



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.'

The Importance of People

That's a self evident heading you may think.

You would be surprised (maybe not - when you stop to think about it), how much we take for granted those with whom we work, whether they be colleagues or team members. How do we know what motivates Tom, Eddie, Sue or Jose or ? Why you might think, is that any concern of mine provided they do their job? This is not a criticism as more a lack of knowing ... as those we have worked with over the years are deeply caring people, working very hard to their very best in whatever role they have.

Most times our current approach works well until there is some change. This can be a person leaving and new staff are engaged, priorities are reordered, competition increases, work loads shift, a new manager is appointed, external factors force a change in process, policy or direction or our previous strategies no longer really work. All or some of these factors would force a rethink in the way we do business.

The actual key to successful enterprises and teams is to uncover the core values, aspirations and experiences of our staff and to build the work around each persons strengths.

The role we then play as managers and leaders is to ensure each person has the opportunities and capacity to contribute their best.

You can help by knowing what that is and ensuring the workplace culture is conducive to high performance.

In our consulting and coaching work we notice most of the focus in today's work environment in the day to day busy-ness is on the work itself, i.e. on business outcomes and results. People are employed primarily because of their skill and expertise as a 'human resource.' Nothing wrong with that - as we usually get paid because we can produce results and achieve outcomes and sometimes add value too - however there is something about this focus which is lacking in vision and creativity and will lead ultimately to passive and active disengagement.

In work groups where the manager has come from a technical or professional background the 'people stuff' can be a mine field best avoided.

Disengagement occurs when we make a decision that the possibility of being ourselves is too risky and we decide instead to blend in with the prevailing culture, which can mean there is much of our own unique innovation, creativity and experiences we no longer choose to share. Research shows this form of disengagement can be as high as 60%

We accept on the one hand we are each different and that we need to promote diversity and allow autonomy in today's changing business environment, because that is the current wisdom and usually perceived as good for business and makes excellent sense to have a happy productive and fulfilling workplace, based on respect for individual human development and contribution. It will of course take time, focus and energy to shift our awareness to the people around us. This requires us to critically and honestly examine our current paradigms and beliefs about what we do and how we do it.

Too much however of modern day organisational theory and practice is devoid of insight into our real nature as humans and an understanding we are each interdependent and much more alike than we are different.

Most of the management focus in organisations over the past several decades has in fact been about productivity, efficiency and achieving. Ultimately people are not resources to be moved around, nor are we units of production.

Managers who simply focus on the work and business outcomes at the expense of learning how to get the best from others can engender feelings in themselves and others of being depleted and unfulfilled. We are not stupid and we each know when we are being treated superficially or with actual disregard.

Are we fearful of being authentic in case we are seen as deficient or weak?

Are we unable or not wanting to show up with our hearts and minds fully engaged because to do so might make us stand out and this can engender potential negative consequences?

I think we are best reminded of this with one of my favourite quotes on the potential of humans, in the writings of Marianne Williamson who wrote:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear
is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness,
that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I, to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous.

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest
the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And when we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

Source : Marianne Williamson - A Return To Love Reflections from A Course
in Miracles

Call to Action:

Resolve today to find out something about another person which you did not know previously.

Show genuine interest and be curious about others. Learn to listen much more than is currently comfortable for you personally and become a person who can get to the heart of a matter because you do understand something of what is important to your manager, colleague or team member. We make far too many assumptions based on our own paradigms and world view on what is best and we usually only get it half right ... if we are lucky!

Focus more on the nature of your relationship than you might normally, because at the end of the day what really matters is that other person knows they are valued and they know precisely what you expect and in what ways they add value.

It is being internally motivated rather than externally inspired that is the difference. We get motivated when we are listed to, acknowledged and encouraged and where we are accepted and welcomed.

Learning to put the focus on the importance of people will ultimately makes the difference between a reasonable outcome and outstanding results.

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