



TalentTalks

Evolving Thinking through best industry reads.

ISSUE # 1

EDITION APRIL 2022

■ CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT

the a strong relationship between healthy cultures and high levels of employee engagement

■ EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

work is changing exponentially as global and digital disruption continues to effect all businesses

■ HYBRID WORLD OF WORK

the emergence of new hybrid workforces and organisations

7 FUNDAMENTALS

■ LEANING INTO THE CONVERSATIONS WE NEED TO HAVE



FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome from the team

This is our first Talenttalks monthly magazine. Your opportunity to dip into the articles, podcasts and inspirations published on the Talenttalks site over a month, at your leisure.

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Our aim is to re-humanize business and empower and inspire people to move forward in their careers, workplaces & lives.

You will be able to access relevant knowledge based on accurate information tested in a real world context and

covering the themes of Culture and Engagement, Diversity, Employee Wellbeing, Learning and Performance and The Hybrid World of Work. A diverse mix with Inspire adding the softer touch.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Please do contact us and share your thoughts.

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We would love to hear from you.

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GAYLIN JEE

CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT

There is a strong relationship between healthy cultures and high levels of employee engagement. But the last two years have changed all of us in some way.

As we slowly return to more hybrid workspaces, we must expect some degree of strain around social connections and cultural cohesion.

But we also have a great opportunity to refresh, rebuild & reinvent.

7 FUNDAMENTALS FOR LEANING INTO THE CONVERSATIONS WE NEED TO HAVE

GAYLIN JEE

What if we could come away from a heated situation, where one person does not win, and one person does not lose? And neither person feels like a winner or a loser?

If you've engaged in conversations lately around emotive issues (here are some examples: vaccinations, lockdowns, protests, or border shutdowns), you'll know how much passion and conviction is driving them. Strong emotions fuel and easily polarize a conversation. In heated debates we fall into the styles that Adam Grant traces out in his book *Think Again*. We become 'preachers', 'politicians' and 'prosecutors' to get our points across, to 'win'. I've witnessed on more than a few occasions how one person retreats as things hot up, taking from the interaction the lesson that speaking your mind comes with personal risk. Some commit to never bringing

up the topic again. This is an outcome that is unfortunate, for some conversations need to be had, and indeed they the golden threads that can take us forward.

A 'good' conversation leaves us not only curious, reflective, and thinking again, but also a little closer than before. A gentle meeting of minds allows us to hear a different view, to see the whole person with their individual wants, needs and interests. At its finest, a beautiful conversation is generative - it opens and activates our minds to positive possibilities we did not see before, so that together we chart new paths. The way we navigate the future could be

so different if we had more skill in this area and the confidence and courage to lean into conversations.

Setting the conditions for a more beautiful conversation is a gift that you can offer to the world (including the world of work). It is not one that you are born with, but rather that you develop and refine like a craft over time. I've been studying with the Centre for Conflict Resolution over the past year, and so I'm taking the liberty of sharing salient points that bring the art into how we approach situations where dialogue feels entangled or messy.

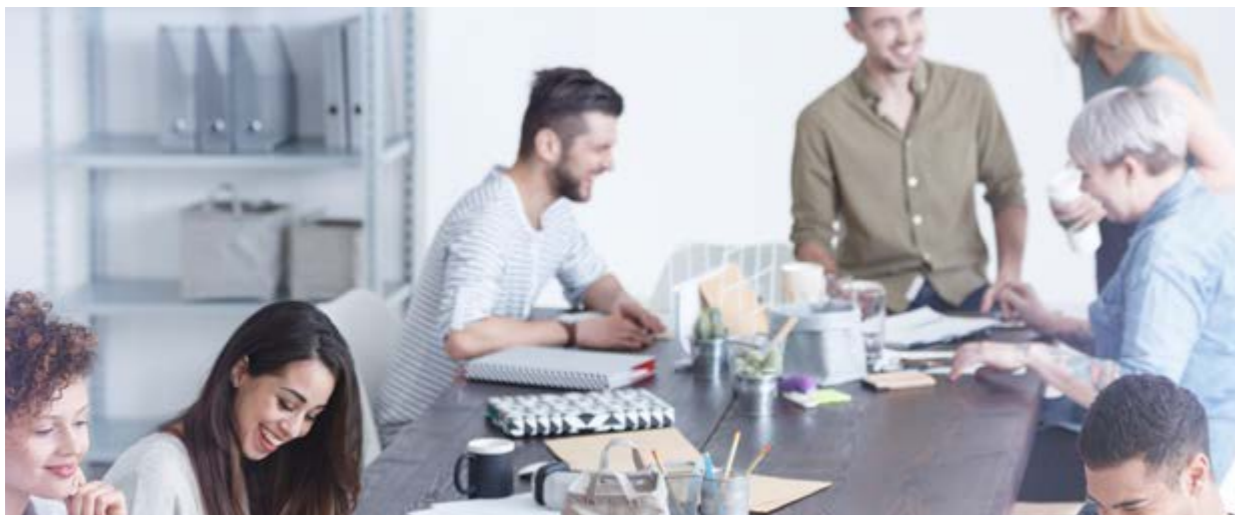
HERE ARE SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS THAT RESONATE FOR ME.

1. **Acknowledge.** To get this right you need to start with listening and trying to 'hear' the other person. There is a difference between acknowledgment and agreement. Particularly important is acknowledging emotions. In some cases, tension is already diffused just by this simple act.
2. **Test your assumptions.** Judgemental approaches cause people to become defensive. Observe. Try to understand facts. Neutrality does not mean disinterest. Nor does seeking to get facts imply condoning. Humility makes us ask: How do I know what I know is true? How open am I to hearing about another point of view? Sometimes how wrong you are about someone else's motivations can humble you. Imagine we approached conversations with the intent to discover more. It's not an invalidation of what we bring, but rather a commitment to be open to what we can learn from one another.
3. **Frame a problem as an 'it', not a person or a you.** Here's an example: "You are lazy," versus "There is a lot of work to be done. How should we do it?"
4. **Shift the focus from the past to the future.** What you'll notice about point 3 is the focus is already shifted forward and on finding a way through.
5. **Try to keep in mind that we all have the same basic needs.** We have different interests arising from those needs. We use different strategies in getting those interests satisfied. What are your needs? What are the needs of the other person?
6. **Try not to avoid conflict.** Leaning into a conversation is a chance to surface underlying issues and move through them in a positive way. Just signalling this intent voices a confidence that it can be done, even if you don't get there in this moment. Issues often arise in other ways or at different times if they are never explored.
7. **Get curious about the conflict in your life.** If it is cropping up across a variety of contexts, perhaps it is time to step back and ask yourself whether there's a pattern or trend you want to unlock.

Imagine every word in conflict as an expression of hope, an act of courage and an effort to reconnect.
- Andre Vlok, Centre for Conflict Resolution

It is human to feel both passion and connection to the views of the world that shaped us into who we are. But we can attach our passion to honest and humble conversation that brings us closer together, that deepens our levels of respect, perhaps even admiration, for each other.

Through dialogue, there's a chance we might discover and create that better way, to direct our energy in service of solving our biggest challenges.



THE URGENT NEED TO RETAIN TALENT

South African companies urgently need to address their strategies to attract and retain talent

WENDY SPALDING

South Africa has experienced its share of brain drains, and the pandemic may just have induced a new kind of the same. With the shift not only to work-from-home, but work-from-anywhere, top talent now has a choice of more local and global opportunities, which has serious repercussions for organisations.

On the one hand, the uncertainty of moving jobs during a pandemic and various fears associated with the economy make candidates more cautious about considering a career move currently. Additionally, those who have moved organisations

have cited a struggle with effective integration due to the virtual nature of the work and teams.

On the other hand, however, with the onset of remote and hybrid work, candidates have realised they have the option of working from anywhere. In our candidate engagement we have noted an increase in "semigration", emigration, and in candidates wanting to hear about international roles. We sense a growing resistance among professionals to return to full-time work at the office.

In South Africa, therefore, the so-

called "Great Resignation" is more of a talent tsunami, where professionals are leaving South Africa, and in some instances, those who remain are actively seeking employment with multinationals or with the option for remote work.

The past year has seen some interesting trends in the talent and recruiting space: a rapid increase in ecosystem partnerships, the growing importance of Environment, Society and Governance (ESG), and the digital transformation of many companies. These factors have played a key role in ensuring that

talent is now in the driving seat, and companies will need to rise to meet the challenges this presents.

The key characteristics of a talent ecosystem are its cohesive, interrelated, and interdependent parts that potentially enable a more attractive employee experience. For instance, the rapid formation of many ecosystem partnerships could present the opportunity for employees to move across organisations to gain access to a broader portfolio of developmental opportunities.

These ecosystems could also offer the opportunity for employees to engage in an organisation beyond the employee-employer contract, which can mean more integrated and diverse employee experience.

ESG and its translation into an organisation's purpose and values are also major topics of conversation among the candidates we work with. According to Mercer's Global Talent Trends 2020 -2021, 67% of South African HR leaders reported ESG goals were being built into the company's transformation agenda, and one in five organisations is embedding ESG metrics into executive score cards. Candidates are looking for evidence of employers that really

care. This is no longer an HR issue only, but one which all executives need to exhibit, communicate and live up to.

The reputation and credibility of an organisation's leaders is a crucial factor – an organisational brand and Employee Value Proposition (EVP) are extremely important, of course, but specifically the reputation of the leader the role reports into is much more critical.

Reporting lines are a very important consideration. For candidates this often determines the strategic mandate that a function holds and is a definite attraction or detraction, while organisations that are experiencing leadership uncertainty and an unclear succession plan are less attractive to candidates.

We don't believe these trends are just interesting themes as a result of the pandemic, but rather permanent and long-lasting change that talent management strategies will need to address. Investing in people is a key priority.



Beyond the Pledge

provides leaders with the support and tools to operationalize gender equality and gender-based violence commitments, as well as building a community of practice to share best practice and build accountability*



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REFLECTION POINT. EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Many organisations are grappling with equal pay for equal work and the challenge is not going away. Legislation has been introduced to drive a more equitable distribution of pay. The King IV code also focuses on Fair and Responsible Remuneration and expects that remuneration will be impartial and free from discrimination, while being approved by the appropriate authority and subject to independent oversight.

Shareholders, the media, and equality activists are asking tough questions. Some organisations are struggling to respond. As I reflect on the current state of equal pay for equal work, I have noticed that we sometimes do not have the basics in place to help us address this important issue. There are a few key areas where we need robust policies and processes: job design, job descriptions, job evaluation, and pay ranges. If these are not in place, or not well designed, the striving for equal pay for equal work will be very difficult to achieve.

KIRK KRUGER



SOHINI PETRIE

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity has become a corporate buzzword. Irrefutably, we are a diverse species, living on a planet that has thrived because of the rich, diversity of all lifeforms. For our organisations to thrive now and into the future, we need to embrace, restore, and protect this diversity.

This work is about creating inclusive spaces that are welcoming and equitable for all genders, cultures, races, abilities, and generations. And breaking down the systems and structures that perpetuate exclusivity.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

PROF SHIRLEY ZINN

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and belonging require leaders who will move beyond awareness

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) are often seen being squarely in the domain of HR; a separate issue to an organisation's sustainability goals, but the two are inextricably linked. If we want sustainable organisations, we need to be building sustainable talent pools that are diverse and future-fit. This means that DEI is at the heart of business strategy.

To be clear, I am not talking about the business case for DEI – if you still need to ask about that, your business is in trouble. This is about moving beyond that tick-box to making real progress, and being motivated to do this at a deep, intrinsic level.

Most organisations – especially in the

context of Covid-19 – are focusing on questions of innovation, sustainability, attracting and retaining diverse talent, creating physically and emotionally safe environments for people to thrive in a hybrid workplace, empathetic leadership, improved productivity and performance, competitive employee and customer experience, ensuring that ethics permeate corporate culture, social impact, ESG, and company alignment with stakeholder and community expectations.

To create the organisation of the future, we need to consider these issues through the lens of DEI – and the vital concept of belonging – so that we broaden the opportunity for all voices to be heard. But what does

belonging mean? Well, as Verna Myers put it, diversity is being invited to the party, and inclusion is being asked to dance. Belonging means you get to choose your favourite song and everybody dances.

Often we have the intellectual buy-in to DEI, but this is where it stays. What we need is emotional and behavioural buy-in too. Awareness is a great place to start, but we need to go further, on a journey of constantly interrogating our assumptions and biases, considering the systemic issues of policies, practices, barriers, structures and systems, to understanding our impact on society and social justice. This is how we become champions and advocates of DEI.

The question, always, is how we do this. How do we embed DEI in business strategy and make it part of every organisation's DNA? The answer, as with everything else, lies with the leadership. And in this instance, it's about leaders who are willing to do the inner work – to be on a continuous journey beyond attending another DEI workshop. They need to be agile thinkers who are self-aware enough to be constantly course-correcting.

They must do the work to understand their own biases, and change their behaviour accordingly. It's a dynamic, continuous process, and we need to bear in mind that our own ideologies are constantly moving and shifting, and need to be managed in the way we behave. None of us is bias-free, and we all need to surface and interrupt those biases.

In South Africa, because of our apartheid history, we often tend to think of diversity as only increasing representation by race or gender metrics. And, yes, this has to have continued and relentless focus. But our country's Constitution, in Sections 9 (3) and 9 (4), provides that no person or the State may directly or indirectly unfairly discriminate against anyone on one

or more grounds. These grounds include race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

This means we have to go beyond gender and race to consider disability, diversity of thought, diversity of lived experience, diversity of personality, parental status, level of education, rank, position.

Intersectionality is the combination of these, cumulative effects within one individual that are hugely complex. This has an impact on the end-to-end employee life cycle from the time and way in which we recruit people, to the way we appoint, onboard, promote, develop, do succession planning and performance management, and exit people.

DEI policies, of course, are a good place to start, but we have to ensure they are being implemented – they, too, are not a once-off, and will need to be constantly improved and updated as we recognise areas they might not have covered.

Policies, however – even the best policies in the world – can't

adequately account for the micro-inequities and micro-aggressions many people face on a daily basis: the subtle ignoring, discounting and humiliation that the aggressors often aren't even aware they are perpetrating.

We must also have realistic expectations of discomfort as we navigate these issues: DEI is an uncomfortable topic for many, but ultimately, it's about humanisation. And in order to achieve that, we need inclusive leadership development programmes that produce leaders who walk the talk. Covid-19 has redefined who people want to work with, and it's a critical part of an organisation's employee value proposition now to have truly inclusive leaders.

It's not about creating artificial harmony, or simply having a policy in place that you can add to your integrated reporting. It's about robust, but respectful engagement with your employee community and other stakeholders in an effort to clearly define what DEI means to you as an organisation, and it's about creating an inclusive environment where your people can truly thrive, and bring their best selves to the workplace.





JVR
ACADEMY



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REFLECTIONS FOR LEADING WELL IN A DIVERSE WORLD

SOHINI PETRIE

Our planet's magic lies in her diversity. Diversity is a fact. It is just who we are as inhabitants of Earth. For me, there shouldn't be anything to do about diversity. It just is. What we have actively done, is create exclusivity in almost all aspects of social life. Exclusivity is the basis for our biases – conscious or unconscious. The 'other' or 'not like us' syndrome. The antidote to this limiting and destructive mindset and behaviour, is embracing the value of inclusivity – an open-hearted and generative approach.

What does this have to do with how you lead? The task of leadership is to align and amplify individual strengths towards a common goal. If you aren't inclusive in the way you lead, you are compromising your team's ability to be successful and effective.

For the next half an hour I invite you to reflect on your challenges and opportunities in being a leader for all. Find a comfortable, quiet place that honours your reflective practice. Take five minutes per question to write uncensored. After your timed journaling, consider what came up for you. Be gentle, forgiving, and compassionate with yourself.

//

"Inclusivity is the concept that we are all connected. We are inextricably linked to each other. Our connections go beyond 'liking' or 'tolerating' each other. Inclusivity is the world-view that all beings are connected. Inclusivity can be summed up in a statement, **We Are One.**"

– Shariff Abdullah

What does being a 'leader for all' mean to me?

"Deep Identity" consists of the parts of a person's identity that we acquire at an early age, before the capacity for abstract or rational thought. It includes race/ethnicity/culture, language, religion and/or class. Our deep identity forms the basis for our perspectives of the world, it can be a factor in motivating action, and it shapes the ongoing narrative of your life story.

1. How might my deep identity have influenced the leader I am now?
2. What does this concept of inclusivity bring up for me?
3. How might this awareness of deep identity and inclusivity help me in my leadership role?
4. What are my strengths in being an inclusive leader and what are my growing edges?
5. Who (specifically) might benefit from me being a more inclusive leader?



DEBBIE CRAIG

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

The world of work is changing exponentially as global and digital disruption force businesses to imagine and adopt new strategies and skills to survive. This requires new future-fit thinking, habits and capability to learn, adapt, build relationships remotely, experiment and fail fast.

We cannot do any of this if we cannot sustain our health, energy, motivation and wellbeing.

6 RESILIENCE HACKS ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK POWER UP

DEBBIE CRAIG

2021 was a massive year of change and letting go for me. It included letting go of my family home, my husband, half my hair from stress, my adult kids moving out. It was about letting go many expectations of how things should be – in life, relationships and business. I also at times lost my sense of humour .. and my need to be tough and in charge and have it all together.

On the flip side, there were so many discoveries and gifts in the spaces created through letting go – that we don't see while we are holding on. If it were not for a number of resilience hacks and awesome friends and support – I may not have survived 2021 in one piece.

So here are my top 6 resilience hacks that have got me through – and like with most life skills – the more we practice, the luckier we get! Unless we master our brains, bodies and automatic stress and trigger responses – we are doomed to stay in survival mode and recreate our past. We end up doing what our brains are conditioned to do. How about retraining your brain with some practices to shift your experience of unexpected change and disruption –



“We are the creative force of our life, and through our own choices rather than our conditions, if we carefully learn to do certain things, we can accomplish those goals.” – Stephen Covey

and empower yourself to create rather than react.

1. INTENTION

John Keehoe, the guru of mindpower, states: “What we intend to, and pay attention to, become our reality”. When we set clear simple intentions and then pay attention to these on regular, daily basis, we encourage our brains to select and process the data we need to lead us toward that intention. Our brains can only process approximately 2000 bits of data per second out of the 400 billion bits of data per second it receives. Tony Robbins, one the world's best personal results coaches, says: “Our energy flows where our attention goes”.

Be clear on your goals for 2022, and then pay attention to that, rather than focusing on what you don't want, don't have or are not enjoying or be so distracted by irrelevant noise, drama or false news that you have no energy left to create your future you.

2. IMAGINATION

Many research studies have shown that our brains don't know the difference between imagination and reality. This is true whether we are imagining a



potential stressful outcome or achieving our dreams. To help our brains recognize the breadcrumbs to our future dreams, spend time imagining feeling and being already there. If you do this in Alpha brain wave state (relaxed, alert state) you can directly access your subconscious mind and neural paths, making the change so much more effortless. The brain also loves pictures and will memorise multiple concepts through just one emotive picture than through words. Make your dreams, goals and state of being tangible, visible and memorable through vision boards, screen savers, journaling or make a movie of your future self, using images, affirmations and music. Place it in a spot that you see regularly and each time you remember what you are intending – imagine the feeling of how it would be if you already had it. Our emotions are a key to creating the life experience we desire. We are creating all the time – new neural paths, experiences, memories and automated responses.

Watch yourself – thoughts, feelings, actions. You will see what you are

creating through repetition. Get good at cultivating a positive picture and emotional experience of your future – regardless of the current circumstance. We have to BELIEVE!

3. COHERENCE

The HeartMath Institute defines coherence as “an optimal state in which the body, heart, mind and emotions are aligned and in sync.” A coherent state such as appreciation, calm, patience or confidence facilitates brain function and promotes optimal performance. An incoherent state such as frustration, irritation, impatience, worry inhibits brain function, increases the stress response and impairs both health and performance. If our heart (feelings) is not aligned with our vision for ourselves i.e. filled with doubt, frustration or fear, it will be very difficult to enable action toward your vision. We can choose to feel a certain way despite what we see or read about or experience. We can cultivate gratitude for what we have and what we are creating. We can also use breathing techniques to activate our

heart centres and calm our automatic stress reactions. When we are calm and coherent, we can switch on both our creative ideation abilities to dream AND our rest and renew response to heal and regenerate. E-motion is energy in motion. Use your emotional energy to pull your desired future toward you AND to motivate you to take action.

Start practicing a calming, heart opening breathing technique and start a gratitude journal.

4. REPETITION

The Hebbian Law states that “nerve cells that fire together, wire together”. This means that we can build new habits through repetition or “stopping” old habits. As Gary Player, the great golfer said: “the more I practice, the luckier I get”. If you want to think, feel or act a certain way, keep imagining, paying attention, and practicing thinking, feeling and behaving in that way – even when you don't feel like it – until new automatic neural paths can be formed. To change deeply

engrained default behaviours, we need to unlearn and create new, more effective ones. We cannot create the body of our dreams if we only lie in bed and imagine ourselves getting fitter and stronger. We need to make it a priority. As Angela Duckworth says: Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare! Imagine automating happiness, optimism, kindness or courage (or maybe healthy exercise and eating habits!). To change a habit, we need to repeat behaviour in a similar context every day for an average 66 days to make it permanent (18 days is the minimum). It may be uncomfortable initially as we build a new path (like beating a new path through thick bush), but the more the path is used, the more open and smooth it becomes. As Aristotle was know to say: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

Create some good routines or habits to start, even if for just a few minutes a day

5. METACOGNITION

We have the ability to observe ourselves (our thoughts, feelings, actions), pause and choose more empowering responses to life. We can learn to delay reacting emotionally to an external trigger (e.g. criticism) or internal trigger (e.g. craving), until we have more information, are calmer and can make better choices. Practice pausing, breathing, watching, reflecting, noticing your automatic or unconscious filters. Be mindful. Once you are calm and aware, then you can CHOOSE the thoughts, feelings and actions that will take toward where you want to go. Start your day with a few quiet moments, affirmations or meditation to set up your day with awareness, using the tips above of intention, attention, imagination, coherence and repetition. During the day activate your metacognition and stop negative or unproductive thoughts and feelings in their tracks through some self-guided words such as: “STOP, CANCEL, CANCEL”, “CHANGE”, “PAY ATTENTION”, “I CAN CHOOSE”. Then call upon an affirmation such as “I have all the time and resources I need to achieve my goals and dreams.” Or “I am the change I wish to see in the world”.

Use a daily journal to build your observational muscle by noting down all the helpful or unproductive thoughts, feelings or habits you noticed that day. You can also ask a friend to help you observe what you might be blind to.

a different more positive response. This is emotional intelligence in action. The greatest power to influence or shift our behaviour and habits comes at the point of CHOICE.

6. REFRACTORY PERIOD (EQ)

We cannot learn or change in the stress response when our bodies are incoherent, upset, or in fear (flight, fright or freeze mode). Our perceptions are altered by stress chemicals and we tend to be more reactive, aggressive, negative, selfish and limited in our thinking. We will often say or do things that we regret later. This can often happen when we spend time together with family with high expectations, and disappointment and conflict can arise. When we are feeling anxious, frustrated or stressed, we can learn to manage our mental and emotional state through self-regulation, metacognition, coherence and choosing a new response as outlined above.

Take some time out, go for a walk, breathe deeply and know you can choose

POWER OF CHOICE

Two extreme examples of the power to CHOOSE are the self-saboteur and the self-master. The self-saboteur is often unaware of their thinking, emotional state or impact on others; can struggle to control their emotions, words and actions; and tends to be reactive to triggers in their environment and easily distracted from their goals. The self-master on the other side of the spectrum is very aware of their thinking, emotional state and impact on others and is disciplined in managing their emotions, words and actions. They generally choose the appropriate responses to people or triggers in their environment that leads them closer to their goals or intentions. We won't get this right every day, but we can focus on this more days than not. Who will you choose to be?



REFLECTION POINT. LISTENING TO OUR SOCIAL SILENCES

Social silences point to critical issues that few people are talking about.

The concept is one I picked up in Gillian Tett's book *Anthrovision*. Tett is Editor of *The Financial Times*. By trade, she's an anthropologist. There are two other critical anthropological skills mentioned in this excellent work. The first is taking the time to see what appears to you as 'the weird'. This allows you to build more empathy for others over time. And the second is to flip the lens back at yourself and see the weird in you. With these two lenses, we have a chance of appreciating more fully what is going on around us.

There are always more than two sides to a story. In truth, there are many. A commitment to broadening our 'seeing' range is a worthy one, especially in a world that feels increasingly polarised.

So, my reflections for the week are:

What are our social silences?

Are there narratives and opinions that I am exposed to more? Less? What are they?

What actions am I taking to lean into my silences, or the view I do not hear?

GAYLIN JEE

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Employee mental health and psychological safety



CAROLINE PASSMORE

I am currently working with a large, multinational organisation that has a powerful brand – they perform exceptionally, are active corporate citizens and, on the face of it, are an amazing business to work for. Young graduates and job seekers are desperate for roles in this mighty enterprise.

However, on the ground, the people talk of pockets of highly toxic culture, a continuous drive to perform at all costs, no place for failure (even mistakes that simply happen in the course of business), a disregard for work-life balance and a disconnect from the original ethos of the business. Over the past year, their staff seeking support for mental health issues, has tripled.

This business has also recorded its highest attrition in history. People are not only leaving for better opportunities but for better wellbeing. It's not to say that the business doesn't have wellbeing programmes and practices in place, of course they do. They just aren't enough.

My fear is that this organisation is simply one of many. Across the globe, organisations are desperately trying to rebuild, restore and recoup losses and setbacks incurred over the pandemic. This is understandable as shareholders still seek their returns. The facts, however, speak for themselves – people are leaving their employers in droves (see the Great Resignation) and mental health related issues have sky-rocketed.

Wellbeing programmes and mental health support, like those offered by

my client, are certainly important – they do make a difference. However, if the culture on the ground is toxic, these simply serve as a band-aid and only address the issues symptomatically. We need these methods of support AND we need to fundamentally transform the lived and experienced culture within teams.

In my experience, when people understand the simple science behind social safety, and how we are all wired for it, it creates sufficient awareness to start the transformation. What is social safety, you may ask? Social safety is simply the neurobiological need that all humans have to feel safe – safe in our "tribe" – whether at home, socially or at work. This human need for social safety is created at an organisational level through fostering a culture of psychological safety or, as professor Amy Edmondson says, "a shared belief that a team is a safe place for individual and interpersonal risk-taking".

So what can we do differently across our businesses to turn the tide of emotional and mental health issues? It all starts with a little introspection and a conversation – lots of little conversations, in fact.

These conversations, that are often difficult, need to be had with teams, across the business, between people and leaders. Each conversation demands a commitment to addressing the unhealthy team behaviours, to rewriting the invisible toxic culture and creating mutual accountability for proactively cultivating a way of being

that is human centred.

Here is a simple recipe to start this process:

Spend some time mindfully observing your behaviour in the workplace. Do you engage all people equally, irrespective of background and gender? Do you admit your own weaknesses openly and share your stories of how, and when you have battled at work? Do you provide safety for others to be vulnerable? Do you invite others ideas and make them feel valued? Are you complicit in the toxic politics?

Have the team explore their views around the team culture, openly, honestly and in a safe space. What behaviours do they observe that break down trust? Do they feel free to contribute and share openly? Can team members speak of their mistakes without fear of retribution? Do they feel that their team has their back?

Examine your processes and systems. Do your processes, such as performance management, support the measurement of outcomes that inadvertently lead to a lack of social safety and perceived threat? Do you reward the absence of errors in work? Do you reward the long hours and the innate competition that develops between teams?

The time to examine the hidden team cultures is now. If we do not act, we are complicit in fuelling the mental health crisis. This is not a topic that we should shy away from but rather embrace. Shouldn't you do the same?

JOIN US FOR OUR HEALTHY TEAMS WORKSHOP FOR SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE

AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP IN PERSON OR ONLINE



Based on the work of Patrick Lencioni, the team works on various elements that will make them effective. The workshop (in person or online) can be customised to particular outcomes.



LITA CURRIE

LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

The skills of the future rely on employees' ability to learn, un-learn and re-learn. Learning agility as a key capability will allow employees and organisations to remain competitive in an ever-changing world.

Capable and competent employees are the bedrock of high performance allowing organisations to maintain a lead in the market.

BUILDING ALIGNED TEAMS ONLINE

LITA CURRIE

Imagine this: you're on an online team meeting. It's like staring into a black void – everyone has their cameras off. You ask a question, just to be met by stony silence. A thought flutters through your mind: they're not there. They've logged on to the meeting, but then left to do something else!

This is the stuff of nightmares! How does one guild teams who work well together, who perform and engage in an online environment? Don't despair, though – it can be done.

Here are a couple of practical ideas from a group of line managers that I work with.

- 1. Contract for videos on.** Create a culture of having videos on during online meetings. If people are visible, they are more engaged. Facial expressions are a critical part of our communication, so don't discount it. "Videos on" should be a ground rule for your team. However, ensure that there are some guidelines about what's acceptable. For example, during one of my online lectures at a local university the other day there was a person about to take a shower when they switched on their camera by mistake. No-one wants that, right? Let the team create guidelines around what's allowed during online meetings that will work for everyone.
- 2. Create connection sessions that has nothing to do with work.** One line manager shared that she schedules 3 30-minute sessions (on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday) where co-workers can talk about anything BUT work. It's a great way to connect socially with others and it really helped the team to engage on a more human level.
- 3. Check-ins at the start of meetings.** Give every person the opportunity to check in. Let

them answer on how they are doing personally – again, no work stuff! Focus on emotions, how their personal lives are going and what's important to them. Try not to include a business update during these check-ins, rather focus on the person.

- 4. Use the tools.** There are various tools available for online collaboration. Use a white board application to capture ideas. Create a Miro board for people to collaborate. Use breakout rooms for discussions in smaller groups. Most of these are free and easy to use. And if you're unsure, search for "how to" guides and videos to help you get into the basics.

- 5. Celebrate and recognize.** Create opportunities for the team to celebrate successes and recognize achievements. Again, this can be online. Create an online quiz as a team building event or host a cooking competition on Whatsapp.

Finally, a good old phone call between two people is a great way to maintain connection. One line manager told me that he calls every team member for a 15-minute chat every week. Sure, it takes time, but the impact has been great. There's been stronger relationships and higher engagement in online meetings because of these calls



HOW TO SUSTAIN CHANGE

LITA CURRIE

Last week a colleague of mine lamented on the disappointing impact of a session on diversity and inclusion.



“We had an hour’s session online where the facilitator covered inclusion and discrimination”

he told me. “It was a good session, and we got to have some honest conversations, specifically about racism and gender inequality. But just as we got into some really deep discussions, the hour was up!” I could hear the frustration in his voice. “An hour is not going to change anything!” he ranted.

“We need persistent nurturing!”

I loved that phrase! Persistent nurturing means that when we think about change, it's not just a once-off intervention. We need to think about

change as a process and not just an event. People don't change overnight (sadly) – it sometimes takes a lot of effort and time to facilitate change. And effort and time are expensive, more often than not.

If we are really serious about creating lasting change in organisations, here's a couple of ideas that organisations can include:

Include the change in more than one intervention. If racism is a problem in your organisation, an hour's training on racism is really just the start. Include it in your company values, discussions between manager and employees, and consistent communication. Include it in leadership development programmes and water-cooler conversations. Embed it in the way that employees relate to the organisation and others.

It needs more than just training. A training course – whether online or in person – is just one step towards creating awareness and opening the door for conversation. But the impact is limited. I have found that coaching is a great way to foster change, both in individuals and teams. I have seen

people who have for years been set in their ways, change because of an insight that they gained in individual coaching. I have seen teams have breakthroughs in understanding one another in team coaching sessions. Coaching is a superpower that your organisation can dial into.

Create real work opportunities to practise. If I reflect on where I have learnt the most, it's probably not training or even coaching – it's doing the job. Create opportunities for people from different backgrounds to work together and get to know one another. This is the best way to break down preconceived biases and prejudice. They just cannot stand up in the face of getting to know someone else as a person.



LISTEN TO BIO-HACKING FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE WITH JONI PEDDIE

VITAL SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE.

AGILITY & FLEXIBILITY

This article marks the halfway point in our journey into the vital future skills required for our youth.

NATALEE HOLMES



I hope that the past few articles have been insightful and that you are already beginning to put the advice into practice. I hope more than anything that I have lit a few lightbulbs for you and that your world is opening and changing as you grow individually and help the youth around you grow into successful people too.

This week we will be exploring agility & flexibility.

agil-i-ty | \ ə-ˈji-lə-tē \

: the quality or state of being agile: NIMBLENESS, DEXTERITY

flex-i-ble | \ ˈflek-sə-bəl \

1: capable of bending or being bent

2: easily changed: able to change or to do different things

3: willing to change or to try different things

To me, they are almost the same concept when we are talking about personality traits. If I was pushed to make a differentiation, I would say that being agile means that you are able to do things quickly and easily, while being flexible means that you can change more easily. Ideally, you want the flexibility to be agile. You want to be open to changes, and able to make them and adapt when necessary. Agility is essentially the natural evolution of flexibility – it is flexibility born out of necessity.

Without stating the obvious, having these traits is essential for a world where the future is quite unpredictable. If we can't know what is coming in terms of work and careers and technology, then we need to be agile and flexible so that we can negotiate that unpredictability,

and adapt to what is required, quickly and easily. Clearly these are critical attributes to foster in ourselves, and for those of us with influence over the youth, in them too as they need to face the unpredictable future ahead of them.

Most of us are creatures of habit and resistant to change. Change feels uncomfortable. The known, our routines, are much less stressful to us. But change is necessary. Now more than ever before, we need to be agile and flexible.

Success is an ongoing process and for agile people, it develops through experience. To be adaptable is key – ask a chameleon. Or a lizard. Adapting as we hurtle into this time of rapid change will require high levels of learning agility – better higher-order thinking,



problem-solving skills, and creativity – as well as the ability to quickly learn and apply multidimensional skills in ever changing situations. I refer again to the chameleon.

Being willing and able to learn from experiences, and then apply that learning to new situations is a strong indicator of future success. Alvin Toffler said that “the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

It is worthy to note that there are different types of agility:

- Intellectual agility – learning and unlearning through experiences
- Adaptable agility – flexibility to adapt
- Relationship & communication agility – self-awareness and awareness of others with the ability to change and evolve in how we relate to each other. Skills required for this type of agility are communication, compassion, truth, respect, love, and active listening.
- But for me, what is more important than the types of agility, is how we foster agility and flexibility in people.

People who are agile are more productive, create higher quality outputs and are able to adapt quicker. It's a no brainer that we need to start

“
Agility is the ability to adapt and respond to change

- Jim Highsmith

fostering agility and flexibility in the youth if we want them to thrive and manage whatever fast changes this world of ever evolving technology becomes. Change needs to be reframed as an opportunity, not a threat. So the things we can do to create agile and flexible people are:

1. Teach them to challenge existing ideas – just because it has always been done a certain way, doesn't mean it always has to be done that way.
2. Teach them to commit to continuous improvement – never settle for something being complete. Continually looking to improve encourages creative thinking and stimulates interest.
3. Teach them to look for new opportunities
4. Teach them the power of collaboration –strengthening relationships, bringing the best of their expertise and capabilities together

5. Teach them to set clear goals
6. Teach them to prioritise tasks – the musts; the shoulds; the coulds; the won'ts
7. Encourage out the box thinking to prepare them for the unexpected – people who plan for and anticipate challenges are those who are most likely to find them easier to deal with.
8. Encourage them to trust their intuition – agility is intuitive

Basically, becoming more agile means expecting, managing, and embracing change. Being agile is not just a way of operating, it is a mindset. It means empowering people to navigate uncertainty. It means being able to develop new skills quickly, without an 'instruction manual'.

To survive and succeed, we need to be chameleons in our environments. We need to take a leaf from a lizard's book – if we lose our tails, we need to know how to quickly grow a new one. Without feeling it is a disaster.

Change is a fact of life, and with the rapid rate the world is changing, it is now a fundamental function of our existence if we want to thrive. The cost of not changing, of not being flexible and agile, is far greater than the price of change. Flexibility and agility are skills that will define our future success.

PAOLO GIURICICH

THE HYBRID WORLD OF WORK

Hybrid workforces and organisations are emerging, with no templates or models setting any precedence. Companies that choose to return to a 2019 working model with simply fail in the short term, and fast adapting organisations will lead out of the pandemic.

We need to have a curious sense of continual experimentation to shape our hybrid business models for the present and future states of a complex and adapting world.

HYBRIDITY AT WORK

Hybridity is creating power differentials at work

GAYLIN JEE

The familiarity we felt with colleagues on remote calls during lockdown rested largely on memories of connections formed when we sat next to each other or met for lunch, says research.

Connection is not only good for bonding, it helps us to make decisions and is especially useful when we feel a majority of things to be outside of our control. The first few minutes of a face-to-face encounter with another person are intuitively used to predict cooperativeness and generosity. This has been our human practice for hundreds and hundreds of years. We can increase flexibility, spend less time in traffic travelling to work, trim down office costs, and reduce our overall carbon footprint by adopting remote work practices. But the benefits of more traditional in-office work, such as informal and formal collaboration, networking, getting to know who is

who, on-site support and learning cannot be undervalued.

Rather than advocate for one or the other, we need to consider what balance works, for our people and our business. Because what we now know is that hybridity creates power differentials through the factors of visibility and access.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND?

Employees who are 'seen' are more likely to be picked for new projects or to be recognised for work well done. A physical presence in the same office as a manager naturally makes an employee more visible, and that can assist with their growth, development and progression.

In a Robert Walters survey, professionals reported on their beliefs about a lack of contact with their line manager: 44% felt they had been overlooked for opportunities, 37% for career progression, and 26% for training. Results indicate a decrease in output and morale for professionals who say they see their manager face to face less than once a week. For those who spent more days in the office with their manager, both output and morale steadily increased.

Power differentials also emerge when there is a lack of access to resources. By this we mean access to the right tools and environment to do the job well, such as computers, software, a suitable desk and chair, a quiet space or office, and access to childcare. The quality of internet connection also matters, and in South Africa, electricity supply can be added to the mix.

Start with your own audit:

How visible am I? Do I have the right touch points for meaningful interaction and recognition of the work I do? Do I have the confidence to ask for what I need to do my best work? If I am a leader, how much 'remote leading' am I doing?

For your company or team:

How can we make the workplace fair? Are employees visible and do they have the right access and tools for the jobs they need to do? What is our policy around hybrid working? Is it clear? What are the boundaries?

How much time do we have for interaction face to face? How much flexibility and choice do our people have?

Heed the call for fairer workplaces. It



takes some thinking, conversation and clear communication. But we can get closer to setting more people free to do their best work.

Read: **Making the Hybrid Workplace Fair** by Mark Mortensen and Martine Haas, Harvard Business Review

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CREATING SPACE

PAOLO GIURICICH

Through the many psychological challenges of 2020/21, people are wrestling with high contextual uncertainty and eagerly await a time where the world stabilises, and we are able to plan for a better future. What if those stable days are gone and this is merely a conditioning for an agile and flexible approach to work and our lives?



For most professionals, the art of working virtually and delivering in our respective roles and work, has become ingrained. We have formulated new approaches to everything that we do (even though these may not be optimal), without even leaving the confines of our homes. We naturally still hanker for the day when we can immerse ourselves in all that communal work allows, but after all this time, we are starting to question many conventions. Some of our practices that have shifted, feel like they can never revert to pre-pandemic rituals

vulnerability in dealing with a surge in emotions. This has brought us closer, redefined our boundaries and exposed deep inequality too.

Flexibility.

Personal choice in when and how we attend to the requirements of our role and work, have opened the space for trust to develop with our employers and clients. The refreshing experience of being seen as an adult and higher trust levels, has changed the work and life landscape for us.

Resilience.

At times all the positive effects of the pandemic on work, can easily be overshadowed by negative consequences and our resilience has certainly been tested too. Some people are just trying to 'ride it out' and other are taking proactive steps to build their resilience and manage themselves through the stresses.

As we look up to 2022 with higher expectations, lets raise our awareness of how we have shifted and give ourselves the time to reflect and make meaning of the changes we have lived. When we acknowledge this new reality and 'what is,' we are creating space for ourselves to contemplate something different and something new. This privilege of freedom in the world of work is priceless and once in a lifetime perhaps. Make it count for your personal growth.

Global access to people. Lightning speed collaboration.

We can now avail ourselves of the experience and motivation from some of the best minds in our fields. We are no longer bound by distance or travel, and getting an hour of time is easier if someone simply clicks 'join' on Zoom or Teams. In real time we access all the resources and knowledge we crave and build relationships in the process. Our ability to connect with colleagues nationally and internationally within our businesses has allowed us to collaborate and move strategy forward at speeds we are not used to.

Deeper relationships.

Due to the tacit invitation into people's homes through virtual working, people tend to show up more as their authentic selves and the work 'mask' has been shed. We are more able to share our

FOCUS ON YOUR RESILIENCE:

Relationship connection

continue to build and nurture the important relationship in your life.

Physical wellbeing

pay attention to diet, get enough sleep, get your body moving through exercise.

Mental health wellness

understand stress factors and focus on rejuvenation of your choice. Think meditation, yoga and breathing techniques with goof frequency.

Reflective practices

understand your skill set and how you coped through difficult times and repeat these new skills over again when required. Future positive behaviour depends on this.

Seek meaning

allow yourself daily to articulate and achieve goals for enhancing self-worth. Remaining hopeful lowers anxiety from past experiences.

THE PATTERNS

GAYLIN JEE

Finding the drag, distraction, or drama in our hybrid workplaces



We have just been through the biggest remote work experiment of all time. The good news is that we're coming away with insights to apply to the hybrid models that will likely dominate our working futures.

In this post I ask you to apply the lenses of drag, distraction and drama to your workplace. They can slow down or frustrate efforts to do our best work (and achieve better outcomes).

Drag is about those processes or ways of working that may no longer be useful. For example, a daily Teams call or Zoom meeting was useful for touching base in the early levels of lockdown. We needed that interaction and connection. Shorter, less frequent meetings might now be more useful, with longer sessions planned for when we are face to face. Questions to root out outdated practices are: Where do I feel as though I am wasting time? What is no longer relevant? What

new tools or tech can make this task quicker, easier or more efficient? No doubt there is a fair amount of drag from our recent years, perhaps even from pre-Covid days. Shedding some outdated practice may help us mentally to shift into a new space.

Distraction is about lack of focus on the work that needs doing. With the advent of clever and social tech, attention has become our most precious resource. Cal Newport is a specialist on this topic. He builds a solid business case for DEEP WORK, where we schedule (and then respect) focused and uninterrupted working time in each day. Start with just 30 minutes if that is all you can bargain for. Productivity levels soar when we do this, as do 'flow states' (see the late Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's amazing work). Explore the simple but effective Eisenhower Matrix to sort and prioritise important and urgent tasks. My vote is for completing this matrix at least once a quarter.

Do you ever get stuck in the human **drama** of pleasing or getting recognised? Presenteeism (in-office or online) can be a manifestation of drama. We appear to be 'at work', but the signalling dominates the commitment to the outputs of the task. We want to make sure that others see us as rolling sleeves up, especially in uncertain times. But the ripple effects of this kind of behaviour aren't especially good for business. We inadvertently create the expectation that there is never any down time, for example, when we are 'always on'. Where is the drama in your workplace? And who sets the tone for it?

There's a lot of room for learning about how to navigate hybrid workplaces. They may be hybrid but they are still human (or should be). The three P's are excellent conversation starters.

Read: A guide for remote work by Dr Richard Claydon.



‘The Gestalt cycle of experience summarises the process by which people, individually or collectively, become aware of what is going on at any moment, and how they mobilise energy to take some action that allows them to deal constructively, by possibilities suggested by the new awareness. This process is sometimes referred to as that of finding out what is needed and going about getting it’

- Edwin C Nevis, ‘Organisational Consulting, A Gestalt Approach’

EMERGING PATTERNS

As professionals start to return to the office, after a prolonged period of working from home, there is a new curiosity about the meaning we ascribe to our work and how this fits into our revised frame of the world. Some interesting patterns are emerging and we consider what they mean for sustained personal growth.

A Gestalt approach is very useful as Organisation Development consultants. Our role is to be awareness agents of what is transpiring around us. The Gestalt orientation focusses on informing our clients on how to improve and take action for better results in their human

interactions. Being in ‘awareness,’ requires invoking the senses – hearing, seeing, smelling and feeling. These stimuli provide us with data and energy to lead to action and learning.

The pattern of caution. People are re-entering the workplace with

trepidation, as if it is the first day of school. Not much has changed physically in the buildings, however, the way we approach and collaborate with other humans has shifted. Some people are wholeheartedly embracing and others are clinical in their approach. We also have everything in between and significant polarisations too. Let’s be sensitive to individual preferences and walk together.

The pattern of human connection.

The visceral energy of connection, is a beautiful sight. This missing piece from our lives in the pandemic, binds and propels us as humans in purpose work and relationships. Reconnect with abandon and notice your energy and how it buoys your work, delivery and growth mindset. Something magical is happening in this realm.

The pattern of inflexibility. People have become stuck in their pandemic

ways and very focussed on themselves and not our collective. Not surprising, it’s been a solitary time. Unlearn certain pandemic rituals and learn new ways of working as we navigate a hybrid work world. Inclusivity, regardless of physical presence, has new meaning and elevated challenge.

A great teacher, colleague and friend once explained behavioural patterns to me in simple terms.



‘When you notice something for the first time, take note. When you see something for the second time repeated, pay attention. When you see the same thing for a third time, it’s a pattern.’

- Mary Ann Rainey (Chicago, USA).

We need to make meaning of the behavioural patterns we see and mobilise the required responses.

What are you noticing in the workplace and how are you attending to the emergence?



WATCH REHUMANIZING BUSINESS WEBINAR WITH LITA CURRIE



LISTEN TO EVOLVING THINKING THROUGH QUALITY CONVERSATIONS WITH CAROLINE PASSMORE, SARAH BABB & PAULO GIURICICH

Joining me in conversation are Caroline Passmore, Sarah Babb and Paulo Giurich, all seasoned Organisational Development Consultants, each of them sharing their expertise and perspectives gained over more than 20 years in the field respectively.

In this episode, we discuss how organisations are responding to the values shift underpinning the move towards a hybrid model of work, how organisations can begin connecting with a greater purpose and the perils facing those who don’t, and of course the rich leadership lessons delivered from the frontline in the Ukraine.

KERRY KOHL

INSPIRE

Our world has been mentally assaulted over the last two years, with the situation exacerbated by the Russian / Ukraine crisis. Most of us have experienced higher levels of stress related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the knock-on effects. We need to be inspired and encouraged to take a holistic, integrated approach to our wellbeing as it affects all aspects of our lives and relationships.

//

“Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience. This is the ideal life”

- Mark Twain



LISTEN TO SHE LET GO WITH NATALIE MOORE

In this meditation practice, Natalie delves into the concept of letting go and guides you through the process of giving yourself permission to simply be with where you are, in your world, mind, and body. No matter the challenge we may be faced with there is always something in the mind we can do to help us through. Music ('Meditation Music') by Paz Sounds, licensed from Paz Sounds.

QUALITY SLEEP SOUND MIND & HAPPY WORLD

JONI PEDDIE

It was World Sleep Day on Friday March 18, with the theme: Quality sleep/Sound mind/Happy world. This message couldn't come at a better time for a world that has been mentally assaulted over the last two years, with the situation exacerbated by the Russian / Ukraine Crisis. Most of us have experienced higher levels of stress related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the knock-on effects.

Clearly, quality sleep is no magic wand, but the laddering effect is real. The first rung of the ladder is restorative sleep, which is quality sleep. This is the single most effective thing you can do for your body and brain health each day. If you can think clearly, objectively and make good decisions (considering your impact on others) then you experience the benefit of having a sound mind. Emotions are certainly contagious, so the laddering up effect would be a vastly different world... a happy world.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that approximately 2/3 of adults throughout developed nations are not getting enough sleep, and that societal lack of sleep is a global health epidemic.

Research shows that insufficient sleep (less than seven hours a night) has a devastating effect on brain health, and is linked to Alzheimer's, depression, bipolar disorder, cancer, diabetes, infertility, heart attacks, weight gain and obesity and suicide. Suicide among young people (aged 15 -29) is increasing dramatically, and the fourth leading cause of death after road injury. The WHO's goal is to help the world reduce the suicide rate by 1/3 by 2030. Every year, more people die because of suicide than HIV, malaria, breast cancer, or war and homicide.

Even though people initially thought that 2022 would be a kinder year, people seem to be frazzled on all levels. Their brains are simmering or

idling like a car on 'uber stress, anxiety and overwhelm'.

A key problem is hybrid working

Hybrid working, in the office and at home, is here to stay. As a result, time in traffic has now become extra screen time, and by my own local and international observations screen-facing time is up by about 55%-60%. A South African IT executive at one of the multinationals I work with says the number of MS Teams meetings has increased from 1.5 million minutes a month to over 100 million minutes.

Here are some Quality Sleep & Sound Mind ideas

The 2-by-10

At the start of each day: plan! Look at your diary, and plan around your commitments. Set an alarm for every 90 minutes to walk outside and look skyward or to the furthest tree. Stand there, breathe in deeply and then do 10 squats, or more. Make sure you are away from your screen and outside for two minutes. Hence the name 2-by-10.

Magic sunset light for 5 minutes

Our eyes are an extension of our brain. Research shows that five minutes of sunset light will buffer for our eyes (and our retinas) against the harsh, bright lights in our homes at night. Artificial light stops our brain producing enough melatonin, the sleep hormone, which helps us to fall asleep easily. Get outdoors for five - 30min as the sun sets.

Blue blocker glasses from sunset

Your body is an ecosystem, and your hormones and other systems are regulated by an internal 24-hour clock, called your circadian rhythm. When we lived in nature on the savannahs 1000s of years ago, we'd go to sleep after sunset. Now we are ruled by our TV, our phone and computer screens. Plus, our ceiling lights are also vampires

of good quality sleep. Our eyes are sensitive to these blue, bright lights, which are the same short-wave length light that brightens the midday sun, and they suppress melatonin release in our brains. This disrupts our circadian cycle, and we miss the sleepiness cue and battle to feel drowsy enough to go off to sleep. Wearing blue blocker glasses, such as TrulyBlue, will help address this problem. These specially designed anti-reflective lenses help reduce glare for a more comfortable and relaxed vision as well as protect your eyes against blue light.

Bring down your stress by doing by NSDR

Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR) sounds counter-intuitive, but even if you have seven hours of good quality sleep at night, your stress levels during the day can rocket. In addition, you need NSDR 'tools' in your resilience toolbox to reduce stress. You could be firing on all cylinders midday, mid-afternoon or just before bed. But then you need to calm down (and there's lots of science behind this) to make sure that you are not overtaxing your body systems, including your adrenal glands. NSDR can take the form of prayer, meditation, yoga, lying on the grass watching the clouds, and or just simply doing good, deep breathing exercises. There are various apps you can use, if you are that way inclined: Headspace, Calm, BrainTap, Reveri. All of them are superb and are sciencebacked.

I use BrainTap and Reveri interchangeably and love the time-efficient one-minute sessions on Reveri. I sometimes use these to focus before a difficult task. The great benefit of NSDR activities is that they boost your neuroplasticity, which is how your brain cells 'fire and wire together'. This helps cement our learning from the day - and this happens only during NSDR and not during your sleep at night. Find ways to

integrate 10, 15 or even one minute of NSDR during your day.

Drop your body temperature.

Your body temperature peaks mid-afternoon and then starts dropping to prepare for sleep. Of course, for many people, we only go to sleep long after sunset. It's good idea to warm up before bed by having a hot bath or shower, or even a sauna if you are fortunate to live close to the gym or have one at home. After this, your body's systems kick into play and your body temperature drops 1 to 3 degrees. This is a great enabler for quality sleep.

In addition, your bedroom should be really cool at 16-18°C. If you heat up during the night, stick your foot or hand out and the receptors on the palm of your hand and arch of your foot will go to work and cool your body back down again.

Magnificent magnesium

Magnesium is responsible for over 300 biochemical processes in your body, including deep sleep and reducing stress.

The top nine signs that you are deficient are:

1. You experience muscle cramps or twitches
2. You are tired most of the time.
3. You struggle to get through a workout.
4. You are frequently constipated
5. You have high blood pressure
6. You have trouble falling asleep
7. You have serious chocolate cravings
8. Your heartbeat is all over the place
9. You feel like your mental health is suffering.

Studies say 20% to 75% of adults are not meeting their recommended daily intake of magnesium.

Try these options daily, as recommended by eatingwell.com

- Cooked spinach: 78mg
- Pumpkin seed kernels: 168mg
- Dry-roasted almonds: 80mg
- Dry-roasted cashews: 74mg
- Soya milk: 61mg
- Cooked black beans: 60mg
- Dark chocolate: 50mg
- Peanut butter: 49mg
- Wholewheat bread: 46mg

Good sleep starts the minute you wake up

While you are sleeping, your brain is busy with its chores, including detoxing. This results in your brain going from a 'plump, juicy grape' at night, to a shrivelled raisin in the morning. So, don't dehydrate it even more with caffeine; have water or rooibos tea upon waking.

If you delay having caffeine until two hours after you wake up, you'll notice that you are less likely to have that mid-afternoon slump.

Move more

Exercise is imperative for a good night's sleep. If you feel allergic to the idea of exercise, try reframing the word and calling it 'movement'. A 20 to 30-minute walk in the morning is best as it is very good for your retinas to be stimulated by the early morning sun. Remember: your eyes are a protrusion of your brain.

If it's impossible to do a 20 to 30-minute walk your morning ritual, then a lunchtime or afternoon walk will do. Make exercise, including other forms, a 'must do' daily.

Mattress madness

You wouldn't drive your car for 20 000 km without an oil change. But many of us sleep on our mattresses for seven or eight years, which is the equivalent of 20 000 hours. Imagine your body weight indentations on your mattress, plus decades worth of sweat, dead skin and saliva. In addition, if you're waking up with back pain, neck pain, shoulder pain or leg pain, your mattress may not be supportive enough for you. Buy a new mattress every seven to eight years. Buy a new pillow every two years!

Consistency wins the day

Many people work long hours during the week and then think they can make up for that lost sleep on weekends. The 24-hour body clock regulating your hormones and body systems detests this, and as a result your immune system may take a knock. Aim to go to sleep at the same time every night, and similarly, wake up at a similar time each morning

Here are some 'quick' reminders:

1. Avoid napping during the day (unless it is a 20-minute power nap).
2. Your bed should only be used for

3. sleeping, sex or reading (paper)
3. Try to avoid being overtired.
4. Do NOT watch TV, read off your mobile phone, or be on your computer 60-90 minutes before bedtime. You should NEVER work (on your phone or laptop) in your bedroom.
5. Turn off the bright lights in your house at night - replace these with low lights and /or red-light bulbs in your lamps (especially if you are getting up for small children at night).
6. Avoid excessive alcohol ingestion before bedtime. Alcohol should be used for 'celebration' and not 'obliteration'.
7. If you are going to bed at about 10pm, stop drinking caffeine at 2pm. This includes coffee, tea, green tea, chocolate, and many carbonated soft drinks. Caffeine has an eight-hour half-life in your body.
8. Avoid heavy, spicy, or sugary foods four hours before bedtime. A light, healthy snack before bed is fine.
9. Make your bedroom your sanctuary and keep it uncluttered. Invest in comfortable bedding and lovely silky nightwear.
10. If you don't have block-out curtains, sleep with a sleep mask on

If you are wondering about the number of hours that you should sleep per night, here is the range:

- Teenagers (14-17): 8-10 hours
- Younger adults (18-25): 7-9 hours
- Adults (26-64): 7-9 hours
- Older adults (65+): +/- 7 hours

Please note: you are NOT unique! Your brain will suffer if you are sleeping a minute less than seven hours a night. Alzheimer's starts 20 years before you find that you 'lost' your house keys by putting them in the fridge!

Lastly, be self-compassionate.

Choose one or two ideas and implement them for three to four weeks to ensure that your new habit becomes your daily ritual. Make it easy for yourself. Once it's engrained as a habit (much like brushing your teeth twice a day), then pick another idea to integrate into your life. Buddy up with your family members, or friends. Accountability partners make forming new habits far easier.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Tuesday Consulting is an executive search and advisory firm specialising in talent sourcing solutions throughout Africa. We are acutely aware that we operate as the extension of a personal and professional brand, and we remain mindful about the impact that our recommendations can have on an organisation and its people.

We are incredibly proud of being a South African business and we acknowledge with great admiration the talent we have on home soil.

Our purpose is to positively impact people's careers, and to provide the right leadership and talent to contribute to the growth and transformation of organisations. We take a highly personalised approach to each of our clients' businesses, always ensuring that our solutions are mutually beneficial.

Our Service

Our specialist recruitment services empower our clients to find the right leaders for their organisation and its unique culture.

Our suite of services empower clients to identify and retain the right people for their organisation and culture. Our research model is designed to give our clients added value through qualitative market intelligence, insights into remuneration levels and skills availability, competitor awareness and organisation design trends.

Our Expertise

Through our industry-led approach, we invest in ongoing research across a number of industries, while building deep networks.

We build deep knowledge and relationships by investing in ongoing research within each sector, including Financial Services; ICT, Consumer; Healthcare; Education; Public Sector.

Our Clients

By partnering with clients across industries in which we specialise and have superior understanding, we become a trusted advisor, sharing insights that will enhance employee value propositions.

Our People

Our professional team are subject matter experts with a solutions-based approach to assignments.

Tuesday Consulting is characterised by individuals with strong ethics, respect, trust and the motivation to deliver the best possible service to our clients.

We live by the ethos of 'investing in people' and are passionate about building a business recognised for excellence and having a genuine Local, Social, Conscience.



Tsholofelo Nketane is a Director of Tuesday Consulting with more than 15 years' experience in Executive Search.

Tsholo honed her experience at various global executive search firms, working in markets such as South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria. Tsholo brings an international perspective and deep insight into her areas of specialisation, which range from healthcare to consumer services and public sector. She is inspired by meeting agile, innovative leaders who are invested in the inclusive economic growth of South Africa.

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