



# The Human Dimension

## ***THE LEADER WITHIN***

***March 2007***

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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.'*

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### ***Develop others; don't 'rescue' them:***

A key part of our role as leaders is to develop others and assist them to grow and learn. This is important in order to develop talent; retain key personnel; ensure succession plans happen and to build the capacity of individuals and teams to deliver on the important goals.

As we all know, put a bunch of people together and we start to notice differences- in personality, approach, experience, skills, attitudes, behaviours, perceptions and priorities.

There is always diversity and difference to account for in any group, team or workplace.

Faced with this complexity and diversity it is tempting when the pressure is on, and timelines are tight, to adopt the management 'rescue' approach.

In our efforts to get things done and to solve problems we can step in too early and do what we call 'rescuing'. This can happen with all of the best intentions not to, usually unconsciously and without checking if is the best response.

That's OK if you are in emergency services - however as a response to problems and challenges in the workplace it is mostly self defeating and ultimately dilutes your attempts to develop and empower those around you.

Most people in leadership roles are committed individuals who want to do a great job and mostly are pleasant to work with. Of course we aim to be in this group! We don't want to 'rescue' others because we instinctively recognise

this could be unhealthy in the longer term - but sometimes it seems to be the easy option. The thing is, our behaviour sends out messages as to how we prefer to work and it can come back to 'bite' us!

What does 'rescuing' behaviour look like?

### *Do any of these situations apply to you?*

1. You take over - when really nobody asked you too. You thought it best!
2. You do the job and don't let others know it needed doing in the first place.
3. You finish other people's sentences and pretty much know the answers any way.
4. You feel sorry and begin to help - mostly without checking if this is appropriate.
5. You act out of a sense of responsibility for the outcome and hurry the process along, which indicates a lack of trust on your part -
6. Others get out of your way and you have to take on more - surprise/surprise!
7. You complain that no-one can do it like you can and go ahead to prove this is true.
8. You don't explain what is required, fail to set the parameters, guidelines and boundaries (after all you're busy) and suspect a faulty outcome as a result - which you then have to fix!
9. You act without consideration and positive regard for the other person involved and don't give them full responsibility- they then rely on you and are continually checking (like - am I 'the parent' here?)

### *What can you do instead?*

Your approach needs to be one which enables and encourages others to take risks, to learn from challenges and is comfortable with them being better than you are in many aspects.

Your role as a leader is to create in others that which you want to experience for yourself.

'Rescuing' behaviour creates dependency, leads to frustration, over-loads you, engenders unhealthy dynamics and stunts the growth and development of your people.

Recognise this for what it is - i.e. your need to feel important or be in charge. Recognise the temptation to act in this way and let it go.

Find new ways to lead. **Leadership is not about you ... it is about them!**

Stop yourself 'rescuing' - you will be a better leader and you will be appreciated for the difference you make in the lives of others around you - because you had the foresight and courage to trust others and let them share the leadership limelight.

### **Call to Action:**

Stop and Think ...

Your job is to enable others to be the best they can be.

So ...

### **As an enabler ask yourself:**

1. How could I encourage and boost others, before jumping in to fix the problem?
2. How much help/and of what kind is needed from me in this particular situation?
3. How could I coach new behaviours, at the same time identifying to the person what is expected?
4. Could I find a new direction, approach or language to get my point across?
5. How could I understand more this person's point of view and incorporate what I find into a more collaborative solution?
6. What do I know about this person's aspirations, strengths, abilities and experiences which can be utilised more effectively?

Remember - **You always have choices**. Even when you are busy (which is usually when you are tempted most to adopt rescuing behaviours) remember stop and think. What are the consequences of you going ahead? Once you have given this some thought make your choice and manage the consequences.

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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](mailto:Gary@humandimension.com.au)

Web: [www.humandimension.com.au](http://www.humandimension.com.au)

PO Box 3083

Weston ACT 2611

AUSTRALIA

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