



# Talenttalks

Evolving Thinking through best industry reads.

ISSUE # 4

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■ **TRANSFORMER SKILLS  
FOR HR & LEARNING &  
DEVELOPMENT**

■ **WHAT IS YOUR STORY?  
THE VALUE OF NARRATIVE COACHING.**

■ **THE DANGEROUS ESCAPE:  
WHAT CAN LONELINESS MAKE YOU DO?**

■ **LEADING THROUGH  
CONSCIOUSNESS**



# FROM THE EDITOR



We believe that we can make the world a better place by providing a gateway to quality information that can empower and inspire people to progress in their careers, workplaces and lives.

## Joie de vivre. A feeling of happiness and enjoyment of life

We are proud to welcome you to this month's issue of Talenttalks magazine. Our wish for you, our readers, is that you feel the same joie de vivre when you start dipping into it as we, as a team, feel as we press the final publish button. That you pick up some gems to inspire you.

As I recall personal moments of joie de vivre, a perfect Johannesburg day springs to mind. We were swimming as a family in our pool on a lazy, summer, Sunday, when my young son floating on his back and looking into the clear blue sky with the warmth of the summer sun on his chest, said "life couldn't be more perfect. This is so wonderful". My response was "capture the moment, because it doesn't happen all the time" to which he replied, "no, no, don't spoil my life". Just this last weekend, three decades later, we swam off the rocks into a lake at Svanholmsparken, Stocksund, on a gentle, balmy, Stockholm day and he said "I don't think there is anywhere else in the world I would rather be than here right now".

Our experiences over the last two years have highlighted for us all the importance of capturing these special moments and that we play an important role in facilitating our own feelings of happiness and enjoyment of life, that happiness is not permanent, it is part of the journey and our choices every day shape the story of our future.

You have cleverly chosen to read this, our latest issue of Talenttalks magazine. Enjoy the journey.

**SUE DE WAAL**  
Chief Executive Editor

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WENDY NAGEL

# CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT

It's fair to say that trust and trustworthiness are in short supply these days. It is hard to trust leadership of countries, organisations, communities and even ourselves because the rate and complexity of the changes we are experiencing are rather intense. Feeling like we have personal mastery under these circumstances is illusive and so authenticity starts to suffer as we mask up and put on the brave face and pretend. Sadly, this is the first breakdown in trust, when we sense struggle, but nobody wants to admit it in case they are viewed as weak or not good enough. When we do this, we lose empathy for ourselves and others and so the second death knell to trust occurs and we start to rely solely on logic to get by. The role of leaders is to create environments where trust is deliberately fostered so that individuals feel safe to bring their authentic, empathic and logical selves to work and make their best contribution.



# WHAT IS YOUR STORY? THE VALUE OF NARRATIVE COACHING.

LITA CURRIE

I'm a practical person. My focus usually is on action plans, lists with tasks, getting things done and planning for the future. In coaching sessions with my clients, we look forward, identify limiting beliefs that might hold them back and prioritise positive change – and the emphasis is always on how to implement it. I like it, and my clients like it.

However, last week I saw the value in balancing it with looking back at the past. I was fortunate to attend a narrative coaching workshop. On the last day (when I joined) the organisers gave the participants the opportunity to share how their original stories of their lives shaped who they are. It was such a powerful experience to listen to people's stories – the narrative we hold in ourselves, that shape us as people and direct (to a large degree) our choices. The story you hold in you has the power to shape your future, and it's something that I had not really considered too much before. We so seldom examine our own stories – I know that I don't! – and doing so can be a tremendous source of self-insight.

I'd like to quote a couple of stories that I found quite moving. A member of the group spoke about his parents' generation being immigrants. He told of their struggle to fit into a new country where they didn't speak the language or even understood many of the customs. They had to leave other family members behind, and this still causes pain. The fact that they had their names changed by the authorities created even more the feeling that they didn't belong. But it is also a story of perseverance,

of courage and hope, and of new beginnings. This family story shaped the story that he tells his kids.

**Questions to consider: What is your family's story and how does that shape you? What can you learn from it, and what parts of the story do you want to give to the next generation?**

Another person shared the story of her ancestry. Her parentage includes a mix of Native American and Mexican cultures. But because much of the Native American cultures have been assimilated into Western culture, she grieves for the culture that is lost. She longs to get closer to the beliefs and habits of her ancestors, but that culture does not exist anymore. Sometimes she struggles to figure out where she fits in.

**Questions to consider: Where do you come from? What do you value? What have you lost that you grieve for?**

A third story was about trying to fit in. A member of the group shared that she feels torn between her native South African tribal culture and the values of the Western world in which she lives and works. She values both but often the values seem to be in direct opposition. She told the story of needing to figure out her true identity – which one is the real person?

**Questions to consider: Who are you? Which parts make up the whole? What truth can you take from the many places that make up your identity?**

Having the courage to tell our stories, and ask others about theirs, is the first

step to create understanding that can lead to insight. And insight can lead to positive change. Stories are powerful, and that power can either help us to direct our lives better, or they can hold us back. Stories can uncover things that are hidden or shine a light on assumptions that might never have been questioned.

It started me thinking about my own story. I was born into a culture in which I felt ill at ease, not sharing the major political outlook or the religious beliefs. I always felt like a foreigner born into the wrong group. My story is about accepting that this is where I come from and letting go of this to forge my own path.

Of course, we do not choose where we come from, nor do we choose many of the experiences that we have. But that's part of our stories, whether we want them to be or not. We have the power to choose the stories that we hand over to the next generation. Our choices every day shape the story of our future. In this we are the author of our own lives.

**Questions to consider: In 5 years from now, what do you want your story to be? Which choices will bring you there? What do you need to change today to make that story true?**

# PACKAGE NEGOTIATIONS IN TOUGH TIMES

## WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS FOR COMPANIES & TEAMS

ADVAITA NAIDOO



Like their global counterparts, South African companies and workers are grappling with a worsening economic outlook as we move into the second half of 2022. And as salary and incentive negotiation season nears, both parties have to grapple with the question of what constitutes fair compensation in light of the prevailing climate.

As much as employers will want to keep pace with inflation, the pressures are many and varied, and margins remain compressed. Companies will likely want to play it safe and hold back on substantial increases and bonuses to keep the balance

sheet stable during these uncertain times. But that does not mean employees have no negotiating power, and that companies can't introduce alternative ways of investing in their people to ensure continued attraction and retention of talent, a leadership expert says.

There is no doubt that there isn't much extra cash on the table right now, and that companies will need to consider creative ways in which to reward employees, and adjust their compensation policies to ensure they keep their teams in healthy shape while also keeping the bottom line resilient.

The key to making this seemingly impossible equation work, is to introduce (on the part of the employer) or request (on the part of the employee) investment into career development and day-to-day working conditions that will have the dual effect of: 1) easing financial pressures for both parties as well as 2) ensuring improved future career prospects for employees and a stronger talent pipeline for companies.

The two biggest bargaining chips right now are flexibility and career development. We would all like to earn more money, and most good companies would like to offer

their loyal employees increased financial incentives. But if money is tight and the outlook less than ideal, companies have to consider how they can attract and retain talent, and employees should know that they have options available to them during negotiations that will benefit them financially and professionally.

Knowing what to ask and what to offer can be a win-win solution in these difficult times, positioning employees for a better professional future as well as an enhanced work-life experience that will be beneficial to everyone.

Some of the alternative solutions on the table for both companies and employees, are as follows:

### FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Many employers earlier in the year called for an all-hands on deck return to work of most employees. However given that the environment remains dynamic and volatile, and the fact that most infrastructure to allow for successful work-from-home arrangements remains in place, providing greater flexibility can be a powerful incentive.

On the one hand it will reduce costs for both the company and employees, which will lighten the financial burden on both. It will also reduce employee stress and contribute to employee loyalty.

### MAPPED OUT CAREER PROGRESSION

Companies can actively facilitate the career progression of employees, with relatively low-cost investment in the moment, but with the promise of dividends for both company and employee down the line.

One key factor for career growth is exposure to and participation in areas that fall outside of one's current area of expertise or course of duties. So employees can, for instance, ask to attend industry conferences and events in the coming year, as well as be assigned to different projects or teams, which will allow them to gain experience in different parts of the business.

Another mutually beneficial carrot, is the plethora of incredible online programmes that were developed over the past two years which are accessible globally and will support career growth. Yale and Harvard,

for instance, offer exceptional online leadership programmes at a fraction of the cost of traditional MBAs.

### MENTORSHIP & COACHING

Companies can provide dedicated mentorship to employees; having access to senior executives within an organisation can help emerging leaders navigate disparate issues like corporate politics, career progression, conflict and workplace culture, while also allowing for informal knowledge transfer, development of problem-solving skills in the unique corporate environment and exposure to diverse thoughts and ideas.

Coaching is also more affordable and productive than ever before, through organisations such as Virtual Coaching Partners. Not only does a great coach enhance performance by helping experienced and emerging leaders identify weaknesses or blind spots, but they can also show how to get the best out of individuals and teams, boosting confidence in the process.

### ADDITIONAL TIME OFF/ SABBATICALS

It should go without saying that a break from the stress of work would benefit the individual, especially if it is of sufficient duration to allow for personal pursuits that an employee may not otherwise have time for e.g. volunteer work, travel or completing a course. But the unspoken benefit to the company is that teams will return refreshed, possibly brimming with new ideas; the knock-on effect is enhanced productivity and reduced employee attrition.

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The offer of sustainable mental health benefits with the focus on easily accessible, anonymous and ongoing support by mental health professionals – rather than merely the occasional ad-hoc wellness intervention – is another win-win for everyone, with very positive impact for modest investment.

With relatively low-cost career development solutions that will pay off later for both the company and employee, combined with flexible work solutions and mental health support, it is possible to ensure a continued

supportive, collaborative and trusting work environment.

The world is gearing for a tumultuous road ahead, at least in the short-to-medium term, but ensuring employees can be confident that they are going somewhere, the focus on building relationships, staying the distance and using the time ahead wisely can ensure that companies and their teams emerge stronger on the other side once more.



## REFLECTION POINT.

### THE JOY OF LIFE.

As we carefully find our way out of this pandemic, I'm reminded of Saul Alinsky who cautioned us never to let a good crisis go to waste. I reflected on this extraordinary experience – a global pandemic that has horrified and frightened us. I remember the terror when my family caught the virus, even though I had tried so hard to keep it out. I remember the sadness and the pain of losing loved ones and friends to Covid-19. And yet, I have a feeling of being more connected to the rest of the world. We have shared a truly global event, one that brought us together as a species like never before in our lifetimes.

The American Constitution mentions the "pursuit of happiness" because happiness is not a permanent state of being. That's impossible. It's always a journey. And if you accept that to live means to suffer, the moments of happiness become precious beyond compare. Moments spent with my family sharing a good joke, playing games or just sitting together watching a favourite movie for the umpteenth time – these things have taken on a more important place in my life. I focus on being more mindful, being in the moment in order to remember these feelings. I've reached out to old friends that I had lost touch with. I reflect on regrets and try to mend bridges. And I find that these moments of happiness make life more worthwhile. Cliche? Yes, maybe. But then, clichés are often true.

LITA CURRIE

# TOWARDS TRUST-BASED PARTNERSHIP

DR ROBYN WHITTAKER



## Part 1: Opening pathways for conversation

Trust Based Philanthropy has been a hot topic on the global stage of recent times, with a great deal of conversation, debate and writing on what this concept means, and what it entails in terms of our approach and engagement style within the social development space.

Building on the emerging and strengthening partnership between IPASA and the National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE), and supported by DBE-E3, which represent (in at least some part) some of the component partners in this debate, we decided to hold a series of multi-located workshops with members of both organisations to engage in conversation on what this concept means within the South African context.

We firmly believe that this topic should not be focussed on only one

component part of the system of social changemakers (i.e. the grant maker/ philanthropic component), but rather that we should be engaging in vigorous and committed conversation as a sector as to what Trust-Based Partnership means to us – partnership that entails a high degree of reciprocity, mutual respect and commitment, and deep alignment around the essential purpose and intent of our work together. We have thus decided that in our context, we would like to maintain a clear focus on Trust-Based Partnership as our goal – what it means to us as a sector, how we create the conditions in which it can be developed, what works and what doesn't work in terms of fostering this attitude of partnership, and how we can practice and progressively develop our capacity to engage in trusting and effective relationships with one another.

These workshops look at aspects of Trust Based Partnership as detailed below and are aimed at starting an ongoing deep conversation which has the potential to shift the sector, if we remain in conversation and seek additional ways to build our capacity, willingness, and resilience to hold onto the hope of trust-based partnership as a core operating model for the sector.

**“Trust based partnership entails two or more entities collaborating around shared values and goals and working together in close and genuine partnership. Like a rainbow, trust develops as part of the process, not upon delivery of the end goal.”**

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### The Mystery & Misdirection of Language

In the realm of trust-based partnership, as in so many other areas which become topical and which are spoken about with the increasing use of “buzz-words” (popular or politically correct phrasing), meaning can easily become lost in the repeated use of specific words. If we do even a cursory examination of the literature and the discussions around the topic of Trust Based Philanthropy, we can see that different people and groups are often speaking at cross-purposes to one another – and using the same term to define very different concepts.

For this reason, it is imperative that we, in our own context, take the time and the

necessary effort to clearly articulate and define what it is that we mean by the use of specific language, that we ensure that we either hold common definitions in our use of specific words, or that we at least clearly understand what our interlocutors mean by their and our use of words.

When we fail to do this, language can easily become a maze of assumptions and misunderstanding. The time taken to slow down and to ensure that we are communicating our intended meaning, checking our assumptions of the other party's meaning, and practicing excellent listening skills, will prove invaluable in creating solid foundations when seeking to enter into trust-based partnership with another person or entity. Likewise, time taken to ensure that we are understanding each other's meaning, and not just our own assumptions of what words mean, may allow for us to step away from potential partnerships where it becomes clear that purposes and ways of working do not align.

**“Pay close attention to the intentions of the heart – the “why,” the “how” and to transparency in communication and sharing. Communicating clearly facilitates trust.”**

### The Crucial Role of Communication

This commitment to excellent communication skills does not end at the outset of a partnership, but rather forms an essential structure upon which the partnership should be built. The intentional and regular creation of spaces for communication and engagement, sharing of values, intentions, meaning and purpose, is equally important. Pragmatic conversations about the ways in which the partnership is unfolding and the hopes and plans of each party can ensure that many a partnership, which would otherwise flounder, is given the opportunity to fortify the levels of trust in existence between the parties within it. Such conversations also help to clear the air of potential misunderstandings early on, and to deal with hiccups in the road in a manner that strengthens rather than depletes trust.

**“Open communication is essential and include ongoing engagement and conversation. Clear communication around expectations and accountability; not making assumptions (and checking those you may have made); talking and discussing grey areas that may arise openly; and sharing problems quickly and honestly. Share the onus to communicate often and well with one another.”**

Strong partnerships recognise this and will create a rhythm and structure for regular and open communication. Such a rhythm may be regarded as a reflective cycle in which the focus of attention is less upon the projects which the partners may share, and more upon the relationship which underpins the work that they do together. Strong, honest, and clear relationships build trust – which is more likely to lead to effective and joy-filled work together.

### The Treasure We Seek Lies Within

So often in a sector such as ours, where different partners tend to occupy specific positions and roles, we hear the members of each grouping complain about behaviours of the ‘other’ grouping that damage their ability to form trusting partnership.

Ironically, the most powerful step that can be taken towards building trust-based partnership is to redirect one's attention onto oneself and one's own organisation. The intentional and clear examination of one's own purpose, intentions, objectives, values, and ways of working (culture) – both as an individual, and as an organisation, put one in a far stronger position to articulate and express these. Once both partners understand their own essential characteristics better, they are better able to communicate these externally, and to look for qualities within intended partners that align with and complement their own. Too often there is an assumption that others know and understand what an organisation stands for, and likewise an assumption that organisations doing similar work have a similar ethos, without attention and time being taken to ensure that this is the case. This may be true internally within an organisation too. Taking time to be clear on one's purpose, values, and culture, and

to be explicit on communicating these to the organisations with which one hopes to partner, can save a lot of pain and trauma in the longer term.

Doing the inner work, actively seeking out brave and aligned partners, re-examining oneself and one's organisation, and being willing to be challenged, heighten the possibility of the development of strong and lasting trust-based partnerships.



*"Trust starts with me"*

*"Trust is facilitated when we take time to do deep dives into knowing the individuals and organisation, establishing connection and values, understanding the mutual needs and values of working together, and developing common goals. For relationships to develop, partners need to see and hear each other, and understand context."*

#### **Taking Time – Breaking Bread and Finding Pathways to Togetherness**

Projects and effectiveness are important. However, in the rush to design and implement projects, and in our tendency to become consumed with the "what" of our work, we frequently forget to make time for the "who" and the "why."

Becoming more conscious and intentional about carving out sacred spaces for refocusing on the why, and reconnecting with the who, is the basis of establishing deep, high quality and enduring connections, allowing for trust and a sense of true partnership to grow.

Ways in which partners can create spaces to attend to these elements of "why" and "who" include being intentional in scheduling regular (perhaps quarterly, or even more frequent) sessions to connect for the purpose of relationship first, project second. Ensuring that in every engagement which partners have together, attention is paid to checking in on the people with whom they are in partnership also supports deeper and more trusting levels of connection.



*"The time and experiences that partners have with each other, their experiences of each other's actions, behaviour, and*

*communication, are what lead to the development of trust. This supports the establishment, increasing alignment and sharing, and deepening of values over time"*

#### **Past Person to Organisation**

We are accustomed to understanding trust as being between two or more people, who have invested in developing a relationship of transparency, honesty, care, and courage with each other. Transitioning the concept of trust to an organisational context may seem foreign to us. Indeed, being relational, trust always requires that attention is paid to the human beings within an organisation – yet it is also possible to build levels of trust that include an organisation as an entity in its own right. Like interpersonal trust, organisational trust relies upon the consistency and quality of the interactions taking place between two organisations. Communication both within, and between, organisations is key. Placing value on ensuring that regular and consistent channels for communication remain in place facilitates the development and maintenance of organisational trust.

Building multiple bridges of communication and connecting human beings at multiple different layers of the organisation assists in strengthening collective trust and aligning values and cultures of the different organisations. Clarity on the degree of engagement, reciprocity, and the anticipated duration of relationship between the organisations will also assist in determining the degree of attention and effort that needs to go into building strong shared relational underpinnings. Purely transactional, task-orientated, and short-term organisational engagements do not necessarily require the same level of trust building that long term, collaborative and co-creative projects will.

In Part 2 of this invitation into conversation, to be published in the September newsletter, we will consider issues such as Care and Accountability, Partnering Beyond Finance, the Dark Side of Trust, and the importance of Reciprocity and Expanding Consciousness. Looking forward to continuing the conversation then!

First published in the IPASA newsletter



### **REFLECTION POINT. TAKING TIME – BREAKING BREAD AND FINDING PATHWAYS TO TOGETHERNESS**

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**ROBYN WHITTAKER**

**Emotional Intelligence**  
is the **Rocket Fuel** for  
**Resilience**

People low on resilience are 4x more likely to experience burnout. So rather than burn out, why not **use your emotional intelligence to shine bright!**

Download this month's tips and tricks **HERE**

# LEADERS; IF YOU WERE A RADIO STATION, ARE PEOPLE TUNING INTO OR OUT OF YOUR FREQUENCY?

WENDY NAGEL



What do you think?

Are you aware of the impact and influence you are having on the people around you?

The fact is, we don't only lead at work... we lead in all aspects of our lives. I know for some this might pose a challenge, but here's the thing, work is but only one aspect of life. And yes, for some of you, work is everything; which may explain why you're so frazzled and close to burnout. But that's another blog for another time.

I am observing the energy of **INTENTION** more and more in my life, which notably includes work. Our intention, is what is being assessed in every single engagement with another human being. We are wired to determine the reason for somebody making the request/s or demands they make. As a result, we very quickly make a decision around the intent and whether or not it is in our best interests and so we either move towards it or away from it.

You see, we are all hard wired for survival and motivated by four fundamental social drives; namely, our drive to survive, affiliate, achieve and ultimately transcend (when we have overcome the fears associated with each of the first 3). Based on our unique and universal life experiences and adaptive strategies that determine our personality, we will determine who we tune into and who we

will avoid like the plague.

It's an absolute prerequisite for leaders to be onto their own INTENT. The question that is begging to be answered then, is, "As a human being and leader, do I really care about people?" I am referring here, to the kind of care for another human being that ensures you understand what makes them tick as well as being courageous enough to call them out when they have not given of their best. Instead of the all too common experience of people in leadership positions (which doesn't make you a leader), generally intending to use people in pursuit of personal goals, which in turn are aligned to company goals.

If you are in a leadership position; it is important to be considering this question because you are ultimately responsible for creating an environment where people are either highly engaged because they can grow, thrive and deliver an above and beyond contribution willingly; or you are creating an environment where people are dis-engaged, stagnant, and doing the bare minimum required. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out which scenario is likely to deliver superior results.

Here's the rub though. Generally, the focus of most people in leadership positions, is the results and not the quality of the people who are meant to deliver said results. What's wrong with this picture?

If results get delivered through people (something that is cognitively understood, but seemingly hard to act upon), then surely the focus needs to shift to the quality and ability of the people? The distinction here is the fundamental difference between people in leadership positions and real leaders displaying leadership...

Which one are you? Occupying a leadership position OR demonstrating leadership? Depending on where you reside, there will either be a high demand for your radio frequency or people will be turning you off.

Consider for a moment a leader who facilitated the very best of you to emerge. What did they allow for you? How did they show up for you? Were they there to be of service to you and your becoming the best version of yourself?

In this game of leading ourselves and then others (we can't lead anyone else until we lead ourselves), it is vital that we reflect on our own intention in this world. Are we here with a focus to acquire as much as we can, or are we here to offer ourselves as vehicles to help others realise the greatness within them.

It is a truism, that when we help others to realise the very best in themselves, we in turn realise the very best in ourselves, and so the virtuous circle continues.



www.futurefitacademy.com

## The Challenge

Constant disruptors are changing how we live and work.

Long-term job relevance and efficiency are no longer guaranteed.

Organisations and individuals need to develop the skills required to deliver indispensable value.

## The Question

Will I rise to the challenge of learning what is required to stay relevant in the future world of work?

## The Tool FutureFit Index

A self-assessment that assesses fifteen critical future-world-of-work skills. Provides awareness about level of readiness across these critical skills. Produces a detailed report with tailor-made developmental pathways and learning journeys.

## The Solution

Tailormade FutureFit Development

Curiosity	Dealing with Paradox	Tolerance of Ambiguity	Learning Agility	Growth Mindset
Sensemaking	Creating Clarity	Design Thinking	Cultural Adaptability	Virtual Collaboration
Resourcefulness	Leading without Authority	Adaptability	Change Resiliency	Connectedness

## The Format

**Online Master Classes**  
Online interactive masterclasses at specified dates and times

**Face-to-face sessions**  
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Self-managed online course content

## The Future Fit Index

Take the Future Fit self-assessment and identify your areas of strength and weakness across a variety of essential leadership and success traits.

<https://www.futurefitacademy.com/the-futurefit-index/>

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# WHEN TRUST IS BROKEN. REBUILDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN ORGANISATIONS

SARAH BABB

*"She says all ideas are welcome here, but then in the next second tells us all what to do. There's no point in speaking up. It falls on deaf ears"*

*"Everyone just smiles on camera and says they are fine. I just stay on mute and keep my head down. I don't know how to tell them I am not coping. That each day is a stretch for me."*

*"My manager spoke poorly about me behind my back. He didn't share what was going on, My job changed and he disappeared for weeks on end during lockdown. I did not know what to do"*

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

It is precisely in these challenging times of the pandemic that we most need psychological safety to speak with candor and vulnerability. Yet it is often in these very times that we inadvertently damage psychological safety and betray trust.

Our trust is broken on three levels. At an organization level budgets have been slashed, jobs lost, businesses reorganized, jobs changed, performance pressure increased, tensions have risen, and tempers flared. At a leadership level, individual managers are straddling business as usual operations with transforming the business in pivoting products and processes. And business pressures trump individual fragility. Some leaders have sown distrust in their teams as they micromanage WFH arrangements, take on key decisions instead of devolving these, show no tolerance of performance deviations. A culture of working 24/7 has become the norm in many businesses. Oftentimes leaders do not pay enough attention to each individual member of their team. Jobs and pay have been cut and those remaining may tolerate higher levels of stress and work pressure to keep their jobs and prospects of career security. At an individual level, burnout, emotional exhaustion and mental challenges have been skyrocketing and this is not sustainable. We face loss, grief and low-grade fear each and every day. On a personal level we withdraw and do not bring our voice or ideas into the team and we do not speak up with our manager to either raise ideas or challenges, let alone to share how we

really feel.

## THREE LEVELS OF TRUST

Trust dimensions straddle self, leadership and organizational culture & systems



## TRUST IS IMPORTANT

Trust is an important ingredient to build a psychological safety at work. And where there is low trust and even distrust, there is psychological danger, self-protection, a silo mentality, backstabbing, cliques are formed as the out groups are excluded. While we fear job loss and a threat to our livelihood we withdraw and withhold questions, suggestions and critical thinking. What is needed though to survive in challenging times is to have all hands-on deck to turn businesses around and to keep innovating and responding to clients' emerging needs. This needs the candor, contributions and engagement of all members of the team.



*Such betrayal damages individuals, relationships, and performance. It robs people of their ability to believe in themselves*

*and diminishes their capacity to contribute wholeheartedly to the organization. When people feel betrayed, they pull back. Morale declines, as does productivity.*  
- Reina & Reina 2006

So the question is then can we and if so, how do we rebuild trust when it is broken? And how do we build psychological safety from here?

## REBUILDING TRUST



*But if people feel too much distress, they will fight, flee, or freeze....(This requires (leadership) to create a culture of courageous conversations. In a period of sustained uncertainty, the most difficult topics must be discussed. Dissenters who can provide crucial insights need to be protected from the organizational pressure to remain silent. Executives need to listen to unfamiliar voices and set the tone for candor and risk taking.*  
- Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky (2009)

Rebuilding trust is both a process and a skill in how to sustain consistent trustworthy relationships and predictability of the organization, the leadership and ourselves. The good news is that it can be rebuilt, although when working from a deficit, this gap needs to be filled first, before trust can be built. This requires a recommitment to a different culture and way of working and it requires some effort to rebuild and remain on course.

## 1. Rebuilding Organisational and systemic trust

Part of building a new organizational culture involves embedding systems, policies and procedures and ways of working that reinforce and build the desired culture. Amy Edmondson and Per Hugander (2021) suggest visualization as a useful technique to help leadership envision the desired ways of working with candor and vulnerability and to see the benefits and results this brings. Beyond being clear on the desired culture, each and every day habits and norms of how meetings are conducted, how WFH is managed, how transparent communications are, how collaborative teams are formed, how teams are recognized, how risk taking and innovation is encouraged, how personal wellbeing is seen to matter. All of these processes and patterns add credit into the trust account. But when the trust account is in debit, so the formal and informal culture and way of working needs to be supportive of high levels of engagement and open communications, and these need to be reinforced on every occasion to rebuild the bank account of transparency and consistency. This is where leadership is key.

## 2. Rebuilding trust in our leadership

Assuming then that the individual leaders commit to rebuilding trust, then ways of practicing and building these habits must be implemented.

Hurley outlines a model around the decision to trust (2006) which he suggests leaders can use to rebuild broken trust. These can be built into the organizational dynamics as well.

The factors include supporting fear of risk or low levels of risk tolerance and levels of adjustment, managing relative power and sense of security and comfort of team levels, reinforcing the shared identity and interests of the 'we', demonstrating consistent benevolent concern, showing capable and consistent integrity and higher levels of candor of communications.

One powerful way to do this is to set up leadership circles in which the leaders learn and practice new ways of working. The leadership circles are facilitated as they engage in conversations around relevant curated themes from which they apply learning and new ways of working, to reflect on progress in the

next leadership circle. It is through the very circle that they learn to live by and apply psychological safety for themselves and their teams. Both individual and leadership teams need to build their skills and have opportunities to apply these in real time.

Small acts of vulnerability and regular and consistent assurances of trustworthiness are essential to build some modicum of relationships. It does fall on the leaders of teams to be transparent and open and to model their own vulnerability. Where need be conversations can be facilitated with an external party to express and clear pent up hurt and to move to a place of forgiveness and healing. A team can remain stuck unless there is some way of letting go in order to move forward. Many leaders find this hard and it will necessarily be a personal and potentially awkward conversation, unless held in a way that can also mirror psychological safety. The best way to get to change is through action. Leaders can put certain challenges on the table that require all input and commitment to use as a way to move into the new ways of being.



*Leader humility, authenticity, and openness instils trust and psychological safety. In turn, trust and psychological safety empower individuals and teams to perform at their highest capabilities. Additionally, continuously learning teams are essential for keeping pace with and effectively navigating 3-D change.*  
(Chima & Gutman, 2020)

## Rebuilding trust in ourselves

We lose faith in ourselves when we hold back, when we stop sharing ideas and when we stop asking. Our self-confidence may plummet. So we need to check in with ourselves and ask whether we are being trustworthy and whether we are crafting candor and vulnerability through our own contributions. This has been a subject of much debate as some businesses turn to training their employees and team members to 'speak up'. Yes we can all learn skills in this but if the leadership and overarching organizational tone is not of psychological safety no amount of training to build the amount of sharing.

Part of building our trust in ourselves is learning self-compassion and understanding, that we acknowledge and accept the level of trauma we may be facing. And with this we can practice sharing and asking for support and encouragement. However, this also calls for self-care of our physical and emotional needs. Having confidants and sanctuaries to self-reflect and have support are so important (Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, 2009), and to build emotional agility whereby emotions become a source of data to what is important to us so that we can live by values-based actions.

The neuroscience of trust actually shows that key management behaviours that simulate the production of oxytocin, builds trust (Zak, 2017). These practices are to recognize excellence, induce team challenge give discretion over how do their work and enable job crafting, share information broadly and intentionally build relationships, facilitate whole person growth, and show vulnerability.

Trust can be intentionally rebuilt between leaders and teams and of the trustworthiness of organisations built, and then psychological safety can be firmly entrenched as a way of being together.

Zak (2017) found from research that the effect of trust on self-reported work performance is powerful. The respondents had 106% more energy and were 76% more engaged at work, also reporting being 50% more productive. He also found that 66% felt closer to their colleagues. A high-trust culture was found to improve how people treat one another and themselves as 40% experience less burnout and 41% felt a greater sense of accomplishment. This is certainly worth aiming for.

**References:** Chima, A. & Gutman, R. (2020) What it takes to lead through an era of exponential change, Harvard Business Review Edmondson, A.C. & Hugander, P. (2021), 4 steps to boost psychological safety at your workplace, Harvard Business Review Edmondson, A.C. & Lei, Z. (2014) Psychological safety: the history, renaissance, and future of an interpersonal construct, The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior. Heifetz, R., Grashow, A. & Linsky, M. (2009) Leadership in a (permanent) crisis, Harvard Business Review Hurley, R.F. (2006) The decision to trust, Harvard Business Review Lewicki, R.J., McAllister, D.J. & Bies, R.J. (1998) Trust and distrust: new relationships and realities, Academy of Management Review (23:3) Reina, D.S. & Reina, M.L. (2006) Rebuilding trust within organizations, Systems Thinker (17.1) Zak, P.J. (2017) The neuroscience of trust, Harvard

SOHINI PETRIE

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

How will we navigate these times? The answer is together ....

We need each other to test our ideas, to share what we're learning,  
to help us see it in new ways, to listen to our stories ...

We have each other's curiosity, wisdom and courage.

- Margaret J Wheatley



LISTEN TO MIND THE GAP  
EPISODE 3

# WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR MORE MEN TO JOIN THE FIGHT FOR GENDER PARITY

PROF SHIRLEY ZINN

The struggle for gender parity in the workplace has been touted as a women's issue for decades now – and of course it is. But it isn't their struggle alone – men have a vital role to play.

There is overwhelming evidence that we have not yet achieved gender equality. Only 37 of the Fortune 500 companies have women as CEOs – that's 7.4%. In South Africa, PwC research from 2019 showed that only 3.1% of JSE-listed companies are run by women CEOs.

Recent female resignations include that of Woolworths South Africa where the role is not being replaced, and African Bank where the position was replaced by a man.

But it's not just the upper echelons that are the problem – gender discrimination is still expressed and infused in far too many companies' processes, policies, rules, practices, culture, organisational and individual behaviour. It manifests in the gender pay gap, in career progression, in recruitment, in leave policies, in personal development, in sexual harassment, and in gender-based violence. It's systemic, and we need to address it throughout the entire system.

The King IV Report on corporate governance released in 2016 recommended that companies should set board gender diversity targets and report annually on their progress. As a result, new JSE listing requirements were put in place for listed companies to adopt their gender policies. This means that individuals from different backgrounds, ages, experience levels, genders and races should be included on boards so that companies can benefit from the diversity of their skills and insights.

But board diversity is just the beginning.

These changes need to filter down through the organisation until they truly permeate the culture. And to do that, we need men to not only take up arms alongside women, but also to educate themselves and reflect on their own biases.

Gender bias in the workplace is a matter of ethics. When women are denied truly equal opportunities – for recruitment, for advancement, for leadership – your organisation is guilty of discrimination. Rooting out this discrimination is a matter of organisational ethics, social responsibility and going beyond compliance with EE and BEE to addressing social injustice. You cannot create a truly diverse and inclusive organisation through a box-ticking, points scoring approach.

So how, then, should we proceed? We have to begin by addressing the principles and mechanisms of gender discrimination in the workplace, understand how they work, and then work to root them out. This will take a conscious effort to move beyond the box-ticking, and make every effort to learn both from our mistakes, and from those women who have succeeded.

Despite the acknowledged disparity, inequality, and crippling bias towards women, a handful of outliers do make it through to sit on the boards of both listed and unlisted companies. These women have to be grounded, determined, resilient, and brave – and have the social and relational capital to make it through.

That last point is vital. Because not only is the organisation's culture important, but women also need sponsors, mentors and a network – and this is where men can make a real difference.

This will require men who aren't threatened by women with leadership potential, but it

also demands men who can recognise the benefits not just of women leaders, but feminine leadership – and the benefits it holds for their organisation, and even for themselves as they learn from inspirational women leaders around them.

The more relevant question is what masculine and feminine elements and archetypes are in play in our culture, and how do they serve or hinder us? We cannot achieve our goals for diversity and equality if women become hypermasculine at work. We cannot attract talented women to high-level business leadership roles if the cost for them is to not be their authentic selves. We will not benefit from adding more of the same; we need diversity precisely because it brings something new to the table.

Organisations, therefore, need to create diverse, inclusive, human-centric cultures that truly give an equal voice to every person in the system, regardless of their gender or other demographic markers. Our organisations need to be places where employees feel seen, heard, and free to be exactly who they are.

When gender-based violence spiralled to even greater levels during our more restrictive lockdowns, we saw a critical mass of men willing to use their power and authority to make decisions that would not only promote gender equality, but increase safety for the women in their organisations. We need more men like that, men willing to do everything they can to bring about change.

Those are the men we need to join hands with us to collaborate with women to co-create better companies, a better country, and a better life for all.



"In today's world people want connection, they want to know what you stand for not just who you are."

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DR KARINA DE BRUIN

# EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

During the last two years, we have seen an increase in the attention that employee well-being has received in popular and more academic publications. The uncertainties that the pandemic has brought and the adjustments that everyone had to make in terms of work and life, have in many instances been to the detriment of our health and well-being. Employee well-being relates to all aspects of working life, including the physical environment (which in many instances are now blended with the home environment) to how employees feel engaged in their work and the climate of the work environment.

Although organisations are continuously urged to promote healthier work practices, employees should also take responsibility for their own well-being. We cannot control everything that happens at work, but we do play an important role in facilitating our own feelings of happiness and enjoyment of life. Perceiving, interpreting, and responding to the things that fall outside our sphere of control with a mindset of happiness and optimism, will not only boost our own well-being but also the joy and well-being of those around us.



## NEUROSCIENCE OF PEAK PERFORMANCE & CULTURE SHIFT EPISODE 1 – WHY BEHAVIOUR/CULTURE CHANGE IS SO HARD

In order to really reach our potential, we need to understand how our brains work and how to hack them for peak performance. Neuroscience can help us do just that. When it comes to culture shift and transformation, why is it so difficult to change? A lot of it has to do with how our brains are wired. But if we can understand the neuroscience behind it, perhaps we can find ways to make change easier. Listen as Debbie Craig and Kerry Kohl discuss the neuroscience of peak performance and culture shift and delve into how to hack our brains for the better.

# THE DANGEROUS ESCAPE: WHAT CAN LONELINESS MAKE YOU DO?

CHRISTINE YEUNG



## Shhh...I feel lonely

The greatest challenge about loneliness is, most people don't even realize they're experiencing it. This is a challenge because it means loneliness has been misunderstood, neglected or under examined from a psychological and medical perspective.[1] Loneliness itself is not a mental health issue, but the unresolved, prolonged experience of loneliness is a high-risk factor for other mental health conditions. Therefore, compared to well-classified and relatively easy to identify conditions, such as depression or anxiety, loneliness has become a real silent killer.



*'The impact of loneliness on an individual, the people around the lonely individual, the community they live in, and society more broadly, has so far been under-recognised.'* (Lim, Eres and Vasan, 2020)

The first step to solving the problem is to identify loneliness.

And here, we face another challenge. There is a huge stigma around loneliness. It is very difficult to admit that 'I feel lonely'. Compare this with sharing 'I feel sad', 'I feel angry' or 'I

feel anxious'. With so much shame and guilt around feeling lonely, internal self-blame comes very naturally. When I feel lonely, the first thought that comes to mind is probably that 'something is wrong with me' or 'I am so weak'.

In my 15 years of experience as a consulting psychologist, I have been working with professionals and leaders to build up their psychological fitness. Again and again, I observed that, in most cases, the root cause of team conflict, disengagement, or lack of productivity, came from a form of disconnection. Disconnection from the people around, and disconnection within – when the work doesn't seem to make any sense. And this disconnection will often lead to loneliness unless connection is restored, or the feeling of disconnection is regulated.

In my coaching practice with these professionals, I have often heard statements like these:

- 'I want to be more challenged at work as I feel bored.'
- 'I want security in my position, but there is too much uncertainty with the restructure.'
- 'I want to meet more like-minded

people. The people I work with, I don't get along with. I don't think we get each other.'

- 'I want to know where I am heading, but I am directionless.'
- 'I want to share my problem as a leader, but I don't know who to turn to.'

Significant work events such as changing jobs, promotions, losing jobs, changing status or changing professional identity (e.g. from a manager to startup founder), can all trigger loneliness. How much impact loneliness has on an individual also depends on each individual's physical health, mental health and other socio- environmental factors such as workplace, do they have access to the park etc. I will share more about this in my next article.

Overall, I have also observed that loneliness manifests as a subjective experience. It manifests as a discrepancy between what you desire and what you're actually experiencing. That discrepancy shows a deficit in both emotional and relational needs. Since these needs are not met in people who experience loneliness, this manifests as emotional pain.

# EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

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 it's 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?

NATALEE HOLMES

# LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

Learning and development are critical parts of our life's journey. We need to make learning and growing our lifelong mission. There is no end to learning and no holy grail of learning attainment. Being curious and fostering curiosity in people from an incredibly early age is an invaluable cleverness that needs to become a part of our DNA.

With the rate of change accelerating daily, we need to initiate, encourage, and embrace learning-driven individuals, who create and sustain learning-driven culture in society and in business. That is the only way people are going to keep up with the pace of transformation.

## DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS, TODAY WITH NATALEE HOLMES.



### PART FOUR

### PART FIVE

### PART SIX

I am so pleased to announce this new series Developing tomorrow's leaders today, with Natalee Holmes. Natalee Holmes is the Director of Conscious Connections. She has worked in counselling, education and training for the bulk of her career. Her areas of expertise are all-around young people - from parenting coaching to youth and adolescent coaching, to continual coaching for a person's life and career, including subject choice and career studies and training guidance. Her passion is helping prepare young people for the unpredictable future they face. Her flagship programme is called Future Leaders Development Programme and young people around the world are finding great self-awareness and discovering where they will make their biggest impact going forward. Together we will be exploring critical leadership skills and discussing various strategies for their development. Part One of this series focuses on the core skill of Self-awareness, and part two explores collaboration as we focus on the critical skills needed to work effectively within teams. In part 3, we turn our attention to the competencies required to transition from Managing self to managing others in a leadership position. In part 4, we start framing the conversations that need to happen today to plan well for the future ahead. Part 5 is more hands-on as we examine the skills necessary to achieve our visions through deliberate practices like goal setting. Finally, in part 6, we discuss how best to marry our goals with organisational objectives and how to achieve our vision through career development.

# TRANSFORMER SKILLS FOR HR & LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

LINDA VAN DER LOO



## It's a great time to be in learning

With the COVID lockdown, we had no choice but to do things differently, because overnight, our world of learning shifted dramatically, into a world where digitization and Fourth Industrial revolution is now a reality. Overnight we lost our face-to-face classrooms, "pivoted" to delivering learning digitally and as a result learning became the flavor of the month with the business because they require new skills at a speed and pace that historically we as learning have been unaccustomed to.

## "We've always done it this way"

The reality is that you know we actually can't keep developing and delivering learning into organisations as we've done in the past. Reskilling starts with L & D, new mindsets, new roles, new skillsets, new mandate. Practitioners and L & D professionals need to be really on top of their game. Armed with the skills that the organization needs, but more importantly with the skills that they need in order to make sure that everybody is on board. L & D has now become a focal point in an organization and what organisations are

expecting is for people to develop their skills at the pace of the organization and the pace of their strategy.

## Stepping in to deliver learning at the speed of business

What we learnt from 2021

- We learnt to be more flexible and enable workers to do their jobs with more autonomy and in new ways.
- We learnt to be more human-centric, bringing a stronger focus on empathy, are and wellbeing at work.
- And we learnt about digital transformation. We now know that we can do things faster than we previously thought and build solutions that get better over time.
- The HR profession has also transformed. We're no longer talking about "getting a seat at the table"; we are now sitting there.

Josh Bersin

**So once you've got the seat at the table, what conversations are you having? What skill sets are you bringing to the party in terms of making sure that your**

**business has trust in you? Do you really know that you can deliver on the learning mandate and the skills mandate of the organization and see delivery at the speed of the strategy and the demands of a strategy?**

## How do we shift our perspectives as HR and L & D?

- We need to deeply understand the world of our learners and employees and by doing that we need to immerse ourselves as a learner. You need to be a constant learner and you can't be in L&D if you're not a learner by heart and you don't have that growth mindset.
- We need to develop a different skill set for our HR and L & D teams.
- We need to partner closely with our business.
- And then I think that the main thing is also to get to a place where you are re calibrating learning solutions to be more future fit.
- More future fit in terms of untrained skills and more future fit in terms of the delivery mechanisms and the ecosystems with which we are delivering skills into the organization.

HR / L&D of today	HR / L&D of tomorrow	HR / L&D of future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to invest in learning (and people has become clear)</li> <li>• The difference between in-person and online training is sinking in</li> <li>• The pandemic &amp; IR4.0 is forcing change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shift in mentality</li> <li>• New technologies will continue to disrupt traditional learning</li> <li>• Learning becomes personalized</li> <li>• Informal learning will play a bigger role plus resilience</li> <li>• Adaptability will be key (Reskilling)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opt for a data-driven approach</li> <li>• Consider social learning</li> <li>• Make room for agility plus resilience</li> <li>• Allow "learning by doing"</li> <li>• Democratise learning</li> </ul>

## The Super 8 Transformer Skills (HR & L&D) - EdCast LXP

We need to build capability and proficiency within these 8 skill sets.

### STRATEGIST

A strategist who can really get to a place where they can literally align decisions and plans against the short term, medium term and long term needs of the business and people. You don't have to be an executive to do that.

### PORTFOLIO MANAGER

A portfolio manager who can optimize the entire content portfolio and ascertain what generates maximum returns

### MARKETEER

A marketer who can make known the value of learning, especially in times of business slowdown and embrace the opportunity to change the brand perception of learning and improve the value proposition in terms of employee engagement. Solutions are going to be outliers to that broader employee ecosystem.

### TECHNOLOGIST

Drive adoption of remote working and digital learning tools, really understanding the tools that would enable learning to flow in in the workplace.

### AMBASSADOR

Role model the mindset and behaviours of an everyday learner. You need to be deeply passionate, deeply immersed in the world of the learner, flying the flag for learning in an organisation. You can't really be an ambassador if you don't have the change in your mind.

### DATA SCIENTIST

Develop a robust framework of metrics and use analytics to make data-driven decisions. One of the first things you need to take to the table when you're engaging with business or with your executives is data and the story and the insights that come with it, and more importantly, what you are going to do with the data.

### CHANGE MAESTRO

Lead and accelerate change efforts through proactive communication and stakeholder management.

You want to get to a place where you are orchestrating change and mindset shifts in the organization, using learning and development, learning tools, learning portfolios, learning programs.

### SCOUT

Seek and identify experts in the organisation and make tacit knowledge explicit. Tell the story of what learning is happening in your organization. This is tightly linked to being a strategist

So, what are you?

Are you finding mentors?

Are you finding coaches or tools and technology that will enable learning in your organization?

How well are you orchestrating and connecting them into your learning programs, a learning ecosystem?

It's really about how they show up and how they are energized to ensure that everybody is learning and in people learning they become relevant. Through that relevancy, you have retention, non resignation and engagement. And you certainly see and, and I've seen it in one of our clients where it leads to such engagement in the organization that the strategy is just flying.

So learning plays a big big, big role in an organization and I get a sense that we kind of sit on the fence as to whether we step in and step up or wait for HR to do it.

To quote Steve Jobs, "Learn continually. There's always one more thing to learn"

The question will be asked in corporates as to whether they need an LED team. Of course there is relevance in an L & D team, but they run the risk of being marginalized if they are not stepping up to really drive the learning agenda, the skills agenda for their particular organization. The transformation of skills is key.

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BASED ON THE BOOK BY MATTHEW SYED

# BLACK BOX THINKING

HOW TO LEARN FROM MISTAKES & IMPROVE

**CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE CAN LEARN FROM MISTAKES**

**DON'T PUNISH MISTAKES — PEOPLE WON'T OWN UP**

**SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.**  
If I change the landing gear lever to look like a tyre, we might have fewer accidents...

**ENCOURAGE YOUR PEOPLE TO QUESTION THE LEADERS**  
Captain, your approach is skew. Thank you! I will correct it immediately.

**MAKE LEARNINGS AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY IN A FORMAT THAT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.**

**DON'T LET EGOS GET IN THE WAY OF LEARNING. CREATE A SENSE OF CURIOSITY.**  
I don't have the answer. What do you think?

**CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FEEDBACK — DON'T GET CAUGHT IN CLOSED LOOPS.**  
Passengers love boiled eggs. Oh no! Not boiled eggs! Yuck! Blech!

**RESIST THE URGE TO ALLOCATE BLAME. IT WILL STOP PEOPLE LEARNING.**  
CLEARLY, pilot error! WHAT! It's the mechanic's fault!

**ADOPT A GROWTH MINDSET\* AND CONSIDER MISTAKES AS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY.**  
What can we LEARN from this?  
\* Based on work by Carol Dweck

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# HOW DO WE CARE FOR OURSELVES HOLISTICALLY?

MARISA WOLLHEIM

The losses, trauma, and changes we experience affect us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. When we talk about care and healing it must take place physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

- Understand Self
- Develop Self Compassion
- Be Patient
- Be Consistent
- Become aware of your dialogue with parts of yourself and their dialogue with each
- Self Correct
- Re-Wire and Redefine Self
- Let go
- Become your Best Friend, Mentor, Parent
- Love yourself back into Life

Commit today to your journey towards wholeness. Become the "CEO" of Self and facilitate the communication and dialogue between the quadrants.



// "What happened to you in your past may not be your fault Yet, your Healing is your Responsibility"

Identify what you have lost & experienced on each level

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual

Agree on a holistic Care Plan Identify what each quadrant is Feeling and Needing and what you & your Partners can do about it

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual
Feel:	Feel:	Feel:	Feel:
Need:	Need:	Need:	Need:
Do:	Do:	Do:	Do:



## REFLECTION POINT.

JULIA KERR-HENKEL

If we focused only on all that is problematic and requiring deep attention in our organisations, communities, and countries right now, the list would be endless, and our anxiety would rocket. And yet, since this TalentTalk issue is themed around joie de vivre and embracing moments of joy, I am reminded of the need to also honor Rule Number 6.

In their classic book *The Art of Possibility* Rosamund and Benjamin Zander share an anecdote about a serious government meeting taking place amongst high profile politicians. A team member rushes into the ministerial board room breathless, visibly distressed and shouting about an issue that has occurred. Immediately, he's admonished and invited to please remember Rule Number 6. Instantly, he settles down and is restored to calm.

What is this magic rule asks a bemused colleague? Rule Number 6 is 'Please don't take yourself so damn seriously!' and the other rules, he asks? The reply is: That there aren't any rules. This amusing tale is a reminder for leaders to on occasion invite yourself and those around you to lighten up. It doesn't mean you're telling others to never take serious matters seriously, but it can be a practice to ease a tense situation by calling a time out by inviting in a joke, humour, laughter and a greater perspective which can lighten up the intense hold these problems have, even if momentarily. So, when next you can feel tensions rising, remember to call in Rule Number 6.



DR ERIC ALBERTINI

# THE HYBRID WORLD OF WORK

The current or traditional ways of organising work and learning have been dramatically redefined post pandemic. So too have the requirements of skills and mindsets. It is time to reimagine and reboot our approaches to organisational learning, from the models, to delivery and technology, to provide learning solutions with impact for people and business.

In the words of Winston Churchill, 'never let a crisis go to waste' – for those able to find the opportunities in our post-pandemic world, an innovative new world of hybrid work and learning awaits for those who are resilient enough to embrace it, adapt and thrive.



## LISTEN TO POWER SKILLS PART TWO

Join Dr Karina de Bruin and I as we discuss the intricacies involved in developing the set of power skills needed to remain relevant now and in the future. Our discussion in part two.

# A DIVERSITY OF RESPONSE

We are about to see how critical it is to do more than 'hold productivity' (or outputs), but also to 'hold people' and the team structures in which they operate. Over the next year, this need will deepen and intensify. The opportunity at our feet right now, in response to novel conditions, is to lay the foundations for a diversity of response. We need to keep exploring questions like:

*How do we configure hybrid workspaces?*

*What are we actively valuing in our organisation?*

*How is leadership holding up?*

*How are we energising a workplace that is dispersed and remote?*

Here are six keys to open thinking and build a diversity of response. You might wish to see them as a set of conversation prompts, or, with a few concrete actions attached, as mini experiments.

## 1. Play 'above the line'

Positive, confident and exploratory all describe 'above the line' functioning. To spot new ways of doing things, or ways forward, you need to be optimistic and confident that they are out there, and to be curious about finding them.

Defensive, fearful and contracted describes 'below the line' functioning. The more time we spend here, the less likely we are to see the ways through, or to assemble the courage and motivation to face the future.

Both positions are fully human and expected, but we should aim to acknowledge where we are, and what we need to do to shift to an above the line position.

## 2. Invest in social capital

Social capital refers to the bonds of loyalty and trust that form between people, and it has very powerful effects on functioning. Social Capital orientates us towards supporting each other, builds resilience, and convenes our collective imaginations to pioneer new

ways of doing business. It takes groups of individuals and transforms them into highly driven teams.

Connecting, speaking up, listening, and empathising all shore up the reserves of social capital. In newish formats of hybrid work, and during times that feel chaotic, this precious reserve of capital may gradually deplete. Yet it is a critical ingredient for thriving.

Nourish relationships consistently, creating structured times and spaces to do so. One very simple technique to start with, is to pose a general question that everyone must answer in the occasional meeting, and make it outside of work concerns.

## 3. Don't do nothing

Uncertainty can produce paralysis. But it can also present opportunity. And we can only take advantage of new opportunity if we act.

Action spurs learning and expands our ability to explore, discover and chart new paths.

With a deeper dive into foresight, we can continue to decide, act, and take calculated risks.

## 4. Ask better questions

There is a big payoff to asking better questions – we get to tackle the unknown and find better solutions. Innovators move the world forward through questions. They ask – What if? Why?

The best questions release insight, get others thinking, frame the challenge, drive growth and innovation. Beautiful questions can also demonstrate empathy.

Build questioning skills and support cultures of inquiry at work.

## 5. Walk your talk

In everything you do, you set the expectation for what others should do.

Taking time off, making time out sacred, respecting 'deep work' time, being 'always on', weekend working – if you are in a leadership position (which

most people are, formal or not), you are setting examples to be followed.

Be mindful of the example you set.

On the note of overwork, the research is clear: Long hours backfire for people and companies, says HBR.

## 6. Identify what energises teams

Where can people make their biggest impact?

What is most likely to block or derail their effort?

How can people work better together, based on their natural energy for contributing?

We have come a long way in terms of people impact data. We can measure contribution to role, team, and business outcomes. Impact data is crucial for productivity. It also boosts employee satisfaction if you act on it.

Your ideal state is knowing where and how people want to make an impact. This awareness can help focus development, build diversity into teams, and create the conditions for minority voices to be heard and their contributions activated.

Appetite for risk, bigger picture thinking, the craft of perfection, the pragmatism of where to focus first, getting people to work together, these are all different kinds of people impact measured by an instrument called The GC Index.

What is your diversity of response to change?

We have new tools and insights at our disposal to build and grow people & teams. Let's use them.



**LISTEN TO THE PODCAST**

# JOHN ELKINGTON RECALLS THE “TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE”

MIKE MIDDLETON



**“If cancer is life run riot, then plastic-clogged oceans, obscene wealth divides, the undermining of democracy, and climate-induced societal collapse are symptoms of our current form of capitalism running riot”.**

In my previous article, I wrote about the need for the world to shift its focus from sustainability towards regeneration. At the core of the argument was that sustainability is focused on “doing less bad” whereas regeneration is focused on “making things better”. Given the speed at which we are stripping the world of its resources, doing “less bad” is no longer good enough and we need to find disruptive solutions that will undo the damage we have done and start regenerating our world.

When John Elkington coined the phrase “triple bottom line” in 1995, his intent was to challenge business leaders to re-think capitalism from a purely money focus to a more holistic view that includes people and planet. Unfortunately, 25 years later he was disillusioned with the manner in which business leaders had embraced the triple bottom line, and the slow pace at which the business world was evolving to become sustainable, so he issued a public recall of the triple bottom line, claiming it had become mere window dressing with business leaders using it to balance trade-off's rather than doing things differently. He said that “the triple bottom line was never meant to be a mere accounting tool but to rather provoke deeper thinking on how to revolutionise capitalism and its future”. He says that “CEO's and business leaders will move heaven and earth to hit their profit number but the same is not true for their people and planet targets, meaning that the triple bottom line has failed in its endeavors to bury the single bottom line”.

One of the key reasons for his decision

to recall the triple bottom line was that he felt the concept was suffering from what he calls the “placebo effect”. In essence, he claims that the main impact of the triple bottom line is to make businesses appear to be doing good, which makes us feel a little better, while the real problems remain out of sight, out of mind, and as a result, out of control. Nick O'Donohue, an investor that has advised the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation says that “as long as Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives aren't fundamentally core to a business, they are unlikely to ever scale or provide lasting solutions to critical social challenges”.

Elkington does acknowledge that the triple bottom line has made capitalism more responsible and less destructive, but he says that it now has to become “radically more economically inclusive, socially just and environmentally restorative” and the only way to achieve this is to for the business world to shift its focus from sustainability to regeneration.

Unfortunately becoming regenerative is not a simple task.

Sustainability is about incremental improvements on existing business practices, processes, products and services making them less damaging to the environment and better for people. Regeneration requires organisations to go back to basics and re-engineer every aspect of their entity so that they can not only undo the damage of the past but also play a role in making things better. This requires suspending the current metrics by which we measure success and introducing a

radically new form of capitalism that truly does measure success based on profit delivery, social impact and environmental regeneration.

Regenerative organizations understand what their core purpose is and constantly disrupt themselves so that they can deliver against this purpose. They don't start at the end product and then find ways to deliver it better to consumers, but rather start at the very beginning and look at how they can make better products from scratch that are far better for their customers, the planet and their shareholders.

Regeneration is a mindset, an ethos, a culture. It requires large amounts of effort to get going but can transform organisation's when embedded into their core.

If John Elkington had not introduced the triple bottom line, the world would be in a far worse state than it is currently, but the pace of change has not been fast enough and the core metric of business success is still largely the profit number, so Elkington was justified in his plea to have it recalled. Capitalism does need a radical overhaul and incremental improvements are no longer good enough. It's time for business leaders to heed to his original request “to provoke deeper thinking on how to revolutionise capitalism and its future” and its especially time for the business world to shift its focus from “doing less harm” to “making things better”. In other words, from sustainability to regeneration.

Our future depends on it.

JULIA KERR-HENKEL

# INSPIRE

Joy is defined as an intense feeling of deep spiritual connection, pleasure, and appreciation. While it's often an experience that is difficult to articulate in words it spontaneously occurs when something we believe is good occurs – connection with others, communion with our faith, the universe or nature. When joy arrives involuntary smiling, free and easy physical movements, laughter and even tears follow. It is pleasurable because it triggers a sudden awareness in us, even momentarily, that life is worth celebrating; we feel free.

It might surprise you then to learn that it is also one of the most vulnerable emotions we experience as humans. Joy is a high-intensity emotion, that is also characterized by being fleeting. Because of its short-lasting, unexpected nature people have a tendency to feel joy rising up like a spiral but just as quickly to forebode the joy by imagining the source of this joy being taken away. While a common response, we need to guard against this to avoid joy being robbed of its magic by anxiety, urgency and even catastrophizing. The answer to this is gratitude. More gratitude for the moments of joy anticipates greater future experience of in-the-moment joy. The more we count our joyful blessings, the more joy filled blessings we get to count. So, create space for joy by pausing right now to tune into a moment of gratitude.



**SLEEP YOUR WAY TO THE TOP WITH JONI PEDDIE**



**LISTEN TO PART FOUR**

**LISTEN TO PART FIVE**

**LISTEN TO PART SIX**

In this fantastic 6 part series "Sleep your way to the top" I am joined in conversation by Joni Peddie. Joni is the CEO of the Business called Resilient People, In a nutshell, she helps people to 'Bounce Forward' after setbacks, challenges or adversity.

# MAKE CHANGE STICK WHEN YOU REALLY WANT IT

CHANTAL DAWTREY



Once upon a time, in a previous life, I worked for one of the big South African financial institutions. In the first three years that I worked there, and it was for the same department, we were moved a minimum of six times. Sometimes it was just across the very large open-plan floor, other times to a different floor in the same building and twice to different buildings altogether.

The moves were as a result of some restructure, a change in the reporting line of our little department or the wholesale upheaval brought on by a new CEO. It felt like we were being moved around like chess pieces. Time, effort and energy was spent, and a considerable amount of money, but it never really made too much difference. So much movement, so little real change.

For the balance of my ten year career at this institution, in different divisions and departments, the changes continued unabated. Usually these changes were heralded by a new appointee in an executive position who had bigger, brighter, better ideas. When I witnessed a complete 360 degree move that brought us right back to where we had

started five years earlier, I knew it was time for me to move on.

We may have been taken through a great deal of change, a great deal of upheaval and some level of stress, but I am not convinced that the leadership learnt a whole lot.

Typically change isn't something we humans enjoy. We prefer the tried & tested, the certain and comfortable. Mainly because then our brains don't have to expend any more energy & we only have so much energy to go around. Renowned neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett calls it our "body budget" also known as allostasis. Predictability is a happier place for our brains and it's how we manage to survive but change, i.e. exploring the new, the different, & unknown, is necessary for growth & development. As long as it is worth the effort.

The problem is, we often don't know whether it will be worth the effort. More uncertainty. However, should we be convinced that it is worth the effort, those desired changes, no matter how good for us, more than likely still do not stick.

We have all been there. The feedback from our 360 or the performance appraisal rings loud and clear: You really have great potential but for the fact that you: take on too much and do not delegate/micromanage/lose your cool and alienate people.

It's not for want of trying, the determination is there. This is my career at stake, dammit! And for a while there is some change, some handing over of projects, letting others do their work without constantly peering over their shoulders or managing to bite your lip when that task goes pear shaped again. After awhile, however, it all gets too much and you are grabbing back all the work, or breathing down your teammates' necks and yelling at your assistant for too many spelling errors. Oh dear.

Unbeknown to us, behind the scenes, we have a very efficient anxiety-management system\* at play. This anxiety management system detects the deeper unconscious commitments that, if we go against them by changing, if we let go of them, we will die!

So I will not delegate because if I am

not seen to be doing all the time, I am worthless, selfish, and lazy. I micromanage because all good leaders are expected to know what is happening all the time and are held responsible if projects fail. If the work I produce and oversee is not of the exceptionally high standard that I set for myself I will be letting down my team and not giving the 110% quality that I have committed to.

It is not so much that change itself makes us feel uncomfortable, even if it is quite difficult, rather it is that we are left feeling defenseless before the

dangers we "know" are lurking in the dark recesses of our psyches.

In order to make change stick, we must really, really, really want that change. Then we need the courage to surface the unconscious commitments. This is done with the help of others as we need an external perspective to validate, or add to, our views. So trust is key. Finally an action plan to change those habits can be crafted.

Although it sounds like a great deal of work and "Big" work at that, the

benefits outweigh the time and effort costs. Life and work can be traversed in a more open and less defensive way, with an appreciation of an intrinsic self worth uninhibited by the efforts of a continuous guard in a personal observation post.

\*Kegan, R; Lahey, L. L. (2009) "Immunity to Change. How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organisation." Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press

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**Talenttalks**  
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# LEADING THROUGH CONSCIOUSNESS

## The Gates of Paradise

A soldier named Nobushige came to the master Hakuin, and asked:

*"Is there really a paradise and a hell?" "Who are you?" inquired Hakuin. "I am a samurai," the warrior replied.*

*"You, a soldier!" exclaimed Hakuin. "What kind of ruler would have you as his guard? Your face looks like that of a beggar." Nobushige became so angry that he began to draw his sword, but Hakuin continued: "So you have a sword! Your weapon is probably much too dull to cut off my head."*

As Nobushige drew his sword Hakuin remarked: **"Here open the gates of hell!"** At these words the samurai, perceiving the master's discipline, sheathed his sword and bowed.

**"Here open the gates of paradise,"** said Hakuin.

Thus goes a well known Zen story. I have loved this story, even since I first heard it as part of a Learning Program, which I was part of, over two decades back. But when this story came back to me last, in July 2021, it was different. The place, the situation, the mindset, everything was vastly different from all the earlier reflections of this story.

## The Other Side of my Life

The date was 27th July 2021. It was my Birthday and it was a birthday like no other, in 49 years which had gone past. The place for the recollection of this story was rather dramatic – the hospital bed. I was lying alone in a room, the Covid ward of the local hospital, being treated, for exactly that – Covid 19. At first, I was a bit unhappy.... distraught no but unhappy yes, at least for a few hours. Who wants to spend one's significant day of the year, sick, least of all, in hospital, and even more so, during a "half century - milestone" of my life? But as the hours ticked by, and I could literally hear the ticking (the TV set lay

unused by me for the 8 days I spent in hospital), my unhappiness gradually turned to an inner satisfaction and in a couple of days - to joy!

I felt like I had not had moments like these for several months – an exciting time professionally no doubt – but yet, without a pause. **It dawned on me.... an inner awareness - this was not an ordinary happening. This was the gate to the other side - of a bright new life!**

## Artistry from a Higher Plane

Cut to Norbulingka Institute, at Dharamshala, a popular tourist place in the hilly state of Himachal Pradesh, in India, 9 months later. This state, is a tourist paradise. Thousands throng every year to experience peace, mindfulness and happiness. Norbulingka means **"Treasure Garden"** or **"Treasure Park"**, in Tibetan. I had written about Norbulingka, a few years back, in another article for Talent Talks – but had not visited. Here I was finally – I had longed to see it all these years.

Norbulingka, itself, is a diverse community of over 300 people, made up of masters and their apprentices, scholars and students, administrators, and hospitality staff. Employees hail from every region of Tibet and the Tibetan diaspora in India, and each individual has a unique story to tell – all through their art. Their goal is to give a glimpse into the lives of some of Norbulingka's employees in hopes that people will gain a deeper understanding of Tibetan culture as a whole, and the values, dreams, and struggles of Tibetan people in exile (Tibetans live in exile here because China claims that Tibet is part of their territory).

I was fascinated to see the Norbulingka Institute in person, amid lush surroundings, which was even curiously designed to look like Avalokiteshwara, a form of Buddha, in its top view. The institute not only trains Tibetans to create sacred thangka paintings, appliqué thangka, metal sculptures and wooden carvings

using traditional techniques, but also produces the masterpieces for sale. The art, which is all done by hand, is extremely intricate and is exquisite in every way (the prices are also beyond the reach of local tourists but every piece is so beautiful, priceless in its own appeal).

The apprenticeships are extremely rigorous and the training for becoming a beginner at professionally creating these art pieces, is ten years! Yes, ten years of daily disciplined effort until one can get recognized as an Artisan. Why such a long apprenticeship, one may ask?

The spiritual art is considered as a "support" and "focal point" for meditation and achieving spiritual goals. For instance, thangkhas (the paintings depicting gods) are used to meditate, visualize the deity and develop a connection with the deity. The sacred art, therefore, is strictly created using size, colour and proportion rules mentioned in the holy books. Thangka paintings are a medium to express the Buddhist principles and an object of beauty. Each thangka must meet standards mentioned in the texts, such as deity statue proportions. Thangka paintings are extremely popular in the Indian subcontinent and are must-buy for every tourist. Little do we imagine the endless hours of gruelling and painstaking effort that has gone into making one painting – ten years of apprenticeship before even starting that one.

**That which seems a beautiful piece of spontaneous creativity is itself a passage to a higher plane. It is due to this that most of the creations look out of this world – a divine touch – led by a divine Leader – the Dalai Lama.**

## A superior Captain

In school, I had heard about Desmond Tutu, South African Anglican cleric – for his role in the stiff opposition to apartheid. Of course, he went on to receive the Nobel Prize. I had not

RAJESH KAMATH

even fully grasped the meaning of "apartheid" at that young age but whatever I heard about him and read through the newspapers had a lasting impact. Only much later did I care to investigate about the personality of this man. More so, the purpose....

Desmond Tutu had formulated his purpose as **"a democratic and just society without racial divisions"**.

Among human rights activists, he was often compared to giants like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., but Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu was known to dismiss those comparisons. What struck me then, was that – even though his purpose and work were so lofty, his sense of humour was very prominent.

In a 2007 interview with Harvard Business Review, the South cleric joked that he won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize mostly because the Nobel Committee was looking for an anti-apartheid figure whose last name was easy to pronounce. "What I am is a good captain," he says. "I utilize the talents and brilliance of the people on the team, and when the team plays well and wins, I get the kudos."

Further, when asked how he learnt to use humour in leadership, his response was no less humorous: "I have a family that likes pulling people's legs. They can be very funny. When you have to survive in that environment, you have to be pretty sharp yourself. In South Africa we became experts at conducting funerals, and people were angry and hurt over the mistreatment. But we also had this wonderful capacity to laugh. If we hadn't, we would have gone crazy. You know the saying—if we didn't laugh, we'd have to cry."

**What a captain! I firmly believe that when a Leader with a purpose much larger than self is able to laugh at oneself and bring humour to even stressful conversations with consummate ease, the Leader is no ordinary one. Such an individual leads from a higher consciousness, leads others to a higher consciousness.**

## Shift to a Higher Consciousness

The Indian flag, also called the

Tricolour, actually has a fourth colour, that of a wheel, which is at the centre of the flag. This fourth colour is blue, but it represents the colours of a higher consciousness. This wheel is attributed to one of the finest Leaders the world has known – his name: Samrat (emperor) Ashok, referred to by scholars, across the world, as Ashoka the Great. But what is truly ironic, is that his rise to greatness, happened through War. That's right – War, that dreaded three letter word, which diminishes consciousness, nay life itself. Then how?

There are limited sources about the exact nature and events about the Kalinga War. As per the Rock Edicts of Ashoka, one lakh people were killed in this war, several lakhs perished & a lakh & a half injured, were taken prisoners.

It was just the 8th year of Ashoka's reign in 261 BC. The ruler of Kalinga, Anant Padmanabha, (the opponent in this war) had a powerful army comprising infantry, cavalry and elephants but the brilliance of Ashoka was able to overcome this force.. What is deeply insightful; is the aftermath of the Kalinga War. The Kalinga War had such a profound effect on Ashoka, it is the only war which led to a would-be conqueror to give up his sword.

**The Kalinga War prompted Ashoka, to devote the rest of his life to ahimsa (non-violence) and to dharma-Vijaya (victory through a higher purpose).**

Following the conquest of Kalinga, Ashoka ended the military expansion of the empire and began an era of more than 40 years of peace, harmony, and prosperity. And how – he became a global Emperor. The message of peace and love, was transmitted to the entire eastern part of the world, as Buddhism, through this reign. Many people will argue, that the reign under Ashoka would be one of the factors that led to the eventual fall of the Mauryan Empire following his death in 232 BC, but that's a very different discussion.

In India, there is a popular belief: As above, so below. As within, so without. **As Consciousness within the Leader grows, the consciousness of its ecosystem can be raised.** The Samurai with his sword in the scabbard

is awareness, with the sword drawn simply because he has been provoked is the Gate to hell. **The Samurai who knows why and when to draw the sword has found the path to paradise – Leading with a higher consciousness.** Such a Leader alone, has the ability to convert his or her organization to a Norbulingka – a garden of divine treasures.

To get back to 27th July 2021, as I passed through the gate of life, I felt I was being nudged to lead with this higher consciousness. Desmond Tutu's words could be a guiding light: "Suffering is part and parcel of the human condition, but suffering can either embitter or ennoble us. It can ennoble us and become a spirituality of transformation when we find meaning in it." The World is facing all sorts of problems today, but for a Leader who leads with this consciousness, these are tremendous opportunities for the development of self and one's people. When we say Leader, we do not limit to only professional spaces – they lead in every space they touch.

So what is "leading with consciousness"? In Eckhart Tolle's words – "at the heart of this new consciousness, lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself, that is infinitely more vast than your thought".

How would leading with consciousness look like:

1. Less identification with one's own ego – not wanting to be right all the time
2. Responding, rather than reacting
3. Interactions arising out of empathy and service
4. In times of crisis, finding solace from a deeper place within
5. Easily finding good within self and others
6. Defining a purpose, greater than oneself
7. Aligning one's actions with purpose
8. Seeking validation, only from self
9. Believing in the interdependence of all existence
10. Finding joy in being

Visualize what a Norbulingka, such a Leader would create. Are you one?

