



The Human Dimension

THE LEADER WITHIN

May 2008

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Our Purpose is: *“To assist those individuals, organisations, and communities who accept that our shared future depends on each of us becoming outstanding leaders.”*

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 Passionate Leaders Avoid Burnout:

Without exception all of the leaders, managers and teams we work with are passionate people who are personally committed to achieving positive outcomes in their professional, personal lives and enterprises.

Most are working at or over their sustainable capacity and are always very busy doing what they care about and are committed to.

This is the dilemma of a life of passion and commitment and yet not sliding to 'burnout'.

How can we sustain our commitments yet know the way we go about affecting change and improving lives can also be sustainable as well as personally fulfilling?

We can sense (or those close to us have told us) that the current pace is not healthy, yet in using outdated thinking and models to inform how we live and work we run the risk of 'falling over and stumbling' and becoming grumpy old men and women sooner than we anticipated.

Here are twelve different and more effective ways of handling ourselves as leaders in the current conditions of increasing complexity with time demands on our resources and increasing need to continually improve our capacity and at the same time to maintain our focus.

1. **Managing your energy, not time is the key to high performance and personal renewal.** Ask yourself: *'Is what I am working on right now taking me in the direction of some of my most important priorities?'* If the answer is no, then consider stopping what you are doing altogether, reshaping the tasks into a bigger project where there are overlaps already with other work, or delegating it to someone else. Managing time is based on Newtonian thinking where if we were organised enough we could realise our goals. The reality is today there is way too much for any one person to get to in any given day leaving us with us constant choices to be made. Time management is an efficiency concept not an effectiveness one.
2. **Build your emotional intelligence and develop strong communication skills.** We are increasingly becoming interdependent on others to achieve results. Your ability to connect with others, build rapport, gain respect and be understood, are now critical skills if you wish to advance the important things essential to your (collective) success. Especially in times of turbulent change, plan to over communicate – even when you don't know – especially when things are vague and uncertain!
3. **Don't go it alone - build an effective team and delegate appropriately.** Teams are essential to get things done and this is more than a competent group of individuals with a shared purpose. Most times we cannot allow them to 'just get on with it' and expect the team to function well. Effective delegation requires being clear, letting go, and holding others accountable for results and outcomes.
4. **Work to your strengths.** We do our best work when we access and utilise what we are good at and enjoy doing. We find it more effortless and we get the important things done with fewer struggles and more energy. We tend to enjoy our work more and time goes by with less dramas.
5. **Keep the big picture in mind, become someone who can think strategically.** This means seeing the trends, connections and themes in any given set of circumstances and being able to connect the dots through providing context and meaning to the various tasks and options in front of you. Being able to communicate the strategic picture to others is a bonus!
6. **Invest in yourself - aspire for a fulfilling life on your terms, not someone else's ...** (no matter how much they love you!). Whose agenda is running your life? This means we love ourselves as well as others.
7. **Actively participate in self-care and build your inner resources in establishing a healthy foundation.** If you are increasingly depleted and worn out, you are in no position to lead and support others. You become too needy yourself!

8. **Understand your true values and orientate your life around those.** Values are our inner compass and guide our behaviour and choices as to where we put our focus. If we find ourselves frustrated, depressed or on a treadmill it is often we have lost sight of what is truly important to us. If this is you, stop and think about your important values and then let these guide your thoughts as to what you ought to be doing.
9. **Manage yourself and develop large measures of self awareness.** Too often leaders are focused on the tasks, outcomes, the business itself and hardly give any thought to the skills, experiences, knowledge, capacity or ideas of those around them. Manage projects and lead people. Even if leaders think this is a good idea (to include others in some way) not many are really effective in accessing and incorporating the wisdom of those around them. One of the key motivators for people in today's work place is to know that they and their contribution are valued, and what they are doing is making a difference.
10. **Master the 'change phenomenon' and manage the process of constant change.** This phenomenon is not an interruption to what you have set yourself to achieve, but rather unpredictable and dynamic change is accepted as a feature of our reality. We must expect and incorporate sudden change into our thinking and learn to flex and adapt to what is happening around us. So much of our locus of control these days needs to be internally determined, rather than externally driven.
11. **Be clear on your purpose on what you wish to do/be in this life.** Most written role descriptions while they are meant to be helpful quickly date and don't often provide us with the clarity and focus we require given the dynamic nature of our responsibilities. If we develop a sense of our own purpose we can align what we do with how we think we can best deliver.
12. **Develop a global perspective with long term horizons at the same time as you focus on what is in front of you.** Give attention to what is there now and focus in the moment and in this way you allow insights and intuition to play a part in creating new possibilities. Too often we use a problem solving mindset when we ought to be accessing a solution orientation with the long term in mind.

Call to Action:

Our willingness to allow new ideas and concepts to influence our thinking and behaviour is an indicator of our future success as leader. We can implement measures which will ensure we live lives which are sustainable, fulfilling and avoid being depleted.

During this coming month read through this newsletter several times and take up the challenge to make one change in your thinking, your approach or in what you typically would normally say or do. Choose something from the list above which you think would make the most difference and likely to have the most impact. Then implement a decision to be different in one aspect.

Share these ideas with your team or manager and have them come on board with you improving your effectiveness as a leader.

If you or your team need new solutions we can help.

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