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Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures, to make it better for everyone.

Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone. Check out this article by Louisa Devadason at bit.ly/LDDiversityManagement.

Do you believe that a team that laughs together, sticks together? Throughout the years, the tradition of pranking at Leaderonomics has helped foster a culture of potential and cohesion. Watch some of our pranks on videos, here on LifeLeadership channel: bit.ly/LifeDRPlaylist.

By CHRISTINE COMAFORD
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NE of the key topics I’m asked about frequently these days is unconscious bias training. More and more studies come in every day that show diverse and inclusive teams (more on what that means later) consistently outperform teams made up of people who are very similar to each other. So, it’s time to bust unconscious biases in business.

And that’s the tricky part. While millions of training dollars have been spent over the past 30-plus years on diversity, there is surprisingly little proof of results.

In fact, the gender and racial diversity training we might be familiar with from the late 80s and 90s was widely reported to have had an adverse effect! It raised awareness of people’s differences but didn’t provide behavioural change strategies.

A study of 829 companies over 31 years showed that diversity training had “no positive effects in the average workplace.”

At best, the study made some people more open to hiring those of other races, genders, and ethnicities. At its worst, it shamed people – resulting in some leaders banding together and enforcing their world views.

Fortunately, in the past few years, research based on organisations like the NeuroLeadership Institute have been studying not only how the brain creates biases but also what strategies successfully mitigate them in organisations.

One thing they have noticed is that while a group of similar people feels better for its members, a diverse group consistently performs better, making it clearly worthwhile while to figure out the bias conundrum.

WE ARE ALL UNCONSCIOUS – AND A BIT BIASED

All human beings are biased. It’s a natural state of the brain that evolved from the days when we needed to be able to calculate very quickly if something was like us and thus friendly, or unlike us and possibly dangerous.

In fact, the brain has far more (three to four times as much!) real estate devoted to identifying threats, than to identifying opportunities and rewards.

There are over 150 different types of biases – and all have their roots in the structure of the brain.

Biases are part of what keeps us sane and able to process the enormous amount of information that we are bombarded with at any point in time.

In a Google presentation on bias, they estimate that at any point in time, our brain is processing some 11 million bits of information and we can only consciously process up to 40 bits – which makes us approximately 99,999,999 per cent unconscious.

The rest gets handled by our unconscious mind.

That part of us that has learned the unconscious biases to delete (ignore some information and not make it conscious), distort (emphasise or fade other information), and generalise (“Gosh! That switch looks just like the switch I used to turn on the lights in the other room, so, it too is a light switch”).

If we were not able to form unconscious biases and delete, distort, and generalise accordingly, we would probably go crazy pretty darned fast.

Since we are all naturally biased, there’s no need to feel ashamed of it. And there’s a very profound business case for ensuring that we mitigate or entirely remove our biases in certain situations.

DIVERSITY PLUS INCLUSION

Many people think that diversity is simply about having a diverse team, one that has representatives from different genders, races and ethnicities.

While that is a start, according to Hedi Grant-Halvorson, PhD, of the NeuroLeadership Institute, “Diversity is getting asked to the party, while inclusion is getting asked to dance at the party.”

Human infants have a very long period of being dependent on the adults of their tribe. If we are socially ostracised from the group, we feel physical pain. This is instinct, and we automatically mirror the behaviours of others from birth in order to belong and therefore survive.

When our belonging is threatened, when we are ostracised or excluded, we enter what I call ‘Critter State’. When the brain is under threat, it literally cannot function in the same way that it does when it feels safe, when it is in the ‘Smart State’.

Studies have shown that, when we feel under threat, we release an enzyme that has been found to attack the hippocampus, which is responsible for regulating synapses.

So, our brain:”

● reduces the field of view and focuses only on a narrow span of what it must do to survive.

● Myelin sheathing increases on existing neural pathways and we are less likely to try new solutions.

● shrinks its working memory, so that it is not distracted by other ideas, bits of information, or stray thoughts. Think of a student panicked by a pop quiz – the information is there but they cannot access it. This means they cannot problem – solve optimally.

● is less creative. With less grey matter and modified synapses, we experience fewer ideas, thoughts, and information available to ‘bump into each other’ so the capacity to create is reduced.

● enlarges the amygdala, the area of the brain responsible for fear processing and threat perception, making us more likely to be reactive rather than controlled.

● is less likely to connect with others. Fight, flight, or freeze is not effective rather than controlled.

To get the benefits of diversity, we must promote the ‘Smart State’ by including, including and including.

And here’s the catch: HUMANS NEVER COMMUNICATE AS CLEARLY AS THEY THINK THEY DO.

It’s actually quite a miracle that we understand anything about each other at all.

How many times a week, a day, or even an hour have you had the experience of thinking you understood or were understood, only to find a complete disconnect?

So, you may think you are including, but if you are not consciously including someone who is not confident about their place in your inner circle, they may feel rejected or not welcome.

To truly promote diversity and inclusion, it is absolutely critical to train your team in effective communication skills.

Techniques like rapport, inquiry mode and feedback allow people to get to know each other as individuals, not as ethnic, race or gender groups.

And that, my friends, is the secret to having diverse teams with lots of inclusion – and to busting bias.

Awareness alone doesn’t work, but structures which prevent biases and the creation of skilled communication patterns and habits do.
I’m something we all go through at some point in our lives. While a healthy dose of it can inspire or motivate us to push ourselves, for many of us, it can become a debilitating fixation that damages our self-esteem and development. It is, of course, comparing ourselves to others. I receive a lot of messages from people asking for advice on various topics, and the one thing that many of them have in common is that they aren’t looking at themselves. Instead, they measure their worth and success against how other people are doing.

WHAT IS SUCCESS? As one worried young professional wrote to me: “I feel I should be as successful as some of my friends, but I’m lagging.”

In cultures where financial independence and status are so highly praised, young people especially can fall victim to what their friends who are doing well and feel a success upon graduation; they look to in a healthy dose, it can be a motivating force. However, there are lots of us who tend to compare ourselves to others a little too much, which can foster nasty thinking habits that affect our psychological well-being as well as our friendships, in some cases. That said, there are very good reasons to avoid comparing ourselves to others. For me, it’s as simple as realising that the more time is spent on measuring ourselves against friends and colleagues, the less time is spent on putting in the work needed to get to where we want to be. Of course, it’s natural that we compare ourselves to others – it can give us a sense of where we are in our social world; and again, in a healthy dose, it can be a motivating force. However, there are lots of us who tend to compare ourselves to others a little too much, which can foster nasty thinking habits that affect our psychological well-being as well as our friendships, in some cases.

Instead of comparing, what we really need is a shift in perspective to see the amount of effort and hard work it takes to become a success. For those who achieve quick success, there are usually elements of substantial support, luck, timing, and other factors that come together to make such stories appear attractive and easy. But we have to think of what really goes on behind the scenes, rather than spending our time focusing on the show reel.

The very best leaders – those who manage to make their success stick – won’t be the ones who post on LinkedIn every day about the million hurdles they overcame in order to be an amazing chief executive officer (CEO) or wealthy founder of a tech start-up. The very best leaders are the ones who spend most of their time comparing themselves to who they were yesterday, not to who someone else is today. They work on themselves and on their teams, and many of their stories feature tough failures without the awe-inspiring close. Their next line is usually something like, “So, I could either give up and go home, or go back and start again…”

“Comparison is waste of energy. Every individual is unique with unique talents. Find your passion and live your best life.” – Lailah Gifty Akita

When we were children, our parents measured our changes in height against our previous marks, not someone else’s. We can’t control how other people grow, but we do have control over how we develop over time.

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FOCUS ON THE EFFORT, TOO

We all have our place in the world. We all have our strengths and our weaknesses, and the paths we have to travel. But most importantly, we all make our mark – whatever that means to each of us – in our own time.

The artist, Pablo Picasso, was recognised for his artistic genius by the time he was 17. On the other hand, Colonel Haford Sanders was in his 60s before the first KFC franchise was opened in America. One of the true hidden secrets of success is that, contrary to popular belief, the bigger the success you chase, the slower you have to go to attain it.

We hear stories of leaders and entrepreneurs who make the most of every minute for 18 hours every day and become massively successful. But these stories don’t look at the time it has taken the likes of, say, Elon Musk, to get to where they are today, or at their struggles and many failures along the way.

All we see and hear is the shiny perception of the ‘success story’, and that’s where we make our comparison. Instead of comparing, what we really need is a shift in perspective to see the amount of effort and hard work it takes to become a success. For those who achieve quick success, there are usually elements of substantial support, luck, timing, and other factors that come together to make such stories appear attractive and easy. But we have to think of what really goes on behind the scenes, rather than spending our time focusing on the show reel.

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Hearing the term ‘mindfulness’ might conjure up a smiling guru sitting peacefully in a quiet, meditative posture. But mindfulness is no longer just for gurus. Mindfulness is a skill you can cultivate to help you be successful in your career.

A wide range of companies, including Intel, Google, Target, General Mills, and Aetna have embraced mindfulness programmes, believing the courses will have a positive impact on their employees and their bottom line.

Universities are also encouraging the practice of mindfulness. David Mick is a marketing professor at the University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce who teaches a ‘Wisdom and Well-Being’ course that equips business students with philosophical concepts and mindfulness practices that can improve their professional and personal lives.

Each week, students apply readings on philosophy and mindfulness to business cases and to their lives.

Prof Mick defines mindfulness as a present-oriented, non-judgmental state of being. “Your mind is not running to the future or ruminating on the past. You are in the moment, present in whatever conversation you are having or activity you are doing,” he says. “Secondly, you are non-judgmental, which is very hard because being judgmental is almost built evolutionarily into who we are.”

No matter where you work or your type of job, you can practise the concept of mindfulness.

Here are three of Prof Mick’s techniques to help you cultivate mindfulness at work.

1. Identify stress and analyse your responses

Think about the last few weeks and identify three stressful events. Now, study how you responded to each of those events. Did you get angry? Did you avoid dealing with the incident? Did you take a deep breath and go for a walk outside to clear your mind?

Consider which behaviours helped you cope better with the stress than others. “Study your body’s response, because we tend to respond physically to stressful events,” Prof Mick says. “When you are mindful of that, you can recognise stress, mitigate certain automatic responses, and have more choice in how you respond.”

Benefit: The better you become at recognising stressful situations, the more control you’ll have to choose the best way to respond.

2. Practise patience

There’s an old saying that ‘patience is a virtue’ but in today’s hyper-paced, technology-driven work environment, there is a tendency to want instant gratification, even in decision-making.

While you might think that making instant decisions will provide a competitive advantage, it isn’t always the case. “Sometimes sitting with a decision, seeking more information, and finding new points of view is important,” warns Prof Mick.

How can you practise patience? Prof Mick recommends using the acronym ‘STOP’ as a reminder: Stop, Take a breath, Observe and Proceed.

Benefit: Practising patience will help you reframe situations to see the bigger picture and other viewpoints. You’ll make more informed decisions and give yourself time to analyse how your decisions will impact others before moving forward.

3. Cultivate humility

Prof Mick recommends reflecting on situations that have humbled you and distinguishing between what he calls ‘submissive humility’ and ‘self-assured humility.’

Mahatma Gandhi is an example he uses of an iconic figure who was renowned for his wisdom and who was self-assuredly humble. “Reflecting on times you were humbled reminds you not to be submissive, but simply to realise that what we do not know dwarfs what we know.”

Benefit: Practising humility will help you accept who you are along with all your strengths and weaknesses. Humility will also help you see others for who they are (without being judgmental) and curb over-confidence and arrogance.
Or many leaders, engagement is a biannual conversation – a retrospective snapshot of how effective their people and culture strategy has been in driving business outcomes.

Smart leaders, however, aren’t waiting two years to discover the need for change. They’re embracing proactive engagement measures to improve performance.

In 2016, Gallup released their Q12 Meta-Analysis, a comprehensive study examining the impact of employee engagement on business performance. As well as discovering a strong correlation between high engagement and better business outcomes including profitability, productivity and shareholder returns, the study detailed two methods of measuring engagement.

The first were reflective measures. These include pride, loyalty, intent to stay with company, and most importantly, discretionary effort. These are all important and impactful insights, but like any reflective measure, by the time they’re reviewed, it’s too late to do anything about them.

The second way of assessing engagement were formative measures. These include: “I know what is expected of me at work”, “I have received recognition or praise for doing good work”, “My supervisor (or someone at work) seems to care about me as a person”, “There is someone at work who encourages my development”, “The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important”, and “I have a best friend at work”.

The results of these measures are driven by the connection between the manager and team member. It’s a connection built on the foundations of human communication.

Want a Successful Business? Human Communication is Key

More than ever, organisations are asking their managers to step up and lead; to go beyond managing tasks and processes, to engage with their teams in an innately human way to increase engagement and drive high performance cultures.

The teams of the very near future will be vastly different. The ability to go beyond technical expertise and embrace human communication skills will be what keeps leaders relevant – inspiring people to do their best, helping them navigate inevitable change, increasing productivity, promoting innovation, and keeping them safe, healthy and happy.

Do You Speak Human?

We can define this approach as speaking human – pushing beyond typically bland, jargon-filled corporate messaging, to considering the way people naturally communicate.

It’s an approach grounded in psychology and neuroscience, using emotions, narratives, inclusive language, and language that fosters connection.

At the core of good leadership is the ability to influence change or make something happen. Without influence, nothing and no one changes.

And that’s as good as a death knell in this fast-paced business landscape. Choose any heavyweight throughout history and consider what makes them memorable. Whether it was Winston Churchill rallying England through war, Martin Luther King Jr. taking a stand for civil rights, or Steve Jobs making Apple relevant again, their ability to influence came from exceptional human communication skills.

These leaders understood the power of language to inspire people and bring them together, and how to use words, imagery and narratives to evoke emotions.

Cut Through the Noise

Attention is everything. Without it, leaders risk wasting time and money developing well-intentioned, potentially brilliant strategies, programmes and initiatives that fail before they ever get off the ground.

Not because they weren’t good or necessary, but simply because no one paid them any attention.

The challenge is that life is busy and work is busier. It’s an increasingly connected world, with a barrage of priorities constantly competing for eyes, ears and minds.

Emails, meetings, memos, posters, phone calls, messages, and all kinds of asynchronous communications: Yammer, Slack, various messaging platforms and social media people’s days are crammed with more and more. Their attention spans are stretched to breaking point.

To survive amidst the noise, people have become skilled at sifting irrelevant or uninspiring information. This makes attention an incredibly valuable resource a finite one at that. And like any other business resource, be it money, machinery, time or space, attention should be wisely invested in, carefully managed, and never, ever squandered.

Leaders need to take an active role in cutting through the noise and earning attention.

They need to draw people in, make them curious, make them laugh, surprise them, tantalise them with stories, visualise content to make it easier to consume, be relevant and interesting, and above all – make people feel something.

Developing Deeper Relationships

The same communication tactics that help gain attention and influence people also lead to increased connection over time.

By inspiring curiosity, fostering anticipation, engineering surprise and delight, simplifying and visualising content, embracing emotions, and considering language, leaders can build engagement – and better business performance as a result.

Bringing It Together

In an increasingly complex and challenging business environment, it’s the distinctly human qualities of connection and the strength of pre-existing relationships that will be the difference between smooth sailing and choppy seas.

And this makes opportunities for connection an investment that will pay dividends in the future.

By DOUGAL and JEN JACKSON

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For more on communicating humanely, read How to Speak Human. To connect with them, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

The teams of the very near future will be vastly different. The ability to go beyond technical expertise and embrace human communication skills will be what keeps leaders relevant – inspiring people to do their best, helping them navigate inevitable change, increasing productivity, promoting innovation, and keeping them safe, healthy and happy.
As mental health issues such as anxiety are on the rise throughout the world, and work-related issues such as mindfulness is given an equal footing, workplace mindfulness training solutions are becoming a common trend in personal and professional development. While mindfulness training solutions are finding their way into many companies worldwide, it is not just the companies that are benefiting from mindfulness practices. Mindfulness training is also proving beneficial for individuals who are seeking mental well-being and personal growth.

Mindfulness practices are known to be effective in reducing levels of stress and anxiety, and promoting emotional intelligence and mental well-being. However, there are other benefits of mindfulness practices that may not be as obvious. For example, mindfulness practices have been shown to improve physical health, reduce the risk of heart disease, and even increase life expectancy. Mindfulness practices can also improve cognitive function, memory, and attention.

In this article, we will explore the benefits of mindfulness practices for individuals and the workplace, and discuss some practical ways to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life.

Benefits of Mindfulness Practices

1. Reduced stress and anxiety

Mindfulness practices have been shown to be effective in reducing levels of stress and anxiety. By focusing on the present moment, individuals are able to let go of worrying about the past or the future, and instead focus on the present. This can help reduce stress and anxiety levels, and improve overall well-being.

2. Improved physical health

Mindfulness practices have been shown to improve physical health, reduce the risk of heart disease, and even increase life expectancy. Mindfulness practices can also improve cognitive function, memory, and attention.

3. Increased emotional intelligence

Mindfulness practices can improve emotional intelligence, helping individuals to better understand and manage their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. This can lead to improved relationships and increased empathy.

4. Better decision-making

Mindfulness practices can improve decision-making by helping individuals to focus on the present moment, rather than being distracted by past failures or future fears. This can lead to more informed and effective decision-making.

5. Increased productivity

Mindfulness practices have been shown to increase productivity by helping individuals to focus on the task at hand, rather than being distracted by external stimuli. This can lead to increased focus and efficiency.

6. Improved sleep

Mindfulness practices have been shown to improve sleep quality, making it easier for individuals to fall asleep and stay asleep.

7. Reduced pain

Mindfulness practices have been shown to reduce pain levels, making it easier for individuals to manage chronic pain conditions.

Practical Ways to Incorporate Mindfulness into Your Daily Life

1. Start your day with mindfulness

Begin your day with a few minutes of mindfulness practice, such as meditation or deep breathing exercises.

2. Take breaks throughout the day

Take short breaks throughout the day to engage in mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing exercises or mindfulness meditation.

3. Practice mindful eating

Pay attention to the taste, texture, and smell of your food, rather than一心急着吃完。

4. Engage in mindful movement

Engage in mindful movement practices, such as yoga or tai chi, to help you stay connected to your body and the present moment.

5. Use mindfulness apps

Use mindfulness apps to help you stay connected to your body and the present moment.

In conclusion, mindfulness practices offer a variety of benefits for both individuals and the workplace. By incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily life, you can improve your physical and mental well-being, increase your productivity, and improve your relationships with others.

If you would like to learn more about mindfulness practices, please contact us today. We can help you incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily life, and help you achieve your personal and professional goals.
By MIKE FIGLIUOLO
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WORK ISN'T WORTH A HEART ATTACK

Mike is the founder and managing director of ThoughtLEADERS, LLC. He is also the author of One Piece of Paper: The Simple Approach to Powerful, Personal Leadership. To learn about the psychology of people management and emotional intelligence, email us at info@leaderonomics.com.

WHERE AM I GOING WITH ALL THIS?

It’s easy to fall out of good habits. Of late, I’ve had a string of busy weeks. I’ve had some personal events change my routine. Through all of it, I’ve (generally) kept to my diet, but my exercise regimen has fallen off. I’ve gained a few pounds, I’m not happy about it. Every day, I think about exercising again but then, that little voice pops up.

“Why bother? You’re just going to get on a plane again in a couple of days and it’ll be hard to start a routine again. Just start again after this next set of trips.”

I’ve succumbed to that temptation. The elliptical machine has gathered some dust. My waist has gained some centimetres. Work is a convenient excuse for not taking care of yourself.

Wrong. Heart attack #2 was a nasty little bugger. Hit me on a flight to Salt Lake City. I was headed out to teach my Leadership Maxim’s class. It ended up being the first class I’ve missed teaching in 12 years of running this business. It wasn’t fair. I was in shape. I was eating well. I was managing stress. Kind of.

I threw a chunk of plaque and it blocked my oblique marginal artery. Ended up with a third stent. Missed teaching the class (although my client was unsurprisingly understanding of my dilemma). I quit caffeine after that one. That was painful but green tea isn’t a bad substitute.

The benefits of the changes I made after the first heart attack were huge. I weighed about 215 pounds. I learnt after the fact that my cholesterol was 266. I got winded just by lifting my fifth slice of pizza. After a year of making changes to diet and exercise, I was much better. My cholesterol was down 65 per cent from pre-cardiac event levels. I dropped 15 pounds. I felt much better. I slept better. I could see my toes without bending over.

Some of you might be looking at the changes and saying, “That’s impossible. I don’t have the time or the energy to change my routine. My diet is too hard to change because I travel/work. I can’t fit time for exercise. It’s just too hard.”

It’s not.

START TODAY

Order the salmon instead of the burger. One meal.

Buy some yogurt or baked chips or almonds or pistachios instead of chicken nuggets, frozen pizza, and Doritos.

Go for a walk. And then another. And turn that into a jog one day. Even then, there are no guarantees.

When I had my second heart attack, it was in the terminal at Salt Lake City Airport. I was thrilled with what I was about to go through. That moment could have been a huge deterrent to future efforts. I could have easily said, “Why bother? Even after all those changes, I’m still on a fricking journey. What’s the point?”

But I didn’t. I kept at it. You should get to it and keep at it too.

YOU HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE

I’ve been inspired to hear the stories of a few of you who have made changes because you saw what happened to me. I met with a client the other day and he told me that since making his Mike-inspired changes, he has dropped 18 pounds. Eighteen. He said it wasn’t that hard to do. No major lifestyle changes.

And I’ve had many people share their own success stories beyond his. I feel like I’ve had a positive impact on the world. Maybe I’ve even saved someone’s life without realising it.

Look, I plan on being around for a long time. I have a lot of living left to do. I’ve made this a way of life and I’ve seen the benefits. I won’t fall out of these habits and use ‘work’ as an excuse. I’m incredibly grateful for all the people around me who have supported me and encouraged me along the way.

People who have given me a kick in the ass when I was whiny about working out. People who care about my well-being. I’m lucky to have people like that around.

YOUR CALL TO ACTION

If you’re one of those people who are already making changes, keep at it! It’s worth it and you can do it! If you need some inspiration, let me know. I’d love to cheer you on! You’ll be amazed by all the other people who want to congratulate you and cheer you on, too.

If you haven’t made changes and you need to, I ask – what’s stopping you? The only thing I can think of that’s holding you back… is you. Start today. People like you, people like having you around, too. I sure do.

Work isn’t worth a heart attack. Make time for you. Speaking of which, I’m going to go work out…
CONFIDENT NETWORKING

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

ENTREPRENEURS are by nature interesting people; boldly launching commercial enterprises, risking careers and fortunes. But being a bold risk-taker does not always translate into being a social butterfly, and the thought of networking events can send some into a cold sweat. So, for those looking to make the most of these events as a way to engage business prospects, here are eight key things to help you get started:

1. WHERE TO GO
Just showing up is smart, but the question begged is: just where should you show up?
All entrepreneurs can tell you what market they are targeting, but the goal is to be at a networking function that has a room full of potential clients.
All industries have associations that sponsor networking events that are ideal for a newcomer to easily meet with like-minded individuals.

2. INVEST IN YOURSELF
Prepare for the networking event like a showbiz professional. Practice your elevator pitch as you would a script for a play.
Find someone who will be a fair judge. Allow for the unexpected by having alternate lines just in case you need to improve your elevator pitch on the run.
Then, practise these. Practise does make perfect. It sounds corny, but each time you practise, it adds to your confidence in the delivery.

3. GET A CARD THAT COUNTS
How easy will it be for anyone to remember you and your products when you give them your business card?
They have your name and mostly, the company name will suggest what services you offer. Some don’t.
Consider assisting your new-found sales prospect by adding your photo to your business card. That will put a face to your business card. That will put a face to your business.

4. SHOW UP EARLY
It’s always a bit daunting walking into a near empty room but opportunity can be waiting. Inevitably the organisers will be early.

Use the opportunity to introduce yourself and ask what profile of business people are likely to be at today’s event. They will love to tell you the full story.
With any luck, an organiser will introduce you to the next person to arrive – one introduction already accomplished.

5. SHOW TIME
As folks arrive, approach them confidently and introduce yourself as a fellow early bird.
You have every reason to be confident about being at this networking event because everyone is there for the same purpose – to network and get business leads.
If you don’t feel confident, fake that welcoming smile and keep talking. Ask them what business they’re in. Don’t feel shy about being blunt. They may even be relieved that you have the smarts to not waste their time. Offer to swap cards and check out if they have any potential business for you.

6. TIME IS MONEY
This event is an investment in your time. The cost is already expended (known as sunk costs to accountants). Now you have the opportunity to turn that sunk cost into a profitable networking event.
Ask yourself: “Would I pay to talk to this person?” If not, you owe it to yourself to move on. Politely excuse yourself and move on to another group or individual.

7. ONCE MORE WITH FEELING
After a while you may feel that an event is a time-waster. Take heart.
Remember that you have spent your time and money being there, so give it a few more tries with anyone left in the room.
When you least expect someone to be interested, that last one in the room may be the one you were looking for. There is never a bad time to present your pitch. Even if no one is interested, you have gained from the practise.

Should your presentation fall flat, that is one more step to success as you know where you got it wrong. There is nothing like audience feedback to help improve a performance.

8. FOLLOW UP FAST
Success and failure is often the difference between the quick and the dead. You have your business cards – now you must hit that keyboard and thank them for their time and interest, now you must hit that keyboard and thank them for their time and interest, and assess their value as a potential lead.

IN CONCLUSION
Entrepreneurs who get out and network are well-connected. The journey may be a while, but after a lot of networking, you will find that you are as well-informed as most, and maybe a little more than many.
The challenge of starting a new journey is not new. The words from Lao Tzu sum it up nicely: “A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”
So, be bold and take the first step!

By ALAN MANLY
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MENTORING MADE
SIMPLE & SCALABLE!

Strike up conversations to build meaningful relationships.

MENTORCLOUD SPARK
IT STARTS HERE

Email us at learn@leaderonomics.com for a FREE DEMO
THE 5 KEYS TO A PROMOTION

By JONATHAN YABUT
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WORKING hard for a promotion is a given. Getting people to promote you is a different story.

We all aspire to get promoted at some point in our careers. It is not just because it means fatter paycheques and bigger responsibilities, but more so because we strive to reach a point in the company. After all, we thrive with recognition and praise.

However, how do you nail down that coveted position when you are already working your hardest? How do you make sure that this new role will be given to you and not to eager-beaver Barbara?

Missing a promotion that you think you deserve is painful (and is also a typical reason for folks to leave their jobs). Remember, working your hardest to get that promotion should be easy. Getting people to promote you on the other hand, is a different story.

TIPS TO SEAL THE DEAL

If you are that high-flyer who thinks that his options are confined to either getting promoted or getting promoted, here are some ‘unspoken’ tips and pointers that you may need to seal the deal.

1. SHOW THAT YOU WANT IT

My first call to order with every boss every time I land a new role or job is to vocalise my aspirations in the company — why am I here, and what’s my goal in the next three, five, and 10 years.

I clearly state that I’m the most absorbent sponge there ever was, and that’s because I’m keen to climb the corporate ladder.

Indeed, the first step in getting promoted is to make your boss fully aware that you are expecting it.

Just like any marriage or business contract, the key is to be clear with what you want from the very start. When you show that you have something and work hard for it, people around you will behave with it in mind.

Of course, in a more conservative workplace setting, there are likely to be those who aren’t big fans of people who vocalise or assert what they want.

In some companies, people may find you too competitive that you start becoming a threat. There is a clear line between being ‘desperate to be promoted’ versus ‘deserving to get promoted’.

In these occasions, be mindful to work even more closely with your team, because you will need them. Offer a helping hand to your counterparts when needed, and never keep information all to yourself.

You want people who will support your promotion campaign, not crabs who will give you bad feedback when human resources (HR) asks.

Good talent will never be easily brushed aside no matter how bad a company is. But don’t just stop with a one-time, big-time discussion. Catch up with your manager, ideally every three months, to check your progress (are you meeting his expectations? What do your other colleagues think about your work output?).

Always keep score because it’s better to know early what needs to get fixed before it’s too late.

2. AGREE ON YOUR DELIVERABLES

You’re fortunate if you work in world-class multinational companies that have advanced structures which quantify soft skills (leadership, influence) and hard skills (business acumen, achievement of sales targets). They use a point system that grades competencies from a junior to a senior role.

However, if you work for a boutique or start-up company that doesn’t have a formal employee appraisal, you will likely need to set that up yourself.

From my personal experiences, I engage my boss (‘I see myself growing in this company and I’d like to know, what will it take to get to a senior role?’) and agree on a contract (‘If I excel in #1, #2 and #3 deliverables, then I can be considered for promotion’).

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3. DON’T JUST BE GOOD TODAY: SHOW THAT YOU CAN BE GOOD TOMORROW

The ‘Peter Principle’ is a management theory named after Laurence Peter, which claims that a performing employee will keep on getting promoted up to the point that he becomes incompetent in the new position.

For example, let’s take Matthew, a hardworking designer dubbed as the most creative in the company and is beloved by clients. The company promotes Matthew as a team manager but realises months later that he is failing in his role. Matthew is a design deity, but he lacks leadership and business acumen which are required of managers, and not necessarily of designers.

Managers today are aware of the Peter Principle, and their goal is to stop that from happening. They promote staff not just because they are brilliant at their current jobs, but because they are ready for a bigger role.

Promotable employees initiate tasks beyond what is needed, and with minimum supervision. They start showing signs that they can strategise, and not just execute. They start exhibiting behaviours of a leader, and not just of a doer.

In every bit of their action, they start wearing a corporate hat and think about the company’s welfare, and not just their own careers. When vying for a promotion, your message should be clear: I am ready for the unknown.

4. MANAGE THE POLITICS

Your promotion doesn’t rest solely in your boss’s hands, especially if you are in a big company. The boss of your boss will need to approve your promotion. The boss of the boss of your boss will likely need to approve it, too.

Representatives from the HR department will also be there on the day of deliberations (and yes, you should know by now that most companies have promotion boards in which department heads or managers deliberate and loosely vote).

Ask yourself: How much do these guys know about you? Do they know that you’re the department’s rock star? Do they know that you’ve been managing your team well whenever your boss is on leave?

MANAGE UP: Hold yourself and your manager, accountable.

These things matter because promotion boards decide largely, on anecdotes — events and experiences that you have pulled off in the past that indicate your readiness to kick ass in the new position. When vying for the prize, make sure your presence is felt in the organisation consistently.

You don’t need to spread your pea-cock feathers to get yourself known, but taking a proactive role to engage them when the moment is apt — those short elevator moments, those opportunities to reply to an e-mail, and those moments of contributing meaningful ideas during a meeting — will helpfully remind them why you’re worth it.

5. KEEP YOUR BOSS ACCOUNTABLE

Personally believe that there are two reasons why an employee fails to get promoted even when the time is due — his manager failed to develop him, or he was wrongly hired. The first case happens more often than not.

He should be increasing your visibility in the company (did you help him make some slides for a presentation? He should be taking you to present a couple of those so that his boss will finally get a taste of your brilliance).

The next time you have a one-on-one discussion with your boss, ask him about his development plan and his time frame.

It’s an altogether different story (and different article) if he doesn’t have one.

At the end of the day

Never feel ashamed of talking about promotions because it is your right and responsibility to manage your career.

Remember, you’re not asking a favour from your company to get you promoted.

You are simply reminding the responsible parties that you deserve career development. You deserve the credit for what it’s worth. And when you do get promoted, don’t forget to pass it on to the next one in line.
LESIONS FROM AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN

By MINDA ZETLIN
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SOMETIMES the emotions and bad mental habits that you set aside have more to do with your success than the things you do. At least, that’s how it was for my stepfather, one of the great role models of my life. William Allen Brodston passed away in January at the astounding age of 105. Before he died, he lived an extraordinary life.

He married three times, raised four children who have careers of their own and went on to live successful lives, helped found a cement company, and then in retirement, became a competitive long-distance runner. He was a consummate sales-man. He had to be because – as he once explained to me – both the composition and the price of cement were the same from every supplier.

Sales boiled down to relationship-building, and to whom people liked best. That was a game he always won. His extraordinary longevity was certainly the result of his athleticism, but even more important, it was the result of his calm and upbeat attitude. He seemed to know that things would work out, and that he would adjust to whatever was thrown his way.

And when he needed physical help, he would simply tell even his favourite guests to leave. You always knew where you stood with him, and people loved him for it.

WORRY

Bill never seemed to worry about anything, although there were plenty of things he could have worried about throughout his life. He was just entering adulthood at the time of the Great Depression, followed by World War II. His father lost most of the money that Bill had hoped to inherit. He was in debt for a large part of his life.

You could always count on Bill to do what needed to be done, and to be there for you if you were in need. But you could also count on him not to do anything he didn’t want to do, or go anywhere he didn’t want to go, out of a useless sense of obligation.

OBLIGATION

You could always count on Bill to do what needed to be done, and to be there for you if you were in need. But you could also count on him not to do anything he didn’t want to do, or go anywhere he didn’t want to go, out of a useless sense of obligation.

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SELF-PITY

Bill never, ever seemed to feel sorry for himself, although he could have. My mother was the love of his life, but a decade in divorce she began showing subtle, and then, not-so-subtle signs of dementia. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2000, although by that time, it was just a formality. Her disease had long been obvious to everyone who knew her. She died in 2015, and through it all, the sense of romance never seemed to leave them.

He never seemed to mind her increasingly painful forgetfulness, or her mood swings, or her diminishing ability to take care of herself, or any of the other awful things that go along with that awful disease.

Watching her slip away was unbearable for me, but he seemed just as happy, and just as happily married, feeding her breakfast and helping her figure out how to get dressed.

RESIGNATION

Some people are good at accepting fate, but that was never Bill’s way. The same determination that brought a 70-year-old man to the marathon finish line, though he was barely able to stand, was part of everything he did.

In his late 90s, he broke his hip, often the beginning of the end for the elderly. But he was determined not to decline from there, so once he was able to walk with a walker, he did everything he could to regain his strength.

He found a rarely-used stairway in the facility where he lived with my mother, with handrails that were just far apart that he could reach both sides with his long arms.

Several times a day, he would leave his walker to one side, and make his way up and down those stairs, five times over, to strengthen his legs. There’s a Sanskrit word – Iṣṭāṅkaṇ – which is sometimes translated as ‘fiery discipline or passion’.

To me, the definition of that word is Bill going up and down those stairs, leaving his walker behind. His life was and is a lesson in how to live for everyone he knew.

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. Email editor@leaderonomics.com to get in touch with her.

It’s human nature to be impulsive and react instead of act. And when it becomes a habit, it can become destructive. Here are some strategies to help you stay in control.

1. Take a deep breath. It’s human nature to seek to simplify each other – to make it seem easier to predict each other’s next move or to just feel like we get each other. However, we are highly complex beings. Perhaps it’s time to put ourselves in other people’s shoes, and be more understanding when we approach human emotions.

Reality is in the eye of the beholder. It’s human nature to seek to simplify each other – to make it seem easier to predict each other’s next move or to just feel like we get each other. However, we are highly complex beings. Perhaps it’s time to put ourselves in other people’s shoes, and be more understanding when we approach human emotions.

For more information and to pre-register, just head to this link: tinyurl.com/LDRoPDay

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We would like to thank our readers - yes, you! – for journeying with us all these years, and we would like to invite you to our special celebration. Please block your time on Nov 24 from 10am to 4pm.

For more information and to pre-register, just head to this link: tinyurl.com/LDRoPDay

QUOTES

"Like education, healthcare also needs to be given importance. — Shiv Nadar, chairman of HCL Enterprise"

"We spend more than a third of our day at work but we call it ‘employment’, like it’s purely a contractual arrangement. On the contrary, getting employed is very much akin to a relationship commitment. Sashe Kanapathi shares how to succeed in tying this so-called employment knot: bit.ly/RYGEmployment"
WHY HR NEEDS GOOD STORYTELLERS

By EMMA BANNISTER
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I
n the business world, especially in human resources (HR), we’ve been taught to keep our ‘game face’ on. Any hint of emotion is seen as inappropriate, or as stepping over the mark. In addition, we’ve been taught that our problem-solving and decision-making should rely on our logic and analysis only.

That applies to whether we’re consulting with management on strategic staffing plans, or presenting a new training initiative with our team. Yet, rational decision making – for the most part – is largely a myth.

This is because up to 90 per cent of the thousands of decisions we make each day fall beneath our level of awareness and are reinforced through our feelings and emotions. In fact, studies have shown that 74 per cent of participants have changed their decision after their emotion was changed.

According to Forrester Research, emotion was the number one contributor to customer loyalty in 94 per cent of industries studied, beating effectiveness and ease.

Further still, Disney and Gallup found that organisations that optimise their emotional journey generate 26 per cent more gross margin and experience 85 per cent more sales growth than their competitors.

That means we need to find ways to connect, engage, and inspire our team and employees using emotion – and storytelling is the perfect way to do that.

MAKE ME FEEL IT

Storytelling is the most powerful form of communication ever invented. Whether it’s the latest Hollywood blockbuster, or a big team presentation, stories provoke our emotions.

Stories help us feel something towards the person telling the story, i.e. the speaker (you), which helps create connection, credibility and trust.

Any time you have the opportunity to present or speak to your team or to management, you need to tell a great story. You must balance the logic of the content (the data and facts) with an emotional connection (the feeling that makes us leap up in glee).

When we try to influence our audience with the presentation’s facts and figures or pros and cons alone, we are relying solely on logic, which is often why our audience fall asleep in their seats. Remember, science says that we make up our minds based on our emotions and how we feel about something.

So, if the goal of any presentation is to influence your audience (which it is), then you need to give them something to feel that will elicit a reason to act now.

Should they feel angry and compelled to change their action? Or excited about the department’s new vision or idea? In a presentation, you can choose images, photos, video, and even colours to match that mood, so what you’re saying and showing becomes not only memorable, but meaningful as well.

DE HUMAN

Above all else, you’ve got to remember that one key word in your job title – human. As a human resource director, your whole role revolves around managing and influencing other people.

Of course, it’s easy to forget this when you’ve got your head down, churning through work, but we really cannot afford to hide behind corporate jargon, blanket statements, or even our screens.

What the world needs today – what your employees, team members, customers, and stakeholders actually need – is H2H: a human-to-human natural connection through compelling visuals and emotional stories.

IN CONCLUSION

When you share your vision and goals through compelling stories and slides that take your audience on the journey with you, you reduce fear and instil confidence in everyone involved.

That’s when they will connect to a future they want to be a part of.

Emma Bannister is the founder and CEO of Presentation Studio, APAC’s largest presentation communication agency, and author of the book Visual Thinking: How To Transform The Way You Think, Communicate And Influence With Presentations. To connect with Emma, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

JAMIE ANDREW
Leading from The Edge

Despite losing his hands and his feet in a climbing accident at the age of 29, Jamie Andrew has achieved the seemingly impossible: running marathons, completing an Ironman triathlon, skiing, snowboarding, sailing, and of course mountain climbing.

Jamie has inspired people across more than 30 countries through his 13 years of speaking experience where he tells his story with great passion, sincerity, and humour.

As a regular presenter for The International Institute of Management Development in Switzerland on several programmes, including the hugely popular High Performance Leadership course, Jamie uses his experiences as a mountaineer in relation to principles of successful business practice. His sessions are gripping, inspiring, and uplifting addressing the following topics:

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Book a session with Jamie Andrew for your organisation today!
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