



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

October 2005

THE LEADER WITHIN © is a free monthly subscription only e/newsletter published by Gary Russell and The Human Dimension. Please pass on THE LEADER WITHIN to those in your network. Details on how to subscribe are at the end of this newsletter.

"We help both people and productivity flourish by developing a positive culture of shared leadership."

We find improved performance is the reward for your investing in people.

The emphasis in THE LEADER WITHIN is on the changes and growth we make within ourselves, as leadership is basically a personal growth experience over time.

'For things to change first I must change.'

Is Your Workplace Culture Toxic?

Last month we spoke about the benefits of creating a positive coaching culture in your team or organization.

Of course we all know or have experienced work places where this is far from reality. Some work places or people can be 'toxic' to be around. We experience the effects of toxic work cultures in the same way we can experience the impact on our bodies where environmental pollutants such as chemicals and poisonous gases or drugs harm us in many negative ways.

Essentially, when it is like this, it is a workplace culture, which is based on fear of doing the 'wrong' thing.

Often it is not spoken about nor are its effects obvious every day or in every situation. There are of course exceptions and individuals who are outstanding positive role models who lead by example. What does happen though is when the toxic forms of behaviour appear they are not challenged or corrected. So these negative behaviours are allowed to adversely impact performance and the way we contribute at work.

It is not always obvious at first, but we can notice the effects of toxic workplace cultures over time.

We can identify a toxic work place culture when some, or all of the following symptoms appear.

Toxic Symptoms can include:

1. We find ourselves, and those around us, becoming increasingly demotivated.
2. We feel more stressed more of the time and become emotionally drained.
3. We find ourselves becoming cynical and less trusting and unsure of the other people around us.
4. We realise that the way to be noticed is to 'play politics and act purposefully' in front of the 'right' people.
5. We keep secrets and hide information as a weapon to ensure we aren't the first to drown when 'the ship starts to sink'
6. Personal ego and seemingly self-centered behaviors play an important part in what gets priority status.
7. Competition and self-protection are the norm, not openness and collaboration.
8. It does not feel like a safe place to experiment, be open or innovate.
9. We notice 'mistakes' bring ridicule or isolation and growth opportunities are not given to us.
10. Workplace 'bullying' becomes the preferred choice of leaders when the pressure is on and aggression is used to get results and keep things on track.
11. What is valued instead are the business, the targets, and profits, and rarely the people who produce the actual results.
12. We become defensive, reactive, increasingly negative and too often crisis's abound.

Do you know anywhere like this? It is not healthy, nor does it have to be 'normal.'

Being different:

How can we as leaders do things differently and have a positive impact, especially when we find others around us behaving in some of these toxic ways, which generate fear.

The short answer is to adopt a positive coaching approach. Coaching helps to eliminate fear in the workplace.

Coaching...

1. Emphasizes collaboration, partnership and mutual growth, and this reduces the fear-inducing distinctions among people regarding their status in the organization.
2. Is a relationship based on mutual respect and rapport
3. Is anchored in constructive, respectful language
4. Is endorsing rather than diminishing of people's skills and abilities
5. Assists individuals to see more possibilities than limitations in the organization
6. Supports individuals to take personal responsibility for managing their fear by challenging their distorted and limiting assumptions

7. Helps people to overcome personal obstacles to their success, including attitudes, beliefs and behaviours
 8. Provides a structure for establishing and measuring performance goals fairly and objectively
 9. Offers a model for giving and receiving constructive feedback for improving performance
 10. Improves team communications and provides a structure for managing conflict
 11. Provides a structure and a process to develop new behaviours and competencies, thereby eliminating the need for posturing and defensiveness.
-

Call to Action:

Learn the skills and approaches, which are adopted by professional executive coaches in their work with leaders.

Have you or do you have your own coach?

Engage a coach to help you change, learn, develop and grow.

© 2006 Gary Russell. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from THE LEADER WITHIN eZine in whole or in part, as long as you include complete attribution, including live web site link. Please also notify me where the material will appear.

The attribution should read:

"By Gary Russell of The Human Dimension.

Please visit our web site at <http://www.humandimension.com.au> for additional articles and resources.

Written by:

Gary Russell, BSW. Grad. Dip. Soc.Sc. MCC (Master Certified Coach)

The Human Dimension Pty Ltd

Ph. 61 *2 6296 4133

Fax. 61 *2 6296 4144

Email: Gary@humandimension.com.au

Web: www.humandimension.com.au

PO Box 3083

Weston ACT 2611

AUSTRALIA

To subscribe to THE LEADER WITHIN © go to:

<http://www.humandimension.com.au/pages/contactUs/newsletter.html>