



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

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"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.'

How To Develop and Retain the Best People:

Every leader I have talked with, about how to develop and retain the best people, has mentioned the following characteristics for the people they would like to have around.

Everyone is looking for self-starters who are

- Creative,
- Open to change and growth,
- Passionate and committed,
- Competent,
- Responsible and
- Demonstrating a healthy positive work ethic.

The key to getting the best out of people is for you as leader to deliberately and consciously create a work environment based on a high level of trust and shared personal responsibility. The reality in Australia, and a number of other countries, is far from this.

You would have read in these pages previously of the cost of disengaged employees. A recent study conducted by the Gallop Organization in Australia has found that 20 per cent of employees are actively disengaged at work with an estimated cost to the economy of \$31.5 billion per year. In contrast, only 18 per cent of Australian workers are fully engaged at work, while 62 per cent are in the bland no-man's land of just being "not engaged".

Actively disengaged employees are less productive, less profitable, less loyal, less likely to provide excellent customer service, and are often disruptive on the job.

Causes of disengagement are diffuse.

Heading the list though, are poor managers and leaders.

As you may have heard: "people join organizations, but they leave poor managers". It probably means hundreds of millions of workers at any time in the world are just showing up for their pay- cheque and not deriving substantial meaning from their professional lives.

This is a serious challenge for each of us, and the responsibilities we inherit as leaders.

Every day we make choices to engage or disengage our talents and abilities in serving clients, customers and the organization. Yet too many managers still regard employees as interchangeable units of cost.

The challenge is to build trust in your team and value your staff for their unique contribution (you do know what that is, precisely, don't you? ... and you have spoken to that person directly and honestly, acknowledging the significance of what they are doing?)

This sense of disconnection and emotional disengagement is even more alarming when we set this work situation against the challenges being faced in our world. For all the material advances of the last few centuries, we have racked up a large physical, spiritual and environmental debt that many people do not know how to reconcile.

There is a growing sense of isolation and alienation, and a mounting disconnection from ourselves each other and the relationships we have with the natural systems, which sustain us.

Our creativity, joy, sense of well-being and the very meaning we derive from life are being seriously eroded.

" More than half of all Australians already feel that their quality of life is deteriorating. While we embrace new technologies and spend large chunks of our days connected to computers, iPods and mobile phones, we've never felt more disconnected from people.

Richard Eckersley of the Australian National University's National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health began establishing trends in national quality of life in 1997 through Newspoll. He found that twice as many people think life is getting worse as those who think it is getting better. Moreover, public attitudes are showing an increasing number of people becoming more concerned about the materialism, greed and selfishness driving society today".

(Quoted from The Weekend Australian Magazine, March 26/27 2005 p. 17)

Leaders are emerging:

In the past few decades, many academics, poets, philosophers, leadership coaches and students of organizational and social change have pointed out that the prevailing paradigms we have been living out have not served us well. Change is badly needed. There is a sense that we have reached a kind of evolutionary impasse that we need to evolve beyond.

Clearly, what people everywhere want are lives and careers with far more joy, creativity, peace, conscious choice, diversity and freedom, balanced by the connection of community, meaning, sense of purpose, true abundance, health and sustainability. Today, more than ever before, the struggles we face are calling each individual, organization, community and nation to make some fundamental changes in how we live and work, in service of a better future for all humanity – **a future where we are inspired by love and a communal sense of purpose**- rather than motivated by fear and self-interest.

In their latest book, '*Presence*', Professor Peter Senge and his co-authors state,
"When people in leadership position begin to serve a vision infused with a larger purpose, their work shifts naturally from producing results to encouraging the growth of people who produce results."

Call to Action:

Coaching - A focus on the growth of leaders:

As coaches, we know that real change happens only when we focus on 'growing' people. And every day we experience first hand the power of coaching as a vital catalyst in supporting individuals as they grow, raise their awareness, connect to their deeper intelligence and make beneficial changes. Professional coaching is by far the most effective modality for this work.

Great coaching is all about taking the time to help individuals clarify their goals, grow, and achieve the outcomes most meaningful to them, their communities or their organizations.

Great coaching engages individuals at a deep level, and helps them become aligned, engaged, connected and inspired. It creates the space and expectation for breakthrough change to occur, and stays with process until new knowledge translates into new behaviour.

This is what the world badly needs!

(Acknowledgement to Steve Mitten, ICF International President - October 2005)

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