I? Evel Knievel? Jackie Chan? Harry Houdini?

Yes, I crashed. Fortunately, I walked away—rather wobbly— with only a few bad gashes and a dislocated left hand. Was I wearing a helmet? No! And, I cannot recall the sorry state of my bike!

What were the results?

- When you find yourselves in ‘unbalanced’ times, or when ‘things’ aren’t going as well as you want it to, go to slow down. The temptation might be to try harder. But the pattern is clear: The harder you try and the faster you pedal, the harder you fast will you fall. What’s your choice?
- Connected to the second lesson above, when you find yourselves in troubling times, ‘let go’. I simply held on tightly for dear life when I made a bad choice – believing that the more tightly I held on to the handles, I might avoid falling! My mom was correct in her assessment of me. ‘You idiot!’ (Cue Mom... thanks! But I cannot blame her for her assessment. At worst, it was my dumb choice to risk the safety of my bicycle.

Lessons learnt
- In our very busy and fast-moving world, do you feel like you are simply caught up in ‘getting there’ (wherever ‘there’ is) quicker? Part of the challenge in times like these is that we get ‘caught up’ in producing our products faster than our competition. While that may be necessary, we sometimes forget to enjoy the process. It is important to note that there is not a question of one (process) at the expense of the other (product). It is to focus on both. This was the ‘informal education’ I received from our La Sallian brothers.

- Another lesson that they were teaching me is that we were united in the journey. Our journeying through our bicycle rides grew us closer together. We didn’t relate to each other as ‘teachers’ and ‘student’ but rather as companions in a common journey.

Imagine relating to those who have been called to lead as ‘companions’ rather than as ‘subordinates’ or ‘followers’? As companions, you are friends, confidants, and colleagues. You are in an egalitarian relationship, rather than in a hierarchical or controlling relationship with each other.

As colleagues and confidants, you appreciate and celebrate the different gifts that each bring to the table. Therein lies the joy of being together in a journey.

In your companion-relationship with each other, be publically clear on your boundaries. Make them explicitly known. There are some ways you speak and behave with each other. Respecting those boundaries enhances your relationship. Cross the lines of those agreed-upon boundaries and you lose respect and trust.

**LESSON #3: BUILDING RESILIENCE**

Do you remember the times when your mom or dad held the seat of your bike as you were learning how to ride a bike?

For me, I remember there were no such things as ‘training wheels’. Our ability to ride our bikes on our own was directly related to mom or dad holding and ‘letting go’ (there it is again) of the bicycle seat.

As a dad who also did the same thing for his children, I knew that letting go meant risking a fall. And my daughters did fall. That was a painful experience. However, they did get up; brush the dirt away; dad did kiss the ‘boo-boo’s’ to make them feel better – and off they went again... they did not give up.

Risking a fall is a way to build or teach resilience. No parent would want their companies to ‘fail’. However, without such an experience, we will not learn the art of bouncing back from a fall.

They fell, they got up, they tried again, and eventually they learnt to ride on their own.

Lessons learnt
- Risking a fall is a way to build or teach resilience. No parent would want their children to fall. No leader would want their companies to ‘fall’. However, without such an experience, we will not learn the art of bouncing back from a fall.

There is strength in that experience.

When we don’t intentionally wish for a fall, falling is an opportunity to learn. Our real failures are when:

- fail to learn from our falls,
- choose not to get up and try again,
- develop defeatist attitudes when we fall.

Would you agree?

- As you ‘let go’ for the sake of independence and resilience, the equation of ‘seeing is believing’ is now switched to ‘believing is seeing’. As a parent, I needed to believe that my children can ride the bikes on their own. My ‘letting go’ is a symbol of my acting on my belief.

In doing so, I now experience my belief as it comes to fruition. If I didn’t believe, and if I didn’t act on my belief (holding on and letting go), I’ll not see my children ride on their own.

What are you holding on to so tightly, that you are denying yourself the opportunity to grow and flourish? How can the metaphor of ‘believing is believing’ be preventing you from moving ahead?

**CONCLUDING THOUGHT**

Today, I am in the process of collect- ing bicycle riding experiences/stories as I write on this subject of ‘Leading Well’ through the metaphor of bike rides. If you have your bicycle-riding experiences that you would like to share with me, invite you to do so. You will definitely add a unique flavour and another perspective on this work that we call ‘leadership’.

So, there is more to riding a bicycle than meets the eye! Discoveries can be made. Lessons can be learnt.

**3 TIMELESS LESSONS FROM BIKE RIDES**

**Risking a fall is a way to build or teach resilience. No parent would want their companies to ‘fail’. However, without such an experience, we will not learn the art of bouncing back from a fall.**

Lessons learnt
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Simplifying Transformation

Who Says it Has to be Complicated?

By LISA ARIE
editor@leaderonomics.com

Transformation happened for me when I realised I had nothing to lose. With this knowledge, I transformed. Everything. Starting with my approach to life.

I stopped saying ‘one day’, because I probably did not have that day. I had to ask for what I wanted now. I only did things I absolutely wanted to do. I only spent time with the people I wanted to spend time with. I chose to laugh as much as possible. I made sure the people I loved knew I loved them. I was bold about asking for help and reaching out to organisations and people who I wanted to help.

If they said no, it did not matter. What mattered was giving each and every minute my all so when the ride was over, I would know I had ridden it well. I could give up the fear that instead of missing life, I had lived it.

I was a creative all-star, growing up in Singapore, South Africa and London. She is the author of Crossing the Silly Bridge and co-founder of Vista Caballo. For starters, I stopped acting out of fear. As death was an imminent certainty, I had no idea how to transform, or whether it might hurt. In fact, I was so stubbornly set in my ways, that it took the threat of death to lead me to the doors of transformation and push me through.

The truth is that I had no idea how to transform, or whether it might hurt. In fact, I was so stubbornly set in my ways, that it took the threat of death to lead me to the doors of transformation and push me through.

The commitment factor caught me by surprise. I had always been a committed person. Or so I thought. This was different. Deciding to put aside fear and face every moment courageously was a level of commitment I had never before experienced. This level of honest determination and commitment was, and is, healthy fuel to my newfound fire.

LONG, BUT VALUABLE ROAD

What’s the end value of transformation? For me, it’s knowing this is how I reach my true potential. It’s knowing I can transform my experience of life every day. It’s how I can leave this planet one day knowing I climbed the mountains and went the distance.

As a former perfectionist, this thought kept us safe. “What if I make a mistake?” – with another, much more powerful negative to keep us safe. “What if I fail?” – with another, much more powerful one: “What if I succeed?” That was a game changer.

As fate would have it, I experienced what happens for me when I realised I had nothing to lose. With this knowledge, I transformed. Everything. Starting with my approach to life.

Transformation happened for me when I realised I had nothing to lose. With this knowledge, I transformed. Everything. Starting with my approach to life.

GOING FEARLESS

For starters, I stopped acting out of fear. As death was an imminent certainty – and everything I did in life did to keep myself alive – my greatest fear became moot. Losing that ultimate fear also meant relinquishing others. For example, “What if the decision I am about to make is a poor one and I end up someplace worse than I am now?” That consideration was no longer relevant.

Any place was better than where I currently found myself. It took facing death for me to see I had been driving myself for most of my adult life with fear. “What if I fail? What if I don’t have what it takes? What if I’m not loved?”

With my fears no longer relevant, I began approaching life fearlessly and life rose to the occasion – it transformed. My priorities changed from being focused on the immediate bottom line to the size and significance of my impact. I lived every moment.

The commitment factor caught me by surprise. I had always been a committed person. Or so I thought. This was different. Deciding to put aside fear and face every moment courageously was a level of commitment I had never before experienced. This level of honest determination and commitment was, and is, healthy fuel to my newfound fire.

SOME KIND OF MIRACLE

As fate would have it, I experienced what some would call a miracle. Once I decided to transform my approach from surviving to living every minute to the fullest, I stopped dying. The disease went away.

One thing I learned was to answer that question ‘I’d always feared’ – “What if I fail?” – with another, much more powerful one: “What if I succeed?” That was a game changer.

This is before I knew about ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) and how the brain automatically defaults to the negative to keep us safe. “What if I make a mistake?”

As a former perfectionist, this thought could stop me in my tracks. Oh, my God! Think of the loss of love and approval that could happen! The shame!

Now, my answer was simple: “If I make a mistake, I’ll just correct it.”

4 REQUIREMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

After this long and transformative experience, I had the good fortune of getting a new perspective on life and what real change – transformation – requires. It boils down to four things. Here is what I learnt we need to focus on for transformation:

1 Energy
I took the energy I had been mis-directing toward being afraid and used it for focusing on and living each moment.

2 Confidence and courage
My true confidence and courage, which had before been covered up with bravado, started to grow and shape my new self.

3 Vision
My vision changed. Before, I had used it to create what I saw as a good, safe world for myself. Now, I hoped to create a better, safer world for everyone.

4 Commitment
The commitment factor caught me by surprise. I had always been a committed person. Or so I thought. This was different. Deciding to put aside fear and face every moment courageously was a level of commitment I had never before experienced. This level of honest determination and commitment was, and is, healthy fuel to my newfound fire.

Don’t miss the rest of the series:


Simplifying Transformation: Who Says It Has To Be Complicated? By Lisa Arie

Simplifying Transformation: How to Manufacture Your Own Miracle By Lisa Arie

Simplifying Transformation: What’s the Mission? By Lisa Arie

Simplifying Transformation: What’s the Message? By Lisa Arie

Simplifying Transformation: What’s the Story? By Lisa Arie

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 spending 10 minutes on yourself

It's Leaderonomics' 10th anniversary this year! As we celebrate our 10th year of building communities of love, growing people into leaders, and transforming the nation, let us share some facts about our company which you may not have known.

Over a decade ago, our co-founders, Roshan Thiran and Ang Hui Ming, had a vision to transform developing nations through leadership development. They believed (and still believe) that leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of the individuals and communities that they influence – and if they helped grow just one person from a challenged community, that one person can go on to change the lives of those in the community.

And so, the work to create Leaderonomics began.

Ever wondered how the name Leaderonomics came about? When Roshan and Hui Ming were brainstorming for names, they knew they wanted a scientific-sounding name that started with the word ‘leader’.

Among the names considered were Leaderology and Leaderonomy. After much thought, they settled on the name Leaderonomics, and created its own definition.

leader-o-nom-ics

The science concerned with the development and establishment of leadership in a person.

The laws of leadership, what makes up a leader, in essence, the Science of Building Leaders.

Another version of the exercise is designed specifically to help women improve their body image. Nearly all women, whatever their actual appearance, feel ugly, fat and unattractive, at least part of the time. Men can have body image issues as well.

So, this time, write yourself a letter from your unconditionally loving friend but have that letter be all about your body. Think about what your friend would say about your body, knowing that he or she loves and accepts it exactly as it is today.

What would your unconditionally loving friend say about the parts of your body that you find flawed or unsatisfactory?

"You find imperfection, I find power."

There are a few other variations of this exercise that Engeln used with various groups of subjects, but I think these letter-writing versions are most powerful. Engeln reports that some of the letter subjects wrote moved her and her research team to tears.

"You listen to the images, the voices that tell you that your body is wrong, undesirable, and flawed," wrote one subject to herself. “But listen to me. Your body is amazing. You find imperfection, but I find power." She went on, “I see soft shoulders for leaning on and elegant fingers for making music. I see eyes of understanding and a smile that can light up a room."

Engeln tried different versions of these exercises on more than 1,500 women, some North-western undergrads and some sorority members who did the exercises online. In every case, the exercises made them feel better about their bodies, and about themselves in general, whether the exercise was focused on the body or not.

Is it worth spending ten minutes with a pen and paper – or a computer or other device – to give this exercise a try and write yourself a letter, say once every month or every week?

“I know that when I feel confident and happy about myself, it also makes me more productive and better at my job. So, it certainly seems worthwhile to me. How about you?”

Minda Zetlin is a business technology writer and speaker; co-author of The Geek Gap, and former president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors.

Career changes are getting increasingly common in today’s world. How do we make the most out of our current job and bring all these skills to the next industry? Which skills can we consider relevant for a whole new working environment? Listen to Nicholas Chin’s podcast at: bit.ly/RYGtransferableskills

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!
In this Raise Your Game segment, Eric Lau shares the significance of leaders having meaningful engagement with their teams in order to provide genuine motivation and empowerment for business success. Check it out here: bit.ly/LDRengagement

The MosT powerful moTivaTion
GETTING THE WORKFORCE FUTURE-FOCUSED

By JEFF SCHWISOW
editor@leaderonomics.com

W
E’re entering an era where exceptional businesses will be the product of exceptional workplaces. Not just compliant workplaces filled with obedient, productive workers, but one where employees are actively and meaningfully shaping the business for the future that it aspires to.

These exceptional workplaces will be driven by the effectiveness with which you engage and motivate your people. Strategic projects provide human resources (HR) managers with an opportunity to be intentional about creating engagement and motivation because they give people future-focused work to be engaged in and a meaningful purpose to be motivated by.

EngagEmEnt is morE than fulfilling a social contract with your people
It has become clear that engagement takes more than bean bag chairs, foosball tables, and trendy in-house cafes.

Engagement research over the last 15 years has consistently shown that there is a direct link between an engaged workforce and performance-based cultural traits. Organizations with high levels of employee engagement outgrow, outperform, and outlast other businesses.

This begs the question: Does engagement drive better business performance and do high-performing businesses elicit more engagement from their employees? The answer is a resounding YES!

To create the sort of exceptional workplace that drives the business forward, the organisation needs to not only engage its employees in a powerful way; it also needs to direct that engagement towards work that makes the business stronger.

ENGAGE YOUR PEOPLE IN THE STRATEGIC JOURNEY
By giving employees the responsibility for turning strategic intent into operational reality, you connect them to your business purpose – you give them work that has meaning.

Strategic projects are the ideal vehicle for undertaking this journey because they turn workplace benefits for employees into performance benefits for the company.

Turning the business’s strategic execution activities into projects not only shapes the business for the future, but also creates the opportunity to grow highly-engaged and intrinsically-motivated teams.

The projects we’re talking about are not big transformational undertakings. They are targeted initiatives that make meaningful progress toward your business’s strategic objectives.

These projects have very specific engagement attributes:

- Short-duration, high-priority initiatives
  This translates strategic goals into something that your people can relate to and, as a result, allows them to readily incorporate this work into their operational activities.

- Target a single, strategic outcome
  This allows your people to clearly see the strategic contribution they’re making. It also makes progress visible, and meaningful progress is the single greatest workplace motivator.

- Undertaken by people closest to the strategic opportunity being pursued
  By empowering the people that have the greatest knowledge of the business area you’re trying to create, enhance or improve, you get better strategic outcomes. Your people will be more invested in the change because they’re creating that change.

IN CONCLUSION
Strategic projects can take many forms, but to deliver both the workplace and performance benefits, they should focus on shaping the business’s future and be of high strategic value.

It’s in these conditions that people will not just do their best work, they will aspire to be their best.

Jeff Schwisow is a Melbourne-based strategy specialist, speaker and the author of Projectify - How To Use Projects To Engage Your People In Strategy That Evolves Your Business. Jeff helps businesses use the power of projects to engage the very best of its people, consistently delight its clients, and constantly evolve to generate exceptional business results.

NO PRINT PULL-OUT NEXT WEEK. WE’re GOING FULLY DIGITAL!

The Leaderonomics pull-out will not be available in print next week. Instead, you can get a copy of our digital exclusive issue at bit.ly/idrEmag

You’ll see us in print again on 15th September. You can also subscribe to our mailing list.

Look out for two bonus pages in this week’s digital pull-out!
By NISHANT KASBRAT

A healthy brain is the foundation of all learning. It’s your brain that enables you to remember information, learn new skills, and solve problems. But how well does your brain function? Do you struggle with remembering names, dates, or facts? Do you find it difficult to concentrate or stay focused? These are all signs that your brain might not be performing at its best. So, how can you improve your brain power and cognitive abilities? One effective way to boost your brainpower is through memory and reading techniques.

Memory and Reading Techniques to Improve Your Productivity

**Boost Your Brainpower**

**Memory and Speed-reading Techniques**

There are many memory techniques and speed-reading strategies that can help you improve your productivity. By mastering these techniques, you can enhance your learning and retention, increase your reading speed, and boost your overall cognitive abilities.

### Memory Techniques

1. **V – VISUALISATION**
   - It’s considered one of the least memory-friendly pictures but that anything else.
   - The easiest way to remember something is to convert the information into a visual form.

2. **A – ASSOCIATION**
   - If you want to remember information in an easy and fast way, you can use a “mental glue” with the help of which the information sticks in your brain. This mental glue is association. Memory works by association.
   - You have probably encountered with new information with something you already know.

3. **P – PLEASURE**
   - Pleasure is a way to search for ways and means by which you can have fun while memorising. It will make this sounds less difficult. Most people associate learning and memorising with stress. The reason is that learning is a long-term memory process.

### Speed-reading Techniques

1. **Boost your reading speed**
   - Reading speed is important, as most people spend too much time reading. Reading too slowly can be a waste of time and resources.

2. **How to boost your reading speed**
   - Here’s a simple trick to boost your reading speed:
     - **Track your reading speed**
     - Set a timer and read a paragraph or a page within a specific time limit.
     - Record your reading speed in words per minute (wpm).

3. **Increase your eye span**
   - The key to increasing your reading speed is to increase your “eye span.” An eye span is the number of words that you can read in a single glance without breaking your concentration.

4. **Avoid distractions**
   - Distractions can significantly reduce your reading speed. Try to eliminate distractions while reading.

5. **Check your environment**
   - Ensure that your reading environment is conducive to reading. Check your environment and ensure that it is free from any obstacles that might interfere with your reading.

6. **Recall**
   - Try recalling what you read immediately after reading. This will help you to remember the information better.

### Conclusion

By mastering memory and speed-reading techniques, you can significantly boost your brainpower and productivity. So, don’t hesitate to try these techniques and see the difference for yourself!