# Talenttalks

**Evolving Thinking through best industry reads.**

## 15 CRITICAL SKILLS TO MASTER FOR THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK

## HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES
**'IMPOSTER' FEELINGS AT WORK**

## PROXIMITY BIAS:
**NEW THREAT TO GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

## HOW TO NEGOTIATE BETTER

# 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.

Our wish for September, as we welcome the new seasons in our various corners of the globe, is to double our newsletter and magazine subscriptions. After all Talenttalks.net exists to empower and inspire people to progress in their careers, workplaces and lives, for as many people as we can possibly reach.

So how about each of you who opens our magazine to read this weekend sends it on to a friend, a colleague, the members of your work team. In fact organise for it to be distributed to your whole company, if you like, and encourage them to subscribe. Remember there is no cost for subscribing, we are super protective of your data and always mindful not to create unnecessary 'noise' in your inbox.

Think of how everybody could benefit from the empowerment, inspiration and connection they will experience by having free access to knowledge tested in a real world context. Culture and Engagement, Diversity, Employee Wellbeing, Learning and Performance, the Hybrid World of Work and Inspiration. There is also the option of subscribing to our weekly newsletter and receiving the articles and podcast interviews "hot off the press".

We appreciate the support of all of you, our readers and listeners, and would love the opportunity to meet you and to introduce our contributors. You are invited to join in a conversation on the Neuroscience of Peak Performance and Culture Shift with Debbie Craig at our next Talenttalks.net online Coffee Club, Friday 9th September, from 09:00 to 10:00 SA time. Let us know if you are keen by emailing sue@life-online.com.au and we will send you the meeting invite.

Have an awesome September.

**SUE DE WAAL**
Chief Executive Editor

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CAITLIN WATSON

# CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT

Organizations should take care to ensure that their workplace systems do not foster or exacerbate imposter syndrome. Clinical psychologist Emily Hu points out that our chances of experiencing imposter syndrome are higher if we don't see many examples of people like us who are clearly successful in our field. Therefore, it is important for organizations to assess whether their talent management strategy and organization as a whole support inclusiveness, fair career development, and effective performance management.

You can start with your team: take the time to understand your team members' strengths, anxieties, emotions, and motivations. When you truly care about your employees and support them on their journey, they will realize their true value and potential.

**LISTEN TO**
**BUILDING TRUST-BASED PARTNERSHIPS  PART ONE**

Through this 6 part podcast series – Building Trust-based partnerships with Dr Robyn Whittaker we will talk through what it takes to build the Trust-needed for successful transformation. Join us for Part 1: The shift towards Trust-Based Partnership where we discuss why building Trust based partnerships are so important and what defines this type of partnership.

**LISTEN TO**
**FROM IMPOSTER TO EMPOWERED - HOW TO MAKE THE SHIFT**
**PART ONE - HOW IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME AFFECTED BY LOW SELF**
**UNDERSTANDING WITH CAITLIN WATSON**

# HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES MANAGE THEIR 'IMPOSTER' FEELINGS AT WORK

**CAITLIN WATSON**

I attended an interesting workshop recently by Rita Collins CBE, author of Love Your Imposter: Be Your Best Self, Flaws and All.  In the workshop, Collins discussed the concept of the 'Imposter Syndrome', originally introduced by psychologists, Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978.

I had heard of the term 'Imposter Syndrome' before; however, the workshop provided me with an opportunity to grapple with the concept and apply the thinking to my own life. It was in this workshop that I realized that I had experienced some of the challenges associated with it at certain points in my career – usually when I had taken on a more complex role – i.e.:

1. Having a constant fear of being called out for not being good enough or being exposed as a fraud, despite evidence of success in this area
2. Externalising success ( giving credit to others for work that I had delivered successfully ), and internalising failures ( blaming myself for anything that went wrong )
3. Convincing myself that achieving difficult goals was more down to luck than the hours of hard work and skill needed to achieve them
4. That others were more qualified than me to share their views on topics for which I was hired as the expert – illustrated in the below image:



**The Imposter Syndrome**

*Assumption* → *Reality*

What I know
What I think others know

What others know
What I know

(Image source: Gail Gazelle MD)

I know that I am not alone in experiencing these feelings – as Collins points out, 70% of people feel like an imposter at some point in their professional life. Imposter Syndrome affects both men and women, but research suggests that it disproportionately affects women. Brian Daniel Norton, a psychotherapist and executive coach in New York, says that "women of colour, especially black women, as well as the LGBTQ community are most at risk" of experiencing imposter feelings.

I started reflecting on the impact of this in organisations and spent some time thinking about how leaders can better support those people on their teams who may be experiencing imposter feelings.  There are some practical tools managers can use to have an immediate impact on their teams, and there are some deeper systemic organizational changes that can be made to support a sustainable culture of inclusion and acceptance.

For managers looking to support those employees who recognize their imposter feelings in the short-term, here are three top tips you can use:

**1. Let your employees know that** imposter feelings are not uncommon. So many well-known, high achievers have experienced imposter feelings. Do some research to find out who these people are and use some of them as examples that would resonate with your team.

Some examples include:

- **Michelle Obama:** "I still have a little impostor syndrome... It doesn't go away, that feeling that you shouldn't take me that seriously. What do I know? I share that with you because we all have doubts in our abilities, about our power and what that power is."
- **Meryl Streep:** "You think, 'Why would anyone want to see me again in a movie? And I don't know how to act anyway, so why am I doing this?'"
- **Robert Pattinson:** "In a lot of ways, I'm quite proud that I'm still getting jobs. Because of falling into a job, you always feel like you're a fraud, that you're going to be thrown out at any second."

**2. Affirm your employees' worth.** According to author and professor of psychology, W. Brad Johnson and author and professor of sociology, David G. Smith, we should remember that there are "two dimensions of affirmation:

- First, affirm your mentees as human beings, acknowledging their inherent worth, accepting them without condition.
- Second, affirm them as professionals, persistently calling out their achievements and celebrating them."  Using concrete data to support your affirmations is important, to further highlight that their claims of inadequacy are unfounded.

**3. Share your own imposter stories.** Johnson and Smith also advise that managers and mentors should share their experiences of self-doubt with their employees:  "Nothing is so uplifting to an imposter than the epiphany of discovering that a respected mentor and role model also has wrestled — and perhaps, continues to wrestle — the dragon of imposter anxiety and managed to endure."

In terms of addressing inclusivity in the longer-term:

Author, Ruchik Tulshyan, and writer, Jodi-Ann Burey, believe that organisations should be thinking about "why imposter syndrome exists in the first place and what role workplace systems play in fostering and exacerbating it". Clinical psychologist, Emily Hu, says that we're more likely to "experience imposter syndrome if we don't see many examples of people who look like us or share our background who are clearly succeeding in our field".

Organisations should therefore think about whether their talent management strategy and organization as a whole support a culture of inclusivity, fair career development, and healthy performance management practices.

Perhaps a good starting point for helping foster a more inclusive, supportive culture in the workplace is to start with your team: spending time understanding your people – their strengths, their anxieties, their emotions, and their motivations. It is this genuine desire to connect with your employees and support them on their journey that will help them see their true worth and potential.

## REFLECTION POINT.

We live in a paradox of wanting to believe we are out of the pandemic and that we are into a new world of work. The assumptions underlying these two sides are that we will not face any more tumultuous changes as we did in the past years of COVID and that we are now clear to finally focus on getting things done. It turns out these assumptions are false. The nature of business in our current world is increasingly complex and all manner of global events, albeit a pandemic or climate crisis or economic or political threat, will continue to reach us across far flung corners of the world. And we continue to manage our organisations 'in transition'- moving between previous ways towards desired future ways. This is ongoing and the more our managers are equipped to lead in complexity the easier and less stressful this will be for them. Managers can prioritise their roles to be around organisational and team re-imaging whether it is around team structure, processes, or hybrid working. And managers can focus on building positive work cultures for the wellbeing of themselves and their teams.

**SARAH BABB**

# TEAM CULTURE MATTERS, A LOT

**JUSTIN BODILL**



I was listening to a webinar recently, where the interviewee shared a statistic that hit me like a 'ton of bricks'! It was, that **70% of human behaviour is determined by whatever environment you are in**. Pause and think about that for a minute.

This was based off a current meta-study by the English Institute of Sport, and it triggered a memory I had of reading about a similar phenomenon that comes from the world of Psychology: namely, Fundamental Attribution Error. The term, which was coined by Social Psychologist Lee Ross, describes the tendency we have as people to falsely believe that a person's behaviour is primarily determined by their personality, as opposed to social factors. In other words, we will generally always assume that what someone does or how they act, is a reflection of who they are, as opposed to the environment they are in, which is often the case.

The reason this has struck such a chord for me, is because of what it means for how we understand people, behaviour, teams, performance, engagement, culture and more. **If the environment that people are in, has such a significant influence on who they are and how they behave, we need to ask ourselves... how intentional are we being in creating these environments?**

So how can we be more intentional in doing this? Well here are a few suggestions:

1. If you are part of an existing team or business, you already have a culture that has formed whether you are aware of it or not. **Look at the current behaviours that you are seeing from people, and ask yourself how your team culture/ environment may be causing them,** both positive and negative. Notice the connection and note these down.

2. Considering the above, **think about what you would ideally like your team culture to be.** You may need to take a step back and re-evaluate your team or business as a whole, by looking at things like your vision, belief or purpose. Think about what you do, your reason for being, and more so how you want to execute what you do as a team. This may all assist in painting a clearer picture of what type of culture you would like (and need) to have in order to make that a reality.

3. With this picture in mind, **identify the behaviours that need to be consistently shown in order for that culture to emerge and strengthen.** Whether this is done through

identifying values, your internal DNA, your standards, or a combination of these, document how people should be conducting themselves, and help to show how and why this is important to the creation of your team culture/environment.

4. Lastly, **ensure that your leadership is aligned to this.** They need to not only 'buy in to it', but more so, they need to set the example and model the behaviour they wish to see from others. They need to praise and recognise those that demonstrate these behavioural standards, and continue to reinforce these, while holding those who don't, to account.

These suggestions above are not an exhaustive list, but they demonstrate that **culture is an output,** and that by adjusting internal mechanisms like these, we can in turn create the culture we want.

By taking the time to proactively and intentionally craft the team environment, we know that we can positively influence the behaviour of our people in a significant way, and by doing so, also ensure that their behaviour will be aligned to the objectives of the team itself. Its a job worth doing well.

**RIKKY MINYUKU**

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

The shifts in workplace practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have put a spotlight on Diversity. As organisations have shifted to remote work, then hybrid work and now back to office drives employees have become more vocal about their needs. This means that diversity discourse has also shifted from a focus on compliance to a recognition that diversity management is a critical leadership skill. As organisations become more aware of the need to  ensure this skill and commitment amongst leaders, it is imperative that diversity becomes a point of focus for performance measures and rewards in leadership.

# PROXIMITY BIAS: NEW THREAT TO GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN THE WORKPLACE

**ADVAITA NAIDOO**

As companies and workforces continue to grapple with the issue of return-to-work, fully work-from-home and hybrid work arrangements, care must be taken to ensure that this contemporary workplace challenge doesn't further erode or even reverse gains made on the gender transformation front.

Hybrid work trends show that women, who typically carry additional weight on the home front, opt for more time working from home compared to men, who are more likely to return to the office fulltime.

Unfortunately, presenteeism and proximity bias have not gone away with the old paradigm of bums-on-seats as a knee-jerk productivity measure. Which means that managers are still inclined to reward the people they see in the office fulltime, rather than considering the actual contribution of the work-from-home or hybrid employees. Additionally, there is also often an unspoken judgment against people who are not in the office.

This proximity bias is estimated to lead to a 50% reduced likelihood of the fully remote worker to be considered for promotion.

Following the pandemic, domestic circumstances have changed for countless families, including those where both caregivers work fulltime. Divorce, estrangement, and a permanent move to homeschooling for younger children, as well as the loss of support networks that previously helped with children of school-going age are but some of the examples which have led to women, for the most part, now having to juggle additional responsibilities while at the same time being expected to perform at pre-pandemic levels.

Furthermore, when promotional opportunities or project lead roles arise, women who are working at or beyond capacity are either passed over by management or are slow to apply because they are already overburdened by their dual career/home responsibilities.

Naturally, no manager wants to further overload someone that they think is already struggling to cope. However what is lost from consideration here, is the fact that many career women can and do operate at a level of efficiency and hyper productivity that is comparable to their fulltime office peers.

The above factors are now adding up to a situation where the already meagre female leadership pipeline isn't likely to improve anytime soon, which will devastate companies' ability to effect the gender transformation in senior leadership most of them are trying to achieve,

Companies should therefore urgently assess the degree to which new ways of working could be disproportionately affecting the women in the organisation, and if necessary, draft clear policies to support these women and nurture their ongoing career progress.

In the USA, author and activist Reshma Saujani leads the Marshall Plan for Moms in recognition of the need to support specifically women's economic recovery and empowerment. It aims to create sweeping changes in three focus areas: Workplaces (organising C-level executives to transform workplaces in recognition of the additional duties placed almost exclusively on mothers on the home front), Culture (through creative campaigns and compelling thought leadership, changing the way motherhood is seen and valued), and Government (working in coalition with advocacy partners to campaign for benefits including childcare and direct payments).

Although the same issues face many South African women, local circumstances will not easily allow for a similar local plan for mothers. However that does not mean the impact to companies falls away. Exhausted, overworked and under-appreciated female workforces will have the same negative impact on companies here as abroad, in terms of the bottom line as well as gender transformation.

The onus therefore is on companies to take the initiative to ensure that those female leaders they previously identified for career progression do not fall off the radar, and that promising young female leaders are actively identified and mentored. Much has been done before the pandemic to develop leadership pipelines for both racial and gender transformation, and those efforts should not now be discarded in the rush to return to old ways of working.

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JULIA KERR HENKEL

# EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

Leadership is about daring to be different. It's about having the courage to stand up for what you believe in, even if it means going against the grain. It's about being bold and unafraid to voice your opinion, even if it means challenging thestatus quo. And it's about being okay with making mistakes, because that's how we learn and grow.

So if you're ready to embrace daring leadership, then know that it starts with a commitment to open, honest communication; with promoting a diversity of ideas and perspectives; and with creating a culture of belonging and inclusion. These are the foundation stones upon which all great leaders are built.

# RAISE THE STAKES

LITA CURRIE



If you've been lucky, you might have had a manager that stands out as an influential person in your career. I had been lucky to have a few like these. The manager that I probably learnt the most from, taught me a valuable lesson about stakeholder management. Before every meeting that we attended together, she would have a quick chat to strategise about who would be at the meeting, what their objectives would be and how we can influence them. This was ground-breaking to me! I had never realised that you could be that deliberate about influencing and promoting your agenda. It's a lesson I have used many times.

Herewith a 6-step process for managing stakeholders that I have found useful.

1. **First, know who they are.** If you're rolling your eyes thinking it's obvious, yes, it is obvious. But spending a couple of minutes thinking about who your stakeholders are might bring some surprises that you might not have thought of. On a big piece of paper write down all the stakeholders that influence your role. Think wide, think big. Don't stop when you've done the obvious ones. There might be important stakeholders in the shadows that, if you don't consider them, might impact negatively on your success. Always ask: "Whose voice is not being heard?"

2. **Understand how they are connected.** Draw the connections among the stakeholders in the shape of arrows. Who do they influence? Who are they in turn influenced by? Play with the thickness of the arrows based on how strong and influential the relationships are. Then stand back and look at what the picture is telling you. Maybe you've been trying to influence a stakeholder unsuccessfully. Is there someone that they are influenced by that you could involve?

3. **Understand where you fit** in. Put yourself on the stakeholder map and make the connections. Who do you have a good relationship with? Which stakeholder doesn't even know that you exist?

4. **Consider what is important to each stakeholder.** What is their agenda? What are they trying to achieve? What do you hear them talk about and pay attention to? Put yourself in their shoes and see the world from their perspective. It might surprise you how different they see the world. If you don't know, go ask them.

5. **Create an action plan**. A stakeholder map without an action plan is just a picture. Prioritise your top 5 – 7 stakeholders and for each stakeholder, create an action plan of how to influence them. Consider your current relationship with them and clarify what you'd like that relationship to be like. What do you want them to do or say to promote your agenda? How can you help them achieve what is important to them, and align it to your goals? Then, put the plan into action.

6. **Review the map continuously.** Stakeholders change over time. It's worth it re-looking at your stakeholder map every couple of months and update it. Add new stakeholders, take the ones that have moved on off the map. Continuously ask yourself who you should be focusing on and what you can do to strengthen the relationships.

A great read on influencing is Robert Cialdini's "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion". It's practical and interesting.

# COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS TO BOOST BUSINESS INNOVATION

JULIA KERR HENKEL



There can be no doubt that today's working environments are both complex and demanding. Fuelled by our increasing appetite for innovation, our reliance on digital solutions, coupled with the fast paced and disruptive nature of global business, everyone is under constant pressure to produce – and quickly. With this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that research is exposing a weakness in modern business leadership and management: the acute inability to have difficult conversations with colleagues and employees.

Although it would be easy to simply point the finger at overburdened leaders and extremely stressful business ecosystems, there are deeper and more fundamental reasons why these tough conversations are being avoided.

**Vulnerability: the gateway to courage**

Many of us fiercely avoid hard conversations because they make us feel deeply awkward and uncomfortable. Indeed, the thorny and sensitive nature of these conversations goes to the very heart of vulnerability – the emotion we all experience during times of uncertainty, risky or emotional exposure. Naturally, the sudden (and unwelcome) emergence of vulnerability brings up feelings of resistance, which is most often speedily acted upon through blatant avoidance, tapping out or defensive behaviours.

To stop this cycle, it is imperative that we lean into the discomfort of vulnerability and step into courage – the ability to feel both brave and afraid at the exact same time.

**Crippling growth & innovation**

While it may seem strange to be talking about vulnerability and avoidant behaviours at a time when many businesses are recovering from the impact of the pandemic, it is a critical time to be addressing the issue – primarily because this avoidance is inhibiting workplace productivity and innovation.

When difficult conversations are avoided in the workplace (around performance, the termination of contracts, possible retrenchments, etc), the symptoms that emerge are called 'moods of resentment' (frustration) and/or resignation (giving up and checking out because there's no point). Increasingly, in these cultures you see a lack of participation and robust debate in meetings – and instead you see many forms of back-channelling.

Not only do these behaviours lead to toxic cultures, but they also cripple innovation and creativity within businesses. If nobody feels that it is psychologically safe to speak up, to question or to debate an alternative approach, they shut down or go into transactional, compliant, do-as-you-say mode, and the best you'll get is group think or status quo behaviours. Or, if they feel that mistakes aren't tolerated (and are even career limiting), very few will be willing to take on new 'transformational' projects.

**Embrace daring leadership**

First and foremost, this requires embracing the principles of daring leadership: whereby hard conversations are clear, kind and respectful; bold ideas and opinions can be raised and debated to get a diversity of views on the table to shift group think and truly allow for innovation; and mistakes, setbacks and failures are expected and learned from. Importantly, such leadership promotes a culture whereby boundaries and values are clearly articulated – and there's a true, authentic sense of belonging and inclusivity.

**6 ways to prepare for a hard conversation**

1. Get your head, heart, and body ready for a conversation aimed at curiosity, compassion, connection, and learning.
2. Own your contribution to whatever has happened.
3. Write down key points in preparation.
4. Become present to your inner state and start by breathing, to speak from a more centred part of yourself.
5. Sit in a way that demonstrates 'I'm open' (arms/legs/ankles unfolded and soft eyes).
6. Lean into the discomfort of the conversation no matter what comes up – get curious about what is being said and felt, slow the conversation down, ask questions and when it becomes tough ask for a break and come back to it later. For more information, visit lumminos.co.za

DR KARINA DE BRUIN

# LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

The workplace is constantly changing and evolving, posing new challenges for organisations and their employees. To stay ahead of the curve, people need to be flexible, adaptable and resilient. They must also trust themselves and others, have good problem-solving skills and know how to cope with stress. Furthermore, success in both their personal and professional lives hinges on maintaining positive relationships with customers, suppliers, colleagues, subordinates and stakeholders. When employees find aspects of their work they don't enjoy or disagree with others, it can negatively impact their productivity. Emotional Intelligence provides the tools required to become more productive, cope better with work stress, resolve differences and work effectively in teams.

**LISTEN TO :**
**NEUROSCIENCE OF PEAK PERFORMANCE & CULTURE SHIFT, PART TWO WITH DEBBIE CRAIG**

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 Kerryn Kohl discuss the neuroscience of peak performance and culture shift and delve into how to hack our brains for the better.

**LISTEN TO :**
**POWER SKILLS PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RESILIENCE WITH DR KARINA DE BRUIN**

There are many reasons why resilience is essential for leaders right now. First, the pandemic has created a lot of uncertainty and upheaval in the world. Leaders need to be able to adapt to change and help their teams do the same. Second, as we continue to deal with the fallout from the pandemic, leaders need to be able to maintain their composure and make clear-headed decisions, even when things are tough. Listen as Dr. Karina de Bruin explains why resilience is such an important skill to develop.

**LISTEN TO**
**THE STATE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PART ONE: THE ROLE OF L&D IN THE HYBRID ORGANISATION WITH LINDA VAN DER LOO**

In today's hybrid world of work, learning and development is more important than ever. Linda van der Loo, an Executive Partner for Learning Innovation at Blue Pebble Consulting & EdCast Africa (partnering with LRMG) and Kerryn Kohl discuss what Learning and Development Practitioners need to know to stay ahead of the curve. Tune in to part one as we discuss The role of L&D in the Hybrid Organisation

# HOW TO NEGOTIATE BETTER

Are you a negotiator? If you've ever had to negotiate with a toddler to eat their dinner or negotiate with a spouse on which movie to watch, you're a negotiator. We use negotiation almost every day. In our personal lives and in business. Here's how to become better at it.

**LITA CURRIE**



**Look with your eyes.** Human beings are great at subterfuge. We can deceive and pretend. That's what makes us such great storytellers! But it's really our capacity to deceive ourselves that's a truly remarkable trait. I have found myself in negotiation situations where I hope for the best. I want to believe that the situation is more positive than it truly is. I have time and time again deceived myself when (with hindsight) I should have seen the truth. In George Martin's Game of Thrones Arya Stark's sword master tells her "Look with your eyes." It means to look at things as they truly are, not as you want them to be. Go into negotiation with your eyes truly open.

**Put yourself in the other person's shoes.** We are very clear on what we want. We think we know what the other side wants. So, sometimes that overconfidence stops us from doing the hard work. The biggest element of negotiation is the preparation. Abraham Lincoln reportedly said that when he gets ready to negotiate with a man, he spends 10% of the time thinking about himself and 90% of the time thinking about the other guy. It's worth it spending time preparing. It will get you closer to a win:win.

**Know when to walk away.** You should know what your BATNA is – the "Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement" from the Harvard Negotiation Project, explained in the book "Getting To Yes". It is the best option you have if negotiation fails to achieve an agreement. Failure to decide beforehand what you're prepared to accept, will put you in a position of less power. And remember: the other side also has a BATNA. Try to see if you can figure out what it is before you get to the negotiation.

**Negotiate from interest rather than position.** Here's an example: in a negotiation course I attended years ago an exercise included negotiating for a limited number of avocados. Both parties wanted the avos and negotiated hard to get the best price. Their position was to get as many avocadoes as they could. It was a win:lose situation – I win if I get the avos and you lose. And teams who stuck to their positions, achieved this win:lose outcome. But teams that asked questions about what the avos will be used for and why the person needed so many avos, got to the heart of the situation: the case study directed one person to only use the flesh and the other person to have access to the pips. As soon as this conversation was had, a much better deal could be negotiated where both parties had access to all the avos. So, always ask questions.

**Don't get caught in a zero-sum mindset.** Negotiation does not need to be a competition. In fact, the best outcomes in negotiation might need collaboration rather than competition. I remember hearing a story about a negotiation exercise where two teams had to bid against one another. If they competed, neither team would win. But if they collaborated, both would win. The facilitator told me that the only group who got this right, was a group of Swiss bankers. They realized that the only way to get the best returns for everyone, was to collaborate. When I share this concept with my clients, they are initially shocked. "We are taught that compromise is the best outcome," a client told me. "I never thought that it could destroy value." Compromise, on the surface, sounds like a great idea. I give a little, you give a little and we get to an agreement. But neither of us really get what we want. If you compromise too soon, both parties stand to lose by giving up what they really want. Go into the conversation looking for the win:win rather than compromise. Be tenacious by investigating alternatives and creative solutions that will lead to both parties getting what they want.

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## Lumminos

## Lighting The Way

Lumminos is a full-service coaching consultancy founded in 2007 by Julia Kerr Henkel, an ICF PCC accredited Integral Coach. We have a global network of professional coaches and consultants who work across the areas of change management, leadership and organisational development.

### Our five key services are:

1. Individual coaching
2. Team coaching and cohesion
3. Dare to Lead™ courage building programs
4. Deepening connection and understanding with the enneagram
5. Keynotes



## Individual Coaching

We offer individual coaching that is tailormade to meet the client's objectives, desired outcomes and timeframe.

## Dare to Lead™
## Courage Building Programs

Any one of our online sessions, in person workshops or modules can stand alone or be built into your existing leadership development programs. Designed to build practical, measurable skills for your work, team and life, covering the daring leadership and practical courage building skillset of Dare to Lead™ based on the empirical research of Brené Brown.

## Keynotes

**Calling All to Courage:**
Drawing on all you've got for times like these

**Returning Home: From Bali to Bryanston:**
A South African's lessons of resilience after being locked out during lockdown

## Team Coaching

We partner with various teams within the organisation to assist them and their people to successfully transition through complex layers of change and relational dynamics for high performance and ongoing results. Together with our clients, we work on developing intelligent systems and synchronised teams who like to work and win together. We develop daring leaders and managers who operate with bravery, accountability, authenticity, skill, clarity and compassion.

## Enneagram

The Enneagram is an archetypal framework that offers in-depth insight to individuals, groups and collectives. Using the Enneagram system, our programs are designed to increase tolerance for diversity and to build individual and team self-awareness, accountability and interpersonal strategies so you can pull together rather than apart during times of high pressure, challenge or difficulty.

**To find out more about the Lumminos offering email julia@lumminos.co.za**

**www.lumminos.co.za**

# USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO FUEL YOUR WORK PERFORMANCE
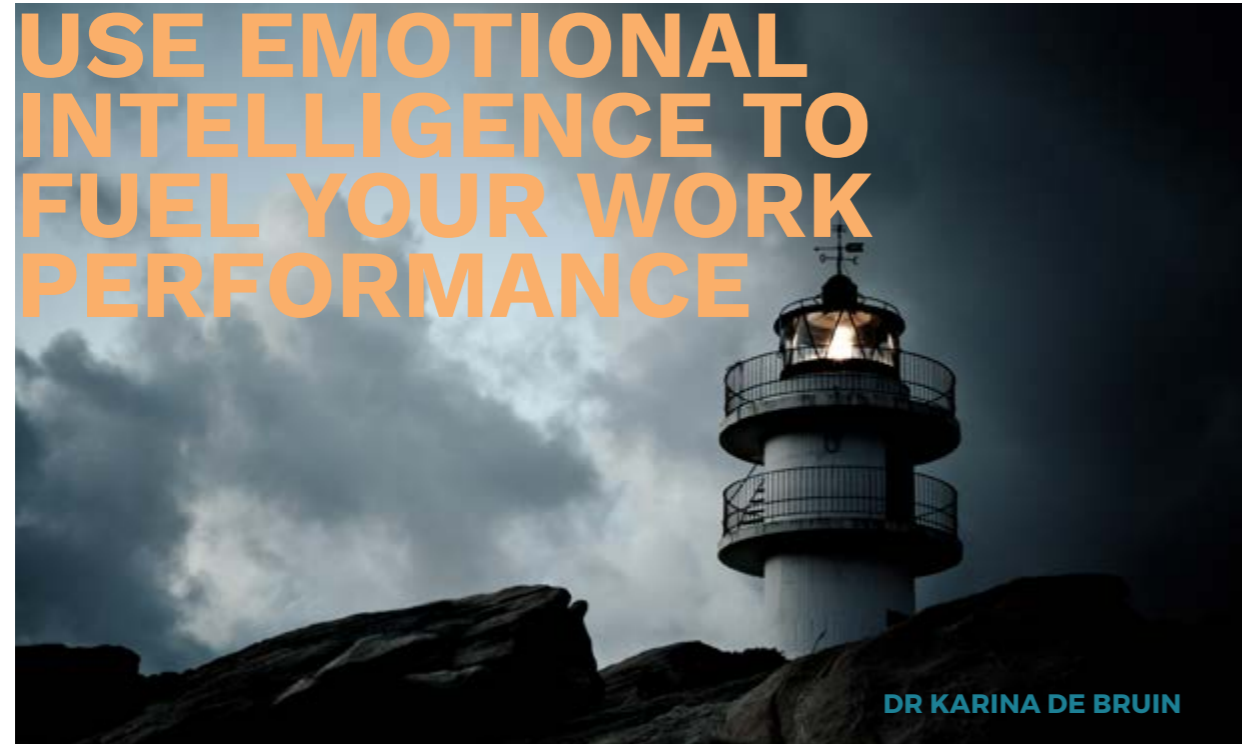
**DR KARINA DE BRUIN**

Today's workplace is marked by technology, globalisation, uncertainty, and change. This complicated work landscape poses huge challenges to organisations – especially to the people in the organisation. To cope with these challenges in an effective way, people have to be flexible, adaptable, and resilient. They must trust themselves and others, have good problem-solving skills, and know how to cope with the stressors that accompany these challenges. Furthermore, success on employee and business level hinges on effective personal performance and favourable relationships with customers, suppliers, colleagues, subordinates, and stakeholders. Productivity usually suffers when employees face aspects of their work they don't enjoy or people with whom they disagree. Emotional Intelligence provides the tools required to become more productive, cope better with work stress, resolve differences, and work effectively in teams.

When going to work, one does not necessarily consider the emotional aspect of it and the significant role our emotions play in our productivity and success. We are after all emotionally driven creatures, whether we want to be or not. Being aware of our emotions and regulating them effectively are crucial elements of Emotional Intelligence. More specifically, Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognise specific emotions in oneself and others, acknowledge their effect on one's goals and relationships, and either minimise negative effects or actively elicit emotions that are more appropriate to the situation.

A recent study by JVR Psychometrics1 has confirmed the positive relationship between various elements of work performance and emotional intelligence. Employees with higher levels of Emotional Intelligence received more favourable ratings from their managers on each factor of a scale that provides a review of individual work performance. These factors are organised into five broad categories:

**(1) In-role performance** refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which employees perform core activities required by the job. These include working accurately, achieving and exceeding work-related goals, championing the organisation's principles, and demonstrating technical expertise at work;

**(2) Extra-role performance** reflects voluntary acts that benefit colleagues and the team that are not part of existing work responsibilities, such as a willingness to assist colleagues with tasks, being proactive, taking charge of own learning and development, spotting opportunities, and generating new ideas;

**(3) Adaptive performance** indicates resiliency to perform when dealing with crises or uncertainty. It also reflects employees' interpersonal flexibility when working with colleagues that may have different viewpoints;

**(4) Counterproductive performance** refers to intentional acts by an employee that could undermine the effectiveness of teams, such as rudeness, being inconsiderate, lack of motivation, being opposed to constructive feedback, and unwillingness to learn new skills.

**(5) Leadership performance** reflects the effectiveness with which an employee can influence colleagues to achieve collective goals.

To drive employee engagement and performance, companies play an important role in fostering Emotional Intelligence (or EQ as called by its metric) among employees, one of which is to make it part of their corporate culture. When companies make the language of Emotional Intelligence part of the everyday work experience, they create an environment in which employees naturally embrace and start living the concept. This can lead to lasting results and a bigger payoff in increased engagement and productivity.

Apart from creating a culture that speaks of Emotional Intelligence, exposure to appropriate development opportunities can help employees and leaders to achieve their own professional goals, as well as the organisation's goals in a sustainable way. As a first step, it should be determined where improvements are required. Professionally administered self-report assessments, completed by employees, will highlight areas of concern and provide a guide for coaching and/or skills development. With this self-information, employers can plot the best course for Emotional Intelligence improvements in their workforce.

Emotional Intelligence can then be increased through appropriate employee development that focuses on practical capabilities that deliver immediate results. Programmes should be customised to address the specific competencies required. They are typically offered as workshops stretching over one or more days and delivered as face-to-face or virtual sessions with an experienced facilitator. Learning must be cemented through repetition. For example, JVR Academy uses a blended approach that includes online and video components to be referenced after face-to-face workshops

Ultimately, if companies can truly appreciate the fact that their employees are emotional beings they can find effective ways of managing this aspect so that it can be the x-factor that sets the organisation apart from its competition, instead of hampering its growth and success.

*Case study:* Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0) and Individual Work Performance, available on request: karina@jvrafrica.co.za

SARAH BABB

# THE HYBRID WORLD OF WORK

When considering leading the hybrid world of work managers must consider the personal challenges to them and their teams. Managers must consider the long term wellbeing of themselves and their teams as employees prioritise their health and work life balance since COVID.

Building a positive workplace culture must be prioritised, one which builds wellbeing in a sustainable way is the key to retaining talent and keeping teams together.

**LISTEN TO**
**EVOLVING THINKING THROUGH QUALITY CONVERSATIONS: HOW ARE ORGANISATIONS EVOLVING AS WE MOVE BEYOND THE PANDEMIC.**

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

In this episode, we discuss how organisations are responding to the values shift underpinning the move towards a hybrid model of work, how organisations can begin connecting with a greater purpose and the perils facing those who don't, and of course the rich leadership lessons delivered from the frontline in the Ukraine.
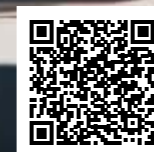
**LISTEN TO**
**GETTING FIT FOR THE FUTURE PART 1: WAYS OF THINKING WITH DR ERIC ALBERTINI**

As the world around us changes, we need to change with it. Staying relevant and efficient is no longer a given; we must work for it. But by developing the skills required to deliver value, we can stay ahead of the curve. Listen as Kerryn Kohl talks with Dr Eric Albertini from the Future fit Academy about how we can prepare for the world ahead. During this series, Eric and I will discuss the three categories or pillars on which the Future Fit Academy is built. These are Teaching New ways of thinking, Leveraging new opportunities and engaging with others.

# 15 CRITICAL SKILLS TO MASTER FOR THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK

**DR ERIC ALBERTINI**

Ask anyone what the crucial skills are to compete in the future world of work, and they're likely to rattle off a list of competencies such as coding, robotics, digital marketing, programming and so on. This overt focus on technical or digital competencies stems from the belief that machines and robots will automate jobs and remove the need for human labour and skills in the 4th Industrial Revolution, making millions of jobs redundant.

Granted, there is some truth in the fact that many jobs will be automated and driven by computers and artificial intelligence – but this has been a reality for decades in the drive for progress! For every pessimist who believes tech and disruption will make more jobs redundant, history has proven that technological advances create more jobs, in different industry sectors. The question that everyone should rather be asking of themselves, of their leaders and workforce is not what technical competencies are needed, but rather:

*"Will I rise to the challenge of learning what is required to stay relevant in the future world of work? Do I possess the crucial human traits and behaviours to be a lifelong learner, to embrace change to continually learn new, in-demand skills to empower myself to transition and face the future of work successfully?"*

For any employer, employee, student, leader or entrepreneur looking to get handle on what the skills of the future will be, the list is onerous. To cut through the clutter, the Future Fit Academy has defined 15 'behavioural' future fit skills as critical to being relevant and competent, if not advanced, in the future of work. The emphasis on the 'Future Fit' skills is equally as important to individuals as it is to employers and businesses. To meet the skills challenge and ensure that businesses are sustainable and competitive demands that organisations developing their human capital 'muscle' to strengthen companies for future disruptions. Companies need a talent strategy that develops employees' critical, future fit skills. For individuals, the need to upskill and reskill has never been more pressing.

In harnessing and developing these 15 skills, the Future Fit Academy's Future Fit Index provides a comprehensive self-assessment tool that assesses your level of effectiveness in these 15 critical skills needed to be effective now, and in the future world of work.

**The 15 Future Fit Skills are grouped into three key areas as follows:**

| New ways of thinking | Seize opportunities & solve problems | Connect & engage with others |
|---|---|---|
| Leaders need to change mindsets and adopt new ways of thinking. | Leaders need to be equipped with the skills and mindsets to identify and seize opportunities and solve problems. | Leaders need to connect and engage with others to leverage differences and co-create value. |
| **Curiosity** the desire to know more, a willingness to seek out and embrace the unknown. | **Sensemaking** refers to how we structure the unknown so as to be able to act. | **Connectedness** the ability to relate to others in a manner that builds them up, encourages, and brings out their highest potential. |
| **Growth mindset** the mindset that talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others. | **Creating clarity (visioning and mobilising)** defining shared values and engaging people in positive action. | **Virtual collaboration** collaboration between dispersed team members that is carried out via technology-mediated communication. |
| **Learning agility** the ability and willingness to learn from experience and use those lessons to perform effectively in new and different situations. | **Design thinking mindset** an ideology and a process concerned with solving complex problems in a highly user-centric way. | **Leading without authority** getting others to willingly cooperate and engage, rather than following directives because of your positional authority. |
| **Dealing with paradox** the ability to deal with contradictory perspectives, the ability to think "both/and" instead of "either/or". | **Resourcefulness** ability and creativity to cope with difficulties, the ability to deal resourcefully with difficult problems. | **Cultural adaptability** an individual's willingness and ability to adapt their manner of communicating, motivating, and managing across cultures. |
| **Tolerance of ambiguity** the ability to comfortable with uncertainty, unpredictably, conflicting directions and multiple demands. | **Adaptability** having ready access to different ways of thinking, enabling leaders to shift and experiment as things change. | **Change resilience** being able to adapt well and bounce back quickly in times of stress and constant change. |

## Unpacking 'New Ways of Thinking'

Without realizing it, most people tend to limit their potential by only focusing on the technical or vocational skills required for a given job or challenge, and don't address their prevailing mindsets that can shape their entire life journey. Being able to embrace '**new ways of thinking'** is underpinned by five of the future fit skills – curiosity, growth mindset, learning agility, dealing with paradox and tolerance of ambiguity. Here's how they all work together...

In times of change having a growth mindset is foundational in developing your perspectives, skills and capacity to deal with the consequences of change. And an essential ingredient of a **growth mindset** is curiosity. When your **curiosity** is developed, you think more deeply and rationally about your skills – or even lack thereof – and are less defensive. At its core, curiosity leads you to want to improve, which supports a growth mindset.

It follows on that having a growth mindset is essential to developing **learning agility**. To be able to learn, unlearn and relearn, you must believe you can do so with planning, hard work and practice. People with a growth mindset believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work, and that intelligence and talent are just the starting point, rather than fixed variables that you either have, or don't. This mindset creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.

This leads into **dealing with paradox** – an essential future fit skill in a 'BANI' World (Brittle – Anxious – Non-Linear – Incomprehensible). In a BANI world it is crucial that you're able to think "both and" and not simply "either or". You must be able to straddle seemingly contradictory or opposed perspectives, as it is in this 'straddle' that innovation happens!

And not only must you deal with the many paradoxes that define so many facets of our lives, but to be successful you need to have an ability to tolerate ambiguity. "Tolerance of Ambiguity" refers to the extent to which you are naturally comfortable with ambiguous or uncertain situations and have an ability to operate effectively in an uncertain environment by considering a range of creative solutions or options. Embracing ambiguity allows you to seize opportunities, take calculated risks to tackle previously unchartered territories and back yourself even when you don't have all the answers. The reality is that in many situations, complete information is not always readily available – ask any entrepreneur or corporate business leader! An obsession with having all the answers up front before making decisions can stymie any forward movement or progress – the increasing rate of change makes the behavioural outputs of tolerance of ambiguity even more critical in business contexts.

In the next edition, we'll unpack the second group of future fit skills that underpin the ability to **'Seize Opportunities & Solve Problems'**

## Why are these 15 future fit skills so important?

The Future Fit Index takes into account all aspects of good leadership and management and how it works in practice. It recognises the need for rounded development across technical knowledge, capability and personal awareness. The reality is that many technical competencies you learned at university, on the job or at trade college are likely to become outdated and redundant in a world facing exponential change. Your ability to embrace change, learn new skills on a lifelong basis, and cope with the stresses of uncertainty are underpinned by your ability to harness and leverage the 15 future fit skills.

In mastering the 15 Future Fit skills, the detailed Future Fit Index provides respondents with an awareness of their level of readiness across these skills, as well as a developmental pathway for each of the 15 skills assessed. By understanding your level of readiness on each of these 15 future fit skills, the Future Fit Academy is then able to formulate a learning strategy to guide behaviour change and master these skills, knowledge and behaviours required to remain relevant and effective in an ever-changing world.

# SUCCESSFUL WORKPLACES OF THE FUTURE REQUIRE TRUST, CONNECTION AND PRODUCTIVITY

**WENDY SPALDING**



ILLUSTRATION BY ALISTAIR GRAHAM

Tuesday Consulting recently hosted a client dinner facilitated by Hans Kuipers of BCG Consulting. The theme of the evening was "How we lead" – a question on the minds of many leaders at organisations both locally and globally.

Hans raised some thought-provoking questions, pointing out that many of the work practices we cling so tightly to, are more than 200 years old, and designed for a working world that was very different from the world we find ourselves in today.

Certainly, the message from the candidates we see has been very clear: people do not want to return to the ways of working that preceded the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, the more rigid organisations are in terms of requiring people to be physically in the office, the less attractive they are as prospective employers.

People are leaving organisations that refuse to provide flexibility and opting for those that allow employees to manage their own work/life schedule.

The evening's conversation focused on three key considerations in designing flexible, future-fit workplaces. First, we need to trust our people and have a firm belief in their reliability, honesty and competence. That's authentic trust. It's about output, and a lot fewer rules about when and how people work. People want to be autonomous, accountable and have agency.

Second, we need to find ways to foster connection with our workforce – and that won't be achieved through an annual engagement survey, but through high-touch engagement and research that allows people to co-develop solutions that work for them and for the company, and which can be tested, evaluated and fine-tuned.

Ironically, many employees are reporting that they felt more connected during the most difficult parts of the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown than they do now – this is a vital issue to address to ensure organisations are fostering a sense of belonging.

Finally, Hans said, we need to redesign ways of working and reshape them to better fit people's lives and focus on productivity, which is not to be found in long commutes, scheduling unnecessary meetings, and tick-box administration.

In reflecting on the evening, and Hans's observations, it is clear that designing a new workplace is as much about a new way of leadership as it is about figuring out the nuts and bolts of who works from where and when, and how to make all of that work for the good of the business and its people.

The world has changed dramatically – and when it all shut down overnight, many organisations and their employees discovered that they could work differently, and did so very quickly and successfully. So why are so many organisations insisting now that employees return to the office fulltime? After two years of self-managing their workloads, why do employees suddenly require a manager peering over their cubicle to check that they are working?

We need to reimagine how we lead successfully to be relevant and forward looking – how we attract, retain and lead great teams in a virtual world.

This will require that leaders do the work to reflect and introspect what their roles will be when team members are potentially working remotely on at least some – if not all – days of the week, or where some might choose to work asynchronously. How will they foster trust, connection and productivity from afar?

Leaders will need to look at themselves and be honest about whether they are able to generate this kind of authentic trust in those they are leading. How can they develop that trust in themselves? Who are they and what is their purpose as a leader beyond checking up on their teams? As one guest highlighted, "It's really about moving from a 'check-up' approach, to a 'check-in' approach."

Fundamental to both trust and connection will be great communication skills. Leaders will need to understand their team members' needs and circumstances, communicate clearly what outcomes are expected from them – and figure out what methods of communication work best for different people.

Leaders will also need to move into a more supportive, collaborative role and ensure each team member has a voice, and intentionally encourage them to voice their needs and co-create solutions to problems.

It will require that leaders take the time, now, as we shift our ways of working again, to pause, reconsider their boundaries and core beliefs, and reimagine a workplace of the future that works for their teams, themselves, and for the organisation as a whole.

NATALEE HOLMES

# INSPIRE

Our passions and desires shape who we are and what we bring to the world. It is therefore vital that we do not shy away from them, but rather embrace them wholeheartedly. Unfortunately, it can be all too easy to lose touch with our passions, making it hard to rediscover them. However, once we do manage to find them again, it is incredibly rewarding – after all, they are an integral part of who we are. So if you're not living your passion right now, know that it is never too late to change course and start living your truth.

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"Why is this coming up again?" "I thought I had dealt with that issue"
"I have not looked at this issue since it happened 35years ago"

# EMERGENCE

**MARISA WOLLHEIM**

Often my clients will use similar statements, feeling quite shocked at the emergence of a recurring issue. In my experience, when we go through loss or trauma it affects body, mind, emotion and spirit and it is probable that often the mind will be dominant and control the body, emotion and spirit as it is the minds job to protect and find solutions. The mind however is often threatened by the emotional pain and will block it or convince us it's over. The mind then takes control of us and we become followers.

As an example. Liz came to see me as she was having an issue with her husband. He was drinking too much and when he has had too much he speaks down at her and makes her feel worthless. He does not understand her sensitivity. Her boss is also a bully and likes to humiliate her in front of other office staff. As for her brother-in-law he has never liked her or approved of her.

She was feeling tired, confused, and overwhelmed as this felt like life had it in for her.

I asked her when else in her life she felt this way? She looked at me strangely as if to say "what do you mean?" I asked her about her relationship with her father. She gasped and said, "Oh we do not have a good relationship as he has always spoken to me harshly and was always drunk and made me feel like I did not belong!" Boom. The light just went on. I reflected to her that it sounded like all the men in her life copied her perception of her father. I went on to explain to her that often when we are young, we do not have all the intellectual resources to understand adult behaviour,

yet we feel everything. This makes the mind feel helpless as it cannot understand the pain we are feeling and needs to protect us.

The mind then unconsciously adopts a belief about self and life. Sometimes it even assumes and fabricates a story that would validate the amount of emotional pain we are feeling. Our minds then steer us away from the pain into survival, believing in an assumption for a very long time and leaving behind the trapped pain.

Within pain there is unfinished business and unmet needs and unacknowledged feelings. I liken it to a wound. The wound of not feeling loved and accepted, rejected, alone, and not good enough.

Our minds project these beliefs upon every man that enters our reality and it confirms our belief. A pattern emerges and we start believing our life is unfair.

If we do not voluntarily go to the wound with its unmet needs, unacknowledged emotions, and unfinished business, how can Life support us in our healing and growth?

The emergence is not punishment. Rather, emergence is a sign of something which has not been completed or healed. Only when we stop the mind from surviving, running away and trying this and that and we reassure the mind that it has not failed, do we allow ourselves to turn around and face the pain with our body, mind, and spirit, our inner resources and wisdom gained during this survival journey. We learn to listen, understand, and embrace the wound with care and compassion. We suspend the judgement.

We face the pain without blame or shame, finding the inner child that experienced the loss and rejection. We allow ourselves to understand the feelings and the mind and how the mind has been trying to survive. We can become the adult for ourselves, acknowledging, allowing, and releasing. We can take down the labels we have stuck on our chests with the false belief, like "Reject me. I am not worthy" and replace those beliefs with a new affirmative statement and belief. We stop the pattern from emerging in our lives.
Liz got it. She could embrace her wound.

She developed self-compassion and was able to reclaim her power from her mind and bring balance back. She could allow other resources from within her to also emerge like choice, options, creativity and gratitude. She became her own father to her wound. She acknowledged the feelings, released the pain through journaling and letter writing. She played the role of mentor to her emotions and mind and her inner child. She emptied the full emotional files and other emotional files had space to release what she needed. What emerged was self-love, peace and forgiveness. She took time and healed the perceptions and her relationships with the men in her life improved. She is maturing her emotions. She is expanding her choices and inviting her spirit to guide her through gratitude and forgiveness. A holistic healing experience.

Next time an old pattern or reality emerges and before you become a victim, stop and see where it originated from. Perhaps life is presenting you with an opportunity to turn around and face the wound, to let go of the past by stretching the perceptions we have adopted about people, ourselves and circumstances. Asking ourselves in noticing the pattern.

// *"How else could I be seeing this?"*

*"What else is possible? Slowly expanding our perceptions and reminding us that we have more choices.*

Emergence is a strange gift often wrapped with layers of past pain. To find the gift inside we need to take off the layers until we can appreciate the gift.

Feel free to contact me if you are keen to become Self-Aware.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALISTAIR GRAHAM

# WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?

**NATALEE HOLMES**

When my boys were younger, they used to imagine having Superpowers. They would often ask, "If you could have a Superpower, what would you choose?" and then serious debates would ensue about the merits of invisibility versus flying, or mind reading versus mind control.

When you think about a Superpower, I am sure images of Superman and Wonder Woman come to mind. You don't associate Superpowers with mere mortals, but we do have Superpowers. We don't fly, or have superhuman strength, but we do have our own Superpowers.

Have you ever thought about what yours are?

Perhaps you do already know, but it is unlikely that you have given it a name, and more unlikely that you acknowledge it. We tend to shy away from our Superpowers and hide them from the world. I am damn sure you don't don lycra tights with underwear on the outside, or flounce around with a big shiny silk cape swooshing behind you.

You're probably reading this and thinking, "I don't have a Superpower", but I can assure you, you do. Your Superpower is that thing that is unique to you because it sets you apart from other people. Other people may have the same Superpower, but it is not displayed in the same way as you yield yours.

Take a moment to reflect on where you have come from and where you are today. You have led a life that has brought you to the point where you are now. You had a starting point, wherever that was for you, and looking back now you can see what about you got you where you are currently.

It is important to acknowledge where you have come from and recognise what you bring to the world. We all hold powers that shape our passions and desires, but unfortunately sometimes we tend to shy away from them. Sometimes, probably too often, we can't yet see the enormous potential they hold for us. It is hard to discover them, and it's easy to lose touch with them. They can become buried beneath other obligations or responsibilities or fears, but because they're a part of who we are, it's hard to step away from them, and it's painful not to be fully aligned with them, once you know what they are.

Living your Superpowers is very fulfilling and liberating. The impact of living your Superpower should not be underestimated. Similarly, the pain of NOT living your Superpower should also not be taken lightly. Knowing what your Superpower is increases your happiness. It is something that is closely tied to your 'self'. It is something you should practice and hone like any skill. The more comfortable you become with it, the more confident you will become because of it. The more confident you are about it, the more you will use it to benefit the world

> **Your Superpower makes you feel like a hero when you use it.**

So what are our Superpowers and how do we unveil them? Most of us have spent all our lives neglecting our Superpowers and even though we can't revive them overnight, there are many different ways to get in touch with them. If you are still thinking, "I don't have a Superpower", I'd love you to take a moment and think about the following things…

- What are you naturally good at?
- What are you passionate and curious about?
- When do you not notice time disappearing?
- What do people come to you for?
- If money wasn't a consideration, what would you do?

Write down your answers and then look if there is a theme to them. That is your superpower. That is the thing that lights you up and where you make a difference in the world.

Now name it. Embrace it. Use it. Show it. Share it.

Do not make the mistake of hiding it anymore. Be brave and let it grow within you, and then without you – let it grow beyond the limits you currently think you have. Rip off your civilian clothes and reveal the Superhero within you. The world needs your Superpower. More importantly, to live a satisfied, authentic life, you need to live your Superpower.

As Aunt May, Spiderman's aunt said, "I believe there is a hero in all of us that keeps us honest, gives us strength, makes us noble and finally, allows us to die with pride."

Go don your Superhero suit, take up your Superpower, and live a life that is Superpowered.

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## What is psychological safety and why is it important in the workplace?

**By Julia Kerr Henkel, executive coach & MD of Lumminos Coaching**

Psychological safety is a key ingredient for high performing, effective and happy teams.

When people feel unsafe, they tend to engage in less helpful, more basic behaviours, such as being negative, blaming others, needing to be right, catastrophizing by blowing things out of portion, over-reacting or even withdrawing, resigning and giving up.

On the contrary, when people feel safe, they are more likely to be open, calm, curious, willing to collaborate and find win-win solutions.

### First things first

Your priority as a leader, is to create a sense of safety in yourself - like the metaphor of securing your own oxygen mask first before assisting other passengers in the event of a loss of cabin pressure on an airplane.

### What aids psychological safety?

The list includes a host of behaviours, including: appreciation, listening, staying curious, asking yourself and others open-ended questions, being honest and keeping the confidence of others.

### Take a psychological safety quiz with your team

Use these ten statements below to measure the psychological safety in your team or organisation. Consider each one and rate your agreement on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Chances are that there were some statements that you didn't agree with so much, and these are the areas that you can work on, either as a leader or contributor.

1. On this team, I understand what is expected of me.
2. We value outcomes more than outputs or inputs, and nobody needs to "look good".
3. If I make a mistake on this team, it is never held against me.
4. When something goes wrong, we work as a team to find the systemic cause and aim to get it right versus being right.
5. All members of this team feel able to bring up problems and tough issues.
6. Members of this team never reject others for being different and nobody is left out.
7. It is safe for me to take a risk on this team.
8. It is easy for me to ask other members of this team for help.
9. Nobody on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
10. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilised.

You can do this anonymously via a tool like Mentimeter, SurveyMonkey or Google Forms, and gather the scores in aggregate.

See this process as an opportunity to engage and create psychological safety in your team. The conversation that emerges will also help to develop trust and reveal areas where you can focus your HR and people engagement plans.

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**FutureFit**

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**In order to grow we must be open to new ideas, new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking.**
**George Raveling**

## Top tips to change your mindset and adopt new ways of thinking

**Cultivate Curiosity**
The desire to know more, a willingness to seek out and embrace the unknown. The most common barrier to curiosity is the fear of the unknown and anxiety caused by facing uncertainty.

**Tip 1: Get to the bottom of your fear of uncertainty**
Ask 'Are my fears real or contrived?' Be vulnerable and move beyond your comfort zones in small steps in a 'safe space'. Understand what stops you asking questions and trying new things.

**Tip 2: Ask 'Why' questions**
Don't focus on the WHAT but rather the WHY. Ask probing, penetrating questions and listen intently. This increases your empathic curiosity about the thoughts and feelings of other people.

**Have a Growth Mindset**
Believe that talents can be developed through hard work, strategy and input from others. With a fixed mindset, when we face challenges or receive criticism, we easily fall into insecurity or defensiveness.

**Tip 1: Acknowledge and embrace imperfections**
Hiding from your weaknesses means you'll never overcome them.

**Tip 2: Reframe the word fail**
When you make a mistake or fall short of a goal, you haven't failed; you've learned. Start using FAIL as the acronym for: First Attempt In Learning.

**Practice Learning Agility**
A willingness to learn from experience and apply learnings in new situations. Let go of outdated beliefs and ways of doing things that are no longer appropriate or may no longer serve you.

**Tip 1: Be your mental model's biggest critic**
Look for evidence and arguments to disprove your current ways of thinking. Think about your thoughts, probe why you think as and do as you do, and challenge these.

**Tip 2: Build reflective habits**
Choose daily cues (your first morning coffee) to prompt short reflective moments to learn from failure, shift mindset, reflect on what happened and what you could do differently.

**Deal with Paradox**
Deal with contradictory perspectives and think 'both/and' instead of 'either/or'. Our brain is wired to resolve tensions or competing demands by reacting defensively with a quick either/or option and response.

**Tip 1: Embrace and live with paradox**
Paradoxical thinking requires us to think in illogical ways, and typically we are not comfortable to do so. Begin by framing questions in terms of 'both/and' instead of 'either/or'.

**Tip 2: Be clear on your purpose**
By identifying the greater purpose of what you are trying to achieve, you will be better able to find the intersection between two seemingly contradictory opposites that don't seem able to co-exist.

**Tolerate Ambiguity**
Be comfortable with uncertainty, unpredictability, conflicting directions and multiple demands. Our brains are wired to avoid ambiguity - rather, we seek certainty and predictability.

**Tip 1: Master Mindfulness**
Develop a mindset that you cannot control everything. Learn to be present and in the moment and to regulate and control emotions. Develop a mental state of openness, awareness and focus.

**Tip 2: Zoom In and Zoom Out**
Zoom Out by mapping existing information to the demands and goals of the future, visualising how things may play out. Zoon In by focusing on what matters most , here and now – in the present.

**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/**