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'Bluer than Indigo' Leadership: The Journey of Becoming a Truly Remarkable Leader, by Jonathan H. Westover, PhD

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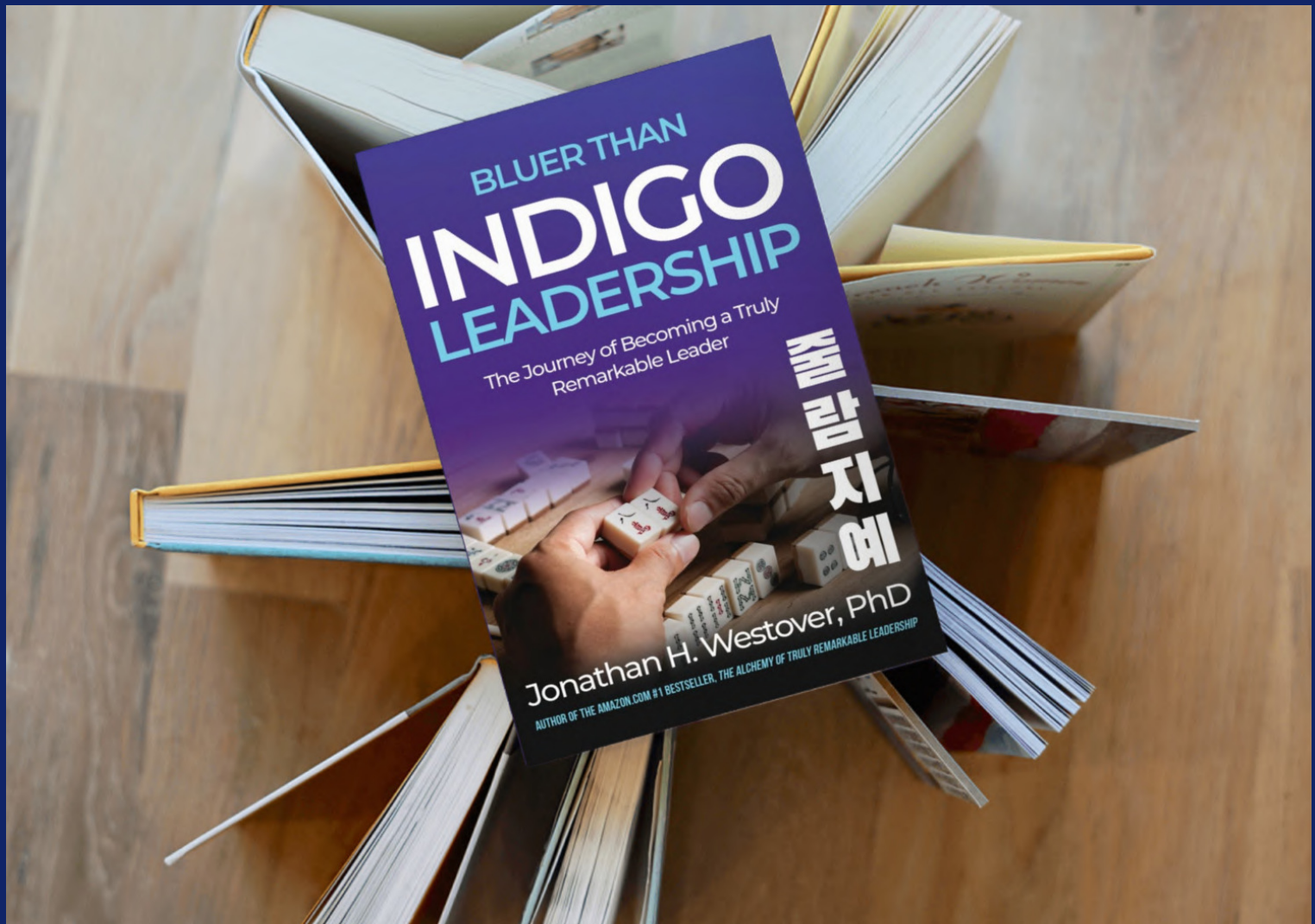**'Bluer than Indigo' Leadership: The Journey of Becoming a Truly Remarkable Leader**, by Jonathan H. Westover, PhD.

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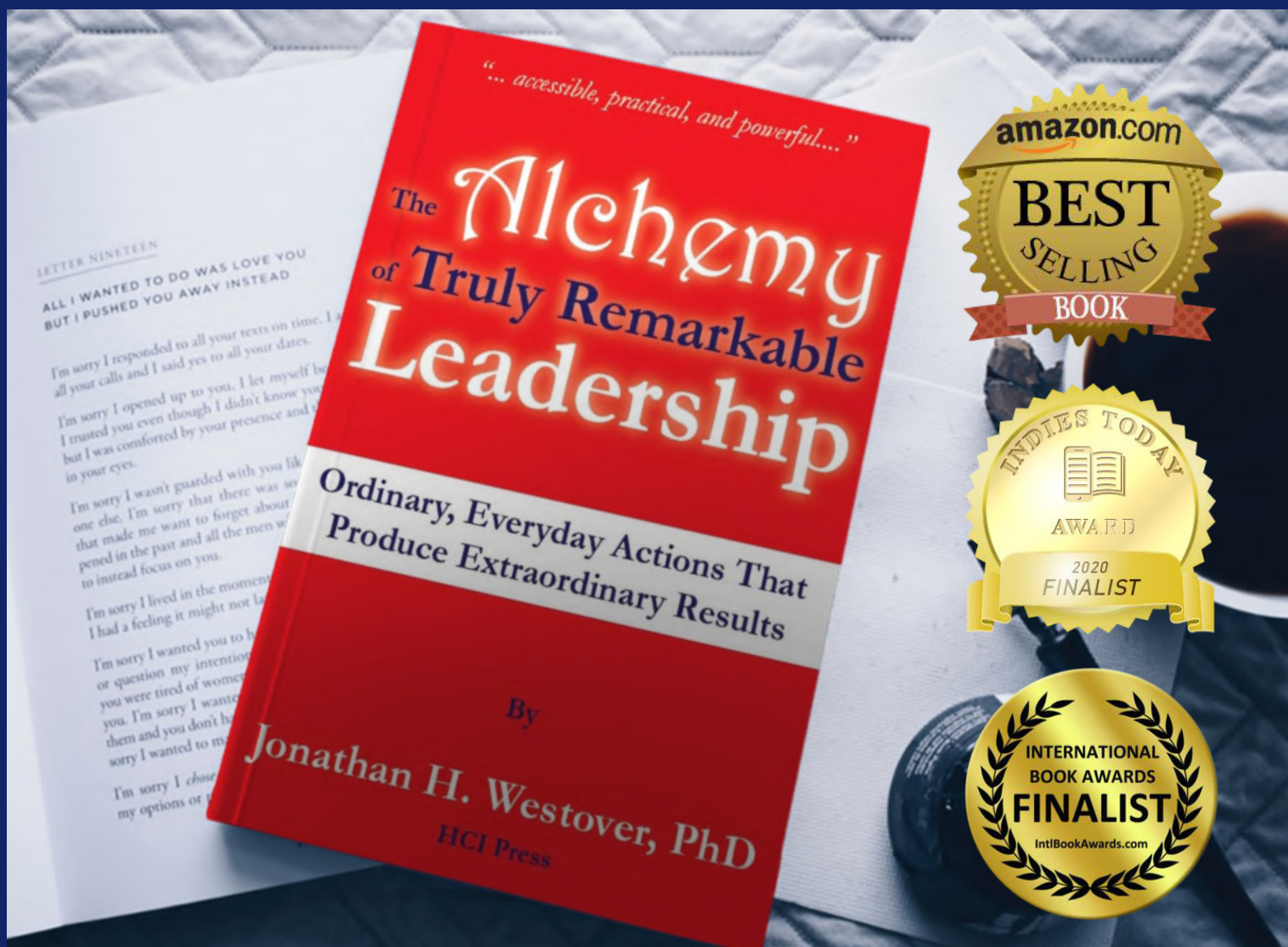
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Features

Index

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By Jonathan H. Westover, PhD

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WHERE TO LISTEN

A Recipe for the Future: Three + One at a Temperature of Dialogue

by Chad Dumas

There is no question that we live in tumultuous times. Whether in politics, demographics, religion, socio-economics--you name it, disagreements abound. Unfortunately, many times these disagreements are unhealthy. How might we leverage these differences to advance understanding? Unity? Prosperity? To have healthy and productive disagreements?

Might there be a recipe to help?

I propose there is just a recipe for this: Three + One at a temperature of Dialogue.

At the beginning of any baking recipe, we typically find a direction to "preheat the oven to X degrees." This is the environment in which the new creation will come to life.

So, too, does understanding require an environment--a temperature of dialogue. Hence, we start with getting this "set," and then go about mixing the ingredients--the Three + One.

The temperature of dialogue is a deep and meaningful commitment to hearing others and valuing their perspectives. Dialogue, of course, begins within each of us, individually.

How do we go about building cultures of dialogue and setting this temperature? In schools? In public discourse? In life?

Principles of Effective Dialogue

Paulo Freiré identified some principles of effective dialogue that help set our temperature. According to Freiré, dialogue is "an act of creation." "Without dialogue," he contends, "there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education." He identifies six principles, or pre-conditions, for dialogue to occur: love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and critical thinking.

As you consider a brief highlight of his thinking around each principle, think about how you embody each principle in your day-to-day actions with family, friends, and colleagues:

Love: "If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue."

The world.
Life.
People.

To what extent do I demonstrate my love for each?

One of my favorite quotes comes from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a spiritual guide and exemplar for millions of the world's population: "If I love you, I need not continually speak of my love--you will know without any words. On the other hand if I love you not, that also will you know--and you would not believe me, were I to tell you in a thousand words, that I loved you."

Humility: "Dialogue...is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility."

Enough said?

Faith: "the 'dialogical [person]' believes in others even before he meets them face to face"

I love this idea of having faith in others without even having met them. With faith, I know in my heart-of-hearts that others are worthy of being. They are inherently noble. Mine is not to question this, but instead to have faith in others--that their values, perspectives, beliefs all are worthy.

Because they are human.

Trust: "climate of mutual trust...leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world"

I trust others, and am trustworthy, myself. I do what I say I will do, and expect (another way of saying trust) that of others.

Hope: "If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious."

Each and every act that we make leaves a trace--some we can physically see, others are imprinted on hearts and minds. Knowing that our actions have effects, and deriving hope from this reality, is a fundamental prerequisite to dialogue and building a better future.

Critical Thinking: "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking"

While many times used as a "catch-phrase" and jargon-y, "critical thinking" allows us to push ourselves, and each other, to think differently than before. This sixth principle, in many ways, is a culmination of the other five. Another way of saying this is that the other five principles lay the foundation for critical thinking to happen.

Setting the temperature begins **within** each of us.

Three + One

Having set the temperature, what are the ingredients to this recipe for understanding? These are what I call the Three + One.

The Three come from the Norms of Collaboration (www.thinkingcollaborative.com), and the One is the context around which these Three play out--being in Rapport. Rapport lays a foundation for the Three.

Costa and Garmston provide a full and scientific description of Rapport--I simply define it as being in relationship with another person. When you are in relationship with another person, and they are in relationship with you, each person is comfortable. This rapport manifests in certain conditions that begin to emerge: one of which is the mirroring of body language--a powerful nonverbal source of communication.

Individuals who are in rapport will have similar body language--if one person uses large arm gestures, the other person will do the same; if one person is leaning back in their chair, the other does the same; if one person is sitting cross-legged, the other person does the same.

Please note the use of the word "mirror," not "mimic." Individuals who are in rapport with each other are naturally mirroring one another. It's not a gimmick or a game, but a natural outgrowth of being in relationship. Hence, if you want to build rapport with someone, a key place to start is the nonverbal communication method of body language. Notice it. Notice their language and tone. And then strive to quickly get into rapport with them by mirroring their movements.

Pause, Paraphrase, Prompt

In addition to the nonverbal "plus one" of rapport, there are three specific moves for building relationship with individuals that Costa and Garmston describe: Pause, Paraphrase, and Prompt.

Pausing in dialogue with someone is exactly what it sounds like: pausing. People need time to think and to process. Give them the gift of that space by simply pausing.

In society today, people are bombarding us all day long with this problem or that issue. Don't interrupt them. Don't immediately jump in with your solution. Instead, give them space to think—five seconds will usually suffice. When you give people the gift of space to think they will come up with far better solutions than you ever will. Give them the gift of space, of silence. Pause. Take a breath. Then you can encourage them to take action and commend them for their thoughtful solutions.

For a great, short, and impactful article on this subject, please see https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/intelligent-minds-like-tim-cook-jeff-bezos-embrace-rule-of-awkward-silence-you-should-too.html

A second powerful move that you can make is the Paraphrase. Though we don't typically know at first, many times people simply want to be heard. Nothing more and nothing less. The process of paraphrasing for another person allows them to know that they've been heard and understood. This communicates to them their value as a person, as well as their value as a professional.

When paraphrasing, Costa and Garmston counsel to avoid the term "I," as in "I think I hear you saying." Instead, use stems like, "So you're thinking that…" or "You feel as though…" or "You're seeing this…." This implies that you must be paying careful attention to the speaker so that you can accurately paraphrase. And the paraphrase cannot be contrived or shallow, but, rather, a sincere acknowledgment of the other person's concerns/needs and reflection back. Finally, the paraphrase should not be longer than their statements—it's not about you; it's about them.

Again, rather than jumping into a person's thinking, prompt their thinking (typically after engaging in a paraphrase). Pose an open-ended question; or ask for more information on a specific point; or ask for a clarification of key material; or ask for their opinion on how to move forward. The process of prompting will allow the other person to feel valued and heard, to dig deeper into their own thinking. They can talk through what they already know and come to their own conclusion.

My Experience with the Three + One

Colleagues have shared with me the power of these three moves in my own leadership. Over my career, I have directly supervised a number of school principals, teacher leaders, teachers, and administrative assistants.

I purposefully use these moves by allowing them to fully share issues under consideration. Instead of jumping in with my own thoughts, I intentionally pause and think—typically moving my eyes away from theirs to signal my thinking (and sometimes accompanied by an intentional movement of my body to also signal this thinking and find out if we were

in rapport). Almost every time, they pick up and start talking more about the issue, further clarifying their own thinking and possible outcomes.

After that initial pause, I regularly paraphrase the issue and/or their thinking around it. The response is either a confirmation that I "had" it, or them expounding further. If they expound further, another paraphrase may be called for.

More often than not, my question is typically along the lines of, "Given what you have shared and your expertise in this area, what are your hunches about how we might move forward?" This many times results in them pausing and then identifying one or more possible solutions to move forward.

What colleagues have shared with me over the years is that, because of these actions, they felt trusted **by me** and, therefore, had trust **in me**, as well. They contrasted my handling of our meetings with the handling of other colleagues and supervisors and particularly noted how trust was completely absent from those other interactions. In other words, utilizing these skills allowed us to build trust, have rapport, and build capacity.

Understanding.
Unity.
Prosperity.

So What?

If we are to move forward, better relationships are foundational. If we are to have better relationships, dialogue plays a primary role. And if dialogue is to be present, we must engage in certain behaviors to create that climate. I propose that the Three + One, at temperature of dialogue, will go a long way in doing just that.

Try them out and see what you think! And keep trying, because, since it's likely not part of your current operating procedure, it will be uncomfortable.

The changes will be worth it.

Prompts for Reflection:

1. **What steps might I take to increase my understanding and use of the Principles of Effective Dialogue?**

2. **In what ways do I demonstrate these principles in my day-to-day interactions with others?**

The next time you're at a public restaurant, notice the people around you. Notice those who are in rapport and those who are not. Notice, for example, the couple, both leaning into each other

with arms up on the table. Notice those who are not in relationship, and you will notice people who are not mirroring each other's body language.

One way to "test" if you're actually in rapport with someone is to shift your own body—arms, legs, or otherwise—and see if the other individual follows. More than likely, if you're in rapport, the other person will follow your lead within five seconds or so. If you're not in rapport, they won't follow and you need to continue to strive for rapport by mirroring them.

3. **As I try these Three + One practices, what am I noticing about myself?**

4. **What am I noticing about others?**

About the Author:

Chad Dumas is an international educational consultant, presenter, and award-winning researcher whose primary focus is collaborating to develop capacity for continuous improvement. With over two decades of successful leadership experience, Chad has led significant improvements for both students and staff. He shares his research and knowledge in his new books, Let's Put the C in PLC and An Action Guide to Put the C in PLC, and consulting that includes research, stories, hands-on tools, useful knowledge, and practical skills.

Become a Courageous Leader to Create a Positive Workplace Culture

by Shelley Smith

Leaders work under intense pressure. It takes courage to become a strong one.

CEOs expect leaders to keep employees aligned with the vision. Team members expect leaders to have all the answers, know what to do, handle all the moving parts of team dynamics, and become fortune tellers to predict landmines and avoid them.

Leadership requires – what feels like – superhuman skills. But, for better or worse, we are all human. We all have blind spots that can lead to costly mistakes if we don't recognize them and be willing to adjust, learn and pivot. Then we need to share our leadership lessons to grow ourselves and help the team grow.

Leaders must anticipate blind spots. Nobody saw the pandemic coming, for example, but it radically changed how we do business. When setting the vision, we must not only see the top of mountain, but imagine what could be on the other side. We must develop the ability to pivot on a dime, fall down and get back up. Lack of resiliency can be disastrous.

15 Courageous Leadership Norms and Positive Culture Traits

1.   Know what success is in the simplest form.

As a leader your ability to articulate what success is in its most simplest form allows you and your team to move forward in unison. Without this clarity, priorities are not handled in the right order, and communication, action and decision-making will go sideways. Bottom line, courageous leaders know what success is and communicates this to each team member.

2.   Articulate in clear messages how each employee fits in.

Once you know what success is, then you can draw a straight line to each team member and tell them how they fit in. You must communicate to them when, how and where they add value. Clarity allows team members to feel valued, seen and heard. This builds inclusion.

3.   Know, live and share your values consistently.

If your team has a value of collaboration, then make sure you can clearly define what collaboration as a team member looks like, feels like and sounds like. As a member, what am I saying and or doing when I collaborate? As a courageous leader, ensure you are a walking example of each value and that you are tying your actions to your values. Then you are building your workplace environment to reflect what right looks like inside your team and company.

Document your values clearly to create your living, breathing workplace culture playbook. The playbook should go beyond rules to bring your values to life through written stories, pictures, videos and testimonies. The playbook helps you brand your team and company, enabling you to attract and retain top talent.

4. To keep it simple, think pineapples and bananas.

Most leaders overcomplicate everything by forgetting to break down goals into consumable pieces. Think about projects and tasks this way: You have five minutes to eat, so you grab something quick, ready and easy to eat, such as a banana. A banana, like a task, is quick and easy to consume. Think of a large project as a whole pineapple that has to be cut into chunks to consume. When you have projects, goals and strategies to achieve, break them down into smaller chunks so that they are as easy to eat as bananas or bits of pineapple. When you look at your and your teams' calendars, think pineapples and bananas to keep goals simple and consumable.

5. Plan deliberate and consistent check-ins.

Remote working requires balance. You must knowing what, when and how to communicate. You must deliberately plan recurring meetings with set agendas. These agendas allow leaders and teams to report on priorities, successes, sticking points and steps forward. These meetings may initially appear to be slowing down the work, but they actually allow you to speed up. When you neglect deliberate check-ins with your team, you slow progress and miss opportunities to capture lessons and make adjustments.

6. Use outside experts.

Outside experts bring an unbiased view to the table. Leaders lose their ability to see their own blind spots when they don't have an outside perspective helping to influence their decision-making and actions. Using outside experts have become a norm and provide a competitive edge to courageous leaders.

7. Remain transparent. Be vulnerable. Instill trust.

The more you share, the more employees will believe in you, your vision, company, and purpose. When your employees trust you, teams align and desired outcomes are produced. Having the courage to be up front can mean the difference between a business that survives and thrives verses one that closes its doors during tough times.

8. Maintain a positive attitude.

Courageous leaders know the importance of maintaining the right attitude. When positivity doesn't lead, you are at risk of creating unnecessary roadblocks that may prevent you and your company from reaching full potential. Focus on the good and the options to move forward rather than on the bad and problems holding you back.

9. Engage in reality testing and get comfortable being uncomfortable.

Although you need a positive attitude, you must engage in brutal reality testing, too. Do this by analyzing facts, data and trends to see the possibilities for improvement. Don't get comfortable being comfortable, but rather get comfortable with being uncomfortable and push through the fear to recognize possibilities. When faced with difficult times, the combination of long-term vision with a keen short-term focus on reality is a winning formula. Think: problem – solution, problem – solution! Ask yourself, "what if?" Be more curious.

10. Recognize the value of connecting and rapport-building. People come first; employees, second.

The difference between work life and personal life have become blurred and can no longer be separated. Remote and hybrid work is here to stay. With that comes the necessity for more flexibility and understanding from employers. The quicker leaders reach out to welcome their new hire aboard, the more likely the new team member will feel included. Rapport-building starts once the candidate accepts the job offer.

11. Hire the right team members. Find the hire with the right behavioral fit and meet motivational needs with the right rewards and recognition.

Courageous leaders understand and embrace the importance of diversity in talent, background and skills. Employees must fit behaviorally. Precise work requires precise employees. Creative work requires creative employees. The right fit isn't based solely on skills, but more so on the behavioral needs of the job duties. Leaders also understand that employees' rewards and recognition should align with individual motivational needs. Employees should be rewarded for taking the right actions to bring the company values alive.

12. Share leadership and develop agile teams.

Courageous leaders know when to lead from the back, side and front. They live to help others take the lead. They realize this builds agility and resiliency in their team and company. They understand that sharing roles and responsibilities aids them in creating greater freedom, better decision-making, more growth and inclusion, and increased innovation.

13. Look ahead and beyond. Be curious. Ask more questions.

Courageous leaders, who intentionally look to see the other side of the mountain, will be the survivors and thrivers of the future. They ask more questions, are curious about roadblocks ahead, and are willing to take risks and make quick decisions. These are the leaders and companies on which resiliency are built. They can quickly transform when swift economic changes, such as the pandemic, hit head on.

14. Understand balance and support a healthy presence.

Leaders and companies that provide flexible and creative options, such as staggered work hours and job-sharing, are becoming the norm. These are no longer unique benefits. Companies that don't get on board will find themselves in a tougher spot when they have open positions to fill. Fewer candidates will apply, and positions will take longer to fill.

15. Make inclusion a norm and a value.

A culture of inclusion is a must. It is not a luxury, neither now or in the future. When a new team member is hired, they expect and deserve to be included and welcomed into the team. They should feel from the get-go that they were brought in to add value, show up as they are, and bring their strengths and differences – daily – to help achieve the shared purpose of the company. They must always know that they are seen, valued and heard.

About the Contributor:

Shelley Smith, CEO of Premier Rapport, Inc., helps business owners and executives find and repair the "culture leaks" in their organizations that prevent them from being as productive and profitable as they can be. Using a proprietary process of inquiry, awareness and leader development, she helps businesses create the workplace environment teams need to drive success. Throughout her 35-plus-year career, Shelley has developed and implemented plans for large corporations such as Marriott as well as for small "mom-and-pop" businesses to advance their strategies and manifest stronger company cultures. She is the author of numerous books, including "Brass Ovaries Own Yours: Master the Mindset, Change the Game" and "How to Avoid Culture Big Fat Failure (BFF)."

"Failing to plan is planning to fail."
– Anonymous

Changing Course:
The Leadership Shift
by Chuck Mollor

It happens to all of us at some point in our career. The formula for success we had utilized to date, and the strengths we had leveraged to be successful, need to be modified as we shift to a more senior role or as an organization and its culture evolve. This shift includes:

• How you budget your time

• How you prioritize and delegate

• How you influence your peers, boss, and other key stakeholders

• How you ensure you are strategic and focused on both short- and long-term goals

The shift to a larger role requires commitment to operating at the next level, but starts with reflection on what you need to change and a plan to implement those changes.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail."
– Anonymous

Economic volatility, uncertain markets, global competitors, rapid technological changes, and evolving employee expectations have made leaders' jobs more unpredictable and demanding than ever. No scenario exists today in which leaders execute in a predictable environment. The traditional "5-year plan" is yesterday's news that no one is reading, much less abiding by.

Below are steps to consider when shifting to a leadership role with greater responsibility and expectations:

Create time to think, plan, research, and connect with others. Schedule time weekly to think, reflect, plan, research, and be externally focused, and make a point to be known across the organization. Speak and meet with people enterprise-wide, as well as with clients and in the marketplace. Many managers are too internally focused — while it's easy to become entrenched with daily management of tasks or tactical decisions, it's not productive. You need to spend time looking externally at best practices, trends, and innovations or changes in your industry, and in other sectors that are impacting its success.

Identify your influencers. Who are the key people within the organization? Are they advocates for you? How are you developing these key relationships to be more visible, to understand their businesses, challenges, and opportunities? Are you investing in the time and dialogue to align them with your mission, vision, and strategy? This is an essential part of influence, relationship management, and strategy, but is easy to overlook. Pay attention to having influencers that represent the goals and challenges you want to address and ensure they understand your message, vision, and brand.

Build relationships. As mentioned above, it's critical that you take the time to get to know influencers and decision-makers — people who can have an impact on your organization, initiatives, capabilities, resources, results, and your career. So, how can you do it?

Establishing trust and credibility with your team, peers, boss, and other key stakeholders in the organization gives you the capability to effectively influence, ask for input and feedback, and develop alliances, especially during critical times. You need these relationships to identify champions for ideas and initiatives. Establishing potential advocates and mentors will provide you with a sounding board, in addition to helping promote your ideas. If a leadership team is hearing your idea for the first time during a "big" meeting or presentation, you have not taken the time to test the strategy or build buy-in.

Successful leaders intentionally market themselves within their companies and across the enterprise. Though it may feel uncomfortable, awkward, or self-serving, you need to be visible and known by executives for potential succession and advancement, and to promote your team's work. Find opportunities to meet with executives and learn about their responsibilities and the organizations they run. It's an opportunity to educate yourself about parts of the business outside of your domain. Learn what success looks like for them, including what challenges they face, and what visions and strategies they have.

Being overscheduled" can be a euphemism for being a micromanager. Recognize what you can let go of and how you can make your team accountable for certain levels of decision making. For many new leaders, spending time developing your bench and successors, building key relationships throughout your enterprise, and looking at the market, competition, best practices, trends, and disruptions, is unchartered territory that should now be on your agenda.

Guard your time. You can't add hours to your day or week. Instead, take more control of your schedule, versus letting your schedule dictate where you spend your time. Are you stuck in back-to-back meetings or responding to endless emails? You can't think, plan, be externally focused, and build relationships across the enterprise if you are tied up or too involved in the minute details. Shift where you spend your time by getting out of the weeds.

Have strategic dialogue. I've worked with a number of executives who tend to engage in more tactical and detailed conversations when discussing their organization, initiatives, and direction. A strategic, senior-level audience is anticipating a high-level discussion on strategy, innovation, and growth, and will tune out or disengage when things get in the "weeds". If a fellow leader is curious about the details, you can follow-up with an executive summary. Strategic discussions should focus on the key takeaways, initiatives, potential opportunities, solutions, and lessons learned.

Be sure to engage in strategic dialogue about what others are doing. Think about creating your own "advisory board" to counsel you on how to continue to develop your people, your role within the organization, and best practices. While the marketplace is flooded with news, be sure to spend time tracking and paying attention to trends, disruptions, and the competition that could have a significant impact on your business.

This is a beneficial and practical way of giving yourself a reason to be visible across the enterprise, educating others on what you are accomplishing, and learning more about the business holistically.

Develop your culture and talent strategy. Leaders today need to have a strategy for their organizational culture. They must live and promote that culture to attract and retain talent that reflects the organization's values and has the potential to achieve its vision, mission, and purpose.

A leader's commitment to making the shift into a leadership position successful has many moving parts. It is important to recognize that success is not overnight and will require fine tuning and course correction. Being a continuous learner, being agile, and having a growth mindset will provide a launching point for the next level of success.

About the Author:

Chuck Mollor is the founder, CEO, and executive coach at MCG Partners.

You can read more in Chuck Mollor's best selling book, The Rise of the Agile Leader. Can You Make the Shift?

Leadership in a Crisis:
Drug Use in the Workplace—
A True Story

by Irma Neal

"Call 911. John has OD'd in the men's room!" 'John' was on my staff and he had just overdosed on heroin in the office bathroom, unconscious with the needle still in his arm. He had overdosed on heroin in the workplace during working hours, five hundred feet from his desk! The paramedics reached him in time and revived him.

My reaction: I was glad he was alive, but I was FURIOUS.

I began writing up his immediate termination. Where I came from, if you were caught using drugs on the job it was grounds for immediate dismissal. Where I came from, such behavior was not tolerated. BUT WAIT! Not here. Not in DC. Not in this unionized office.

Using drugs was considered an illness. Addiction was a disability requiring a referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! No suspension, no disciplinary action, whatsoever?

The union representative told me about John's rights. I responded, "What about the rights of all the other employees in this office who may be jeopardized by his behavior? What about trying to maintain a safe and respectful environment for everyone? What about free will and personal responsibility?"

The union representative said that I could terminate him, but even if I did, John WOULD get his job back. Termination would mean mandatory mediation.

An examination of my personal value system went into overdrive. I liked John. He was smart and personable and he had been employed over 5 years. I had only been on the job three months. But I was responsible for all the staff. I had a job to do. I had to change the toxic office environment, and I had to ensure that the organization retained its federal funding!

I decided to terminate John." (Excerpt from Leading in Chaos: Insights to Lead Through the Storms).

The above account is true. I was the new Director of a government agency in Washington, DC when it happened. I took the following steps immediately:
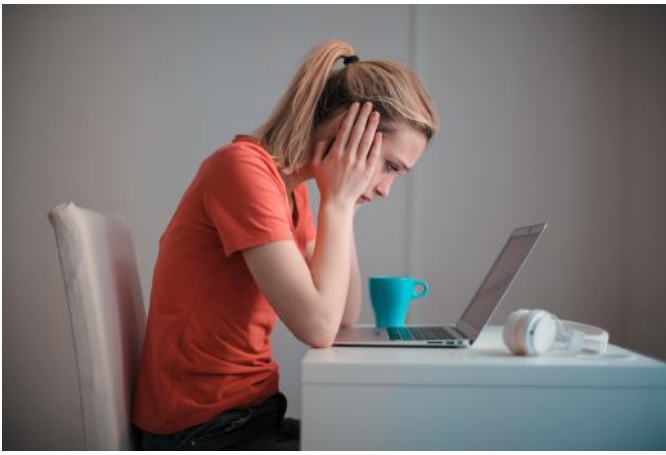

Assess the Situation:

While there was a Drug-Free Workplace policy in effect, it was woefully inadequate to address the facts of this situation. Other complicating factors: there were no performance failures in John's personnel file that would allow for disciplinary action, but it was well known by staff and line supervisors that this was not his first overdose in the workplace. In fact, there had been three!

As Director, I had to defend the organization. I had to defend the rest of the staff who were doing the best they could every day. I had to ask myself how to balance the rights of an individual against the broader rights of all of the employees. How did witnessing an overdose on the job affect the organization internally? What would be the fallout externally in such a highly political environment? How would it affect overall productivity and performance both short and long term?

Document the Facts:

Every aspect of the situation had to be documented. First, it was necessary to state the obvious: John had taken drugs while on the job. The needle used to administer the drug was still in his arm when help arrived. This was established by the on-the-scene paramedics as was the drug of choice – heroin. The drug NARCAM was used to revive him. Next, it was necessary to establish that he had given himself the drugs and that he had a history of drug abuse. Finally, assessing the performance of his duties prior to the overdose was part of the documentation. His immediate supervisor and those who witnessed the event were also consulted.

Make and Execute a Decision:

My assessment of the situation based on the facts was that John warranted immediate termination. Some may argue this action was excessive given the fact that there were no previous documented occurrences. While this is true, the facts surrounding the overdose and the state of the organization at the time necessitated swift and decisive action. I terminated John effective immediately.

Work with Key Stakeholders to Establish a Fair and Coherent Policy:

Difficult personnel situations are an excellent way to access and refine existing policies in the organization. In this situation, I collaborated with the local union representative and other stakeholders to develop an effective drug policy going forward. There were many rewrites and edits before the final policy was ready.

Ensure New Policy is Articulated to All Supervisors and Staff:

The union representative and I presented the new policy to all staff together. We included the major players who collaborated in the new policy development in the rollout. This was crucial to staff acceptance of the new policy. While management is responsible for implementing and executing new policy, management is not always trusted. Sharing the stage is one way to build trust and acceptance of change.

While the situation outlined above happened several years ago, I am not alone in having to deal with an employee with addiction. According to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "68.9 percent of the estimated 22.4 million illicit drug users, ages 18 to 64 were employed full or part time." Further, managers in every organization may encounter employee drug use where the correct action may not be readily apparent: where there is no documentation in the personnel file to use as a basis for performance disciplinary action; where there must be a balance between the rights of the individual; and the need to provide a safe and productive organization recognizing the needs of everyone.

Below are insights I used in this very difficult situation:

1. In the absence of a clear personnel policy to guide you, always do what your value system says is right and be prepared to accept the consequences.

2. Take appropriate steps to make sure the missing elements that made the current situation difficult are addressed and codified.

3. Take into account the feelings of all the staff in the organization and give them a chance to be heard.

4. Document, document, document and if possible, seek guidance from the Human Resources Department at every step.

Most importantly, despite the noise around you, stay focused on the results you want to achieve!

About the Author:

Irma Neal is currently owner of Onyx Rising Financial Services; a former VP in two Fortune 500 companies, a former Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis, Director of several government organizations and author of the book "Leading in Chaos: Insights to Lead Through the Storms."

These 4 Disciplines Will Help You Improving Work-life Balance

by Mitadru Dey

Please focus on your work-life balance," said my boss, who was visibly concerned with my obsession to work 24*7. That was the first time I learned about this fascinating term, "work-life balance". My relationship with this term has evolved. I used to work long hours and proudly proclaimed myself a workaholic to my friends and family. I worked on weekends fearing what if I miss to respond to emails. When my colleagues ask why I work so much, I used to say that work is my life. Hence no need to balance work and life. Seven years ago, when I came to New York, I heard people saying almost every day, "I am hanging in there"—as if just one knock would throw the person to the floor. That's why we look forward to weekends and vacations, and industry is built to cater to this need to get away from work.

When I conducted a poll on LinkedIn a few months back-asking the most challenging aspect of WFH, work-life balance makes it a clear winner among other options.

The concept of work-life balance came into existence in the 1980s. Ever since we have destroyed millions of trees to write about it. Reading several articles about the topic made me realize work-life balance essentially boils down to stress management. The very usage of the 'term' states that work and life are separated. As life is the most precious thing, it's work that generates stress leading to agitation and anxiety in professional and personal lives.

The root cause of any stress is mental agitation caused by unfulfilled desires. As an example, you are stressed that your child is not studying correctly. If he does not learn properly, he will not get into a good school. If he does not get into a good school, he will not get a good job. If he does not get a good job, then he will struggle with money. If he struggles with money, he will not get a good partner. If he does not get a good partner, he will not have a good family life—ad infinitum. You have multiple desires for your child which will not be fulfilled if he does not study.

Thus, you are stressed. You can extend this logic in other aspects of life as well. To mitigate stress, you need to manage your desires carefully. The solution lies in improving the quality of your desires as you cannot live without desires.

It would help if you cultivated higher values, which would automatically drop off lower categories of desires. For example, when you grow up as an adult, you no longer value toys that were the world to you as a child. Now your toys are name, fame, family, wealth, etc. How can you work towards higher values in life?

Here are some practical tips you can practice improving the quality of your life.

1) First thing in the morning is the essential aspect of your day

When you get up in the morning, study a book or watch videos which explain higher values of life with guidance from someone whom you believe live (not just talk) higher values. It needs to be a systematic study as one does with other courses like medical, law, engineering, etc. Discipline is key here. Otherwise, you will waste your time. To have maximum impact, this should be done before you touch your phone or other devices. Do this for no more than 75 minutes to have a healthy stretch for your brain.

2) Perfect your attitude throughout the day

Have an attitude of service and sacrifice while performing actions throughout the day. Think about how you can benefit the organization or your team instead of thinking about promotion and bonuses. The moment you move from being selfish to unselfish, your capacity to contribute will increase proportionately, and you will be more productive. Your management will recognize this focus to help the organization as will provide you with additional responsibilities. This will automatically take care of your promotion and bonus. At home, listen to your family members instead of thrusting your views on them. This could be as simple as watching a Netflix or Amazon prime show that you don't like with your kids. You will be amazed to see how your family reciprocates this behavior in due course.

Also, spend 20–30 minutes doing physical exercise. If you do not have a fit body, it will not let you function correctly.

Shirley Chisholm said, "Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth."
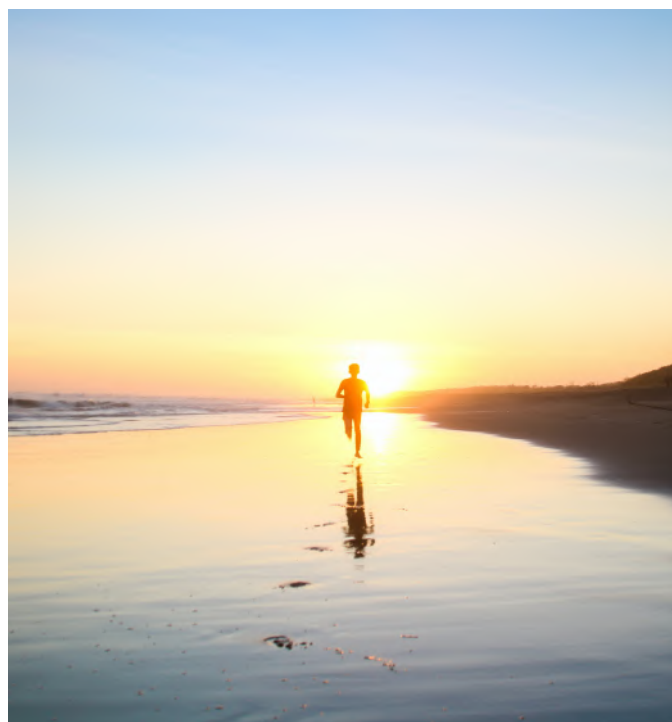
3) Be Grateful for being alive

Have an awareness that there is something higher in life ensuring you are taken care of. For example, 24*7 oxygen supply and so many natural and human factors contribute to having food at your table. Have an attitude of gratitude for people who contributed to your accomplishments in life. Listen to music that inspires you. Watch a nature documentary appreciating how a flower releases fragrance without caring whether anyone is there to take it or not. The underlying focus is to stay away from selfishness and recognize there are things bigger than you. I suggest spending 15–45 minutes doing this activity.

Got no checkbooks, got no banks, still I'd like to express my thanks. I got the sun in the morning and the moon at night." Irving Berlin, one of the greatest songwriters

4) Don't exaggerate your worries

Another aspect to consider is the value we give in each activity. It's critical to give the required value to every task. As a teenager in high school, all that mattered to you was getting a respectable score in your exams. That made you worried and anxious. Currently, it has not much meaning in your life. Fast forward to now and consider what is worrying you now will not concern you in 2025. However, that does not mean you need to be careless about what you are doing now; all I am saying is give appropriate attention to your present task—not more, not less. Having that understanding also reduces stress.

Following these disciplines are having a positive impact on my life and others who are following them. So, take control of your life—for your development and others around you. You will have a happy life—within and outside of your work.

"Let him who would move the world first move himself." — Socrates

The Author

Leadership:
Developing Your People
by Russell Heath

In 1969 Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull published a book titled "The Peter Principle." They argued that people are promoted through the corporate ranks until they reach their level of incompetence. People are promoted to ever higher positions as long as they perform well. At some point, they are promoted to a position that demands more than they can handle. Since they no longer produce adequate results, they remain in that position—never promoted again.

They have arrived at their level of incompetence.

Logically then, the mature corporation is staffed at all levels by incompetents.

The fallacy in The Peter Principle is the assumption that a person's performance is fixed—as if they have reached the limits of their genetic potential.

If, as a leader, you have promoted someone into a position in which they are not performing adequately, understand that they have not reached their level of incompetence. Instead, they have reached the level of incompetency of their "winning strategy."

What is a winning strategy?

When we are young, we develop a set of behaviors, values, and ways of looking at the world that we use to produce the results we want in our lives. If you were shrewd in choosing your genes, parents, country, culture, neighborhood schools—and a host of other factors—you may have developed an extremely effective winning strategy. A strategy that has enabled you to climb the corporate ladder with relative ease.
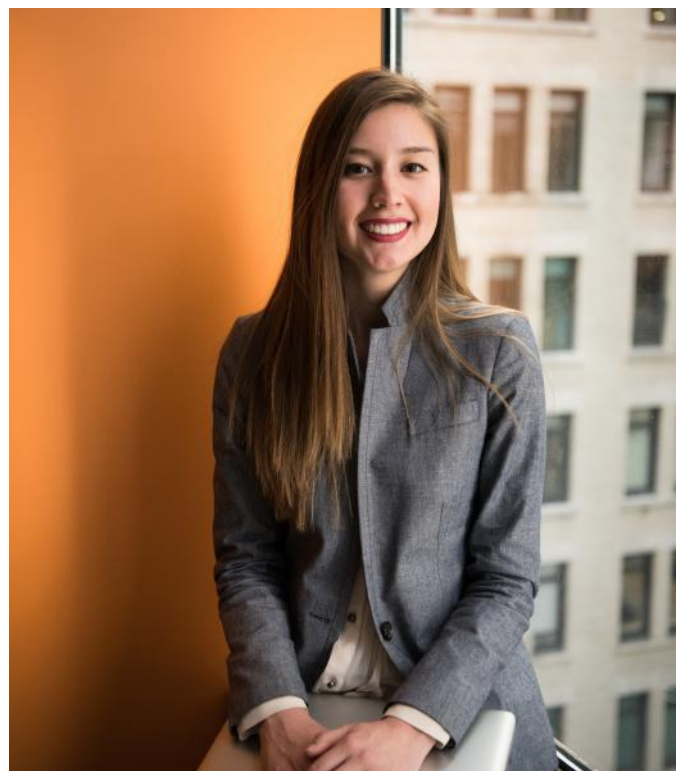
If you were less wise in selecting your genes and environment, you may have a less effective winning strategy—one that frequently trips you up, leaving you angry and frustrated that you have accomplished so little in your life.

Regardless of how effective your winning strategy is—whether you are a CEO or a clerk in the mailroom—the fact is that your winning strategy limits you. Even if you are performing well at the highest possible position, you could be taking your company further if you were not limited by your winning strategy.

The question then becomes: How do you move beyond your winning strategy?

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Let me start with an example.

Let us call him Joe. Joe is an electrical engineer—and he is good. He produces results by mastering the details of his project and coming up with very creative solutions. Joe quickly moved up the ranks until he became a team lead. Three junior engineers reported to him—few enough that he could still master the details of a project. His next promotion was to project manager, where he supervised 20-odd people, not all of them in his area of expertise.

Suddenly Joe could not master all the details of a project.

Joe doubled down, working late and on weekends. The team's work products started slipping. Losing control, he became anxious and began criticizing and micromanaging his team. He blamed his bosses for their (perceived) poor management. Team morale dropped, people left, deadlines were missed, and the success of his project looked bleak.

Joe had reached his level of incompetence—he could no longer produce the stellar results that had once awed his managers.

He came to me when he knew he was about to flame out.

Ideally, as a coach, my goal is to coach a person to tackle any problem without needing a winning strategy at all; that is, to be able to deploy whatever behaviors are necessary to solve it. In practice, moving beyond a winning strategy takes time. Instead, as with Joe, my initial goal is to augment a client's winning strategy so they can stabilize and resolve the situation they are immediately confronting.

After Joe and I distinguished his winning strategy—mastering all project details— we looked at the underlying assumptions that had made his strategy necessary. These assumptions were not trusting others to do their jobs well and, consequently, that he had to do the work himself. There was also a deeper core assessment that he was not good enough.

We introduced "partnership" into his kit of behavioral tools. Consciously and deliberately looking through (a metaphorical) lens of partnership, he learned how to relate to his team differently. Partnering with them to solve a problem that within his winning strategy he would have solved on his own; delegating accountability to team members for tasks and work-products, and listening to and brainstorming with his team on product strategy.

We put structures in place to ensure that the team completed its work-products to spec. Joe no longer had to know the detailed work steps that produced a product as long as the product performed to specification.

Quickly, Joe released his death grip on the details and micromanaging his team.

The team, of course, blossomed— performance and morale improved.

If you are a leader, you must know how to develop the people you lead. Dismissing employees who fail to perform adequately may be necessary for some circumstances but learning to spot when someone is bumping up against the limits of their winning strategy and taking action to bust them through will build a stronger and more profitable organization.

A beleaguered employee, working with a good coach, can dismantle and reconstruct their winning strategy relatively quickly, get back into the action, and produce the results you are looking for.

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If you are a leader, you must know how to develop the people you lead.

SMART Language
for Savvy Leaders

by Leanne Wyvill

Are you a leader who consciously considers how to use language to achieve a desired response?

Good leaders lead by example, and your expectations are reflected in your language choices, especially in your business writing.

If your team or others you wish to motivate and impress are not responding as you expected, it may be because they are misunderstanding your messages. Or perhaps it takes them a while to understand what you mean and they need more time to decipher it.

It's time to take responsibility for that confusion or delay.

For some leaders, moving away from an academic writing style conjures fears of sounding like a copywriter trying to market a dodgy deal or be pally in a way that doesn't match the brand tone.

It is possible to communicate professionally and effectively, to assert authority and attract respect, using less formal language.

Before I share some SMART language strategies for savvy leaders, let's look at why minding your language matters.

Firstly, remember the Mehrabian Principle?

• Words convey 7% of meaning
• Tone 38%
• Non-verbal cues 55%

The tone is more likely to be misinterpreted in a written message than a spoken one because the reader cannot supplement your words by recognising facial expressions, posture and vocal variations. That's why attention to other non-verbal clues like layout, formatting and word choice makes such an impact on communication effectiveness and efficiency.

Secondly: time. When you assume responsibility for how long it could take your reader to understand your message, you and your reader will have more time to be productive with other tasks.

Making your messages easier and therefore faster to read saves your audience time and effort. They'll thank you by responding more quickly in your favour.

Savvy leaders respect their readers' time and provide sufficient detail to help them take the desired action.

When you use SMART language, your readers can:

- See what they need to know (easily, quickly)

- Understand what they read

- Use this knowledge to take the action that will meet their needs... and yours.

SMART language helps the writer:

- Improve response rates and outcomes

- Encounter fewer complaints and delays

- Be more productive with the time and effort saved

- Boost reputation and promotion prospects

- Support and enhance team performance

SMART language choices consciously aim to be **S**pecific, **M**eaningful, **A**ctive, **R**eader-centric and **T**one-sensitive.

Communicating what you need others to do to achieve a common goal using SMART language will reduce time, stress and risk... for you and them.

SPECIFIC

Be specific so they don't have to keep coming back to you with questions. When your aim is to get a task done quickly, or that task is very important with a lot riding on its execution, sometimes using more words is actually what saves you time, stress and risk.

Specificity involves concrete words about (for example):

- Size
- Shape
- Colour
- Shade
- Make/Model
- Time - am/pm, hours/minutes/days
- Name
- Map coordinates
- Budget

If your text says: "I'll pick you up tonight," you'll probably spend distracting time going back and forth with the details or driving around the block several times, focusing on the kerbside instead of the road.

"I'll pick you up in a dark green SUV at 6 pm outside your hotel" is specific and clear. And time-saving.

How much detail depends on the context, your knowledge of the reader/s and your relationship with them.

MEANINGFUL

Choose words that you and your audience use every day, i.e. your common language and shared meaning of terms.

If they have to look up a word or ask a colleague what it means, the response or action you want will take longer. If they misinterpret the meaning, make assumptions about it, the wrong action might be taken and that could be detrimental or even disastrous to what you want to achieve.

Who wins by using sophisticated phrasing? No one.

- "Circumnavigation of the system to redeploy human assets is not commensurate with the overarching strategy."

- "Moving people from one job to another without following the right process is not going to help us achieve our goals."

Which one did you understand first?

As well as taking more time to comprehend, such choices can make you sound pompous or patronising. Is that what you want your readers to think of you? Is it the attitude you want your people to emulate?

What's more important: showing off your vocabulary range or making it easier and quicker for your reader to move from understanding to action?

Buzz words can be cute but also confusing, especially if your audience includes literal thinkers and native speakers of another language. If you say "It's in the bag", you might find someone rifling through your briefcase.

Metaphors can be very helpful for creating visual associations of complex concepts, but only when they clarify and amplify. If you have to explain the metaphor, you've made the wrong choice.

Perhaps your common language is jargonistic, a shorthand specific to your industry or team. However, while your vice-president might be familiar with company-wide acronyms and abbreviations, a client might use those same letter combinations differently in their business. It's fine to use jargon if it is the common language for everyone involved. But it's not if it's not.

ACTIVE

Would you prefer to be known as an active or passive leader? How you phrase your words is a form of non-verbal communication.

Active language looks livelier. That's because it has more verbs ("doing words") than nouns (things). It communicates that you are actually doing stuff.

Active voice lets the actors act. They are in the spotlight.

Which version sounds less sluggish?

- "The sales team met every monthly target in the first quarter."

- "The monthly targets in the first quarter were met by the sales team."

The first has fewer words and is more direct and energetic.

Sentences and paragraphs with more nouns than verbs take longer to read – like taking bridal steps down the aisle instead of striding swiftly.

Compare these sentences:

- "There is a Dispute Resolution Department which has the responsibility for the promotion of the development of dispute resolution services and for the provision of independent, responsive and effective assistance to individuals and groups that are engaged in the constructive resolution of conflict." (43 words; 15 nouns; 4 verbs; 256 characters)

- "The Dispute Resolution Department is responsible for promoting the development of dispute resolution services and providing independent, responsive and effective assistance to people engaged in constructive conflict resolution." (28 words; 11 nouns; 4 verbs; 200 characters)

- "The Dispute Resolution Department promotes the development of dispute resolution services and provides independent, responsive and effective aid to people engaged in constructive conflict resolution." (25 words; 11 nouns; 3 verbs; 175 characters)

Adjectives describe the sensory aspects of an action or object, e.g. how it looks, feels, sounds, tastes or smells. Adverbs clarify how you want something done, e.g. promptly, smoothly, tactfully, quietly, assertively. Adding these extra words can reduce doubt about your expectations.

Use verb + adjective or adverb combinations instead of multiple nouns:

- Take care with making your decision... Decide carefully.

- Ensure the smooth operation of the program... Ensure the program operates smoothly.

- He used gestures to emphasise... He gestured emphatically.

- What we heard was songs that were full of joy... We heard joyful songs.

To check for passive voice, look for sentences beginning with "There is" and "There are". Change the sentence structure so the sequence is subject-verb-object. Think "The cat sat on the mat" instead of "The mat was sat upon by the cat".

To reduce your noun numbers, look for longer words that end in "ment" or "tion". Shorter words like "of the" and "by" are usually beside them. Consider using the verb form of the word instead, e.g. manage/management, believe/belief, convey/conveyance, etc.

Tools that can help you reduce passive voice include Credosity, Grammarly, and that grey pop-up box that appears after you've run the in-built spell-checker.
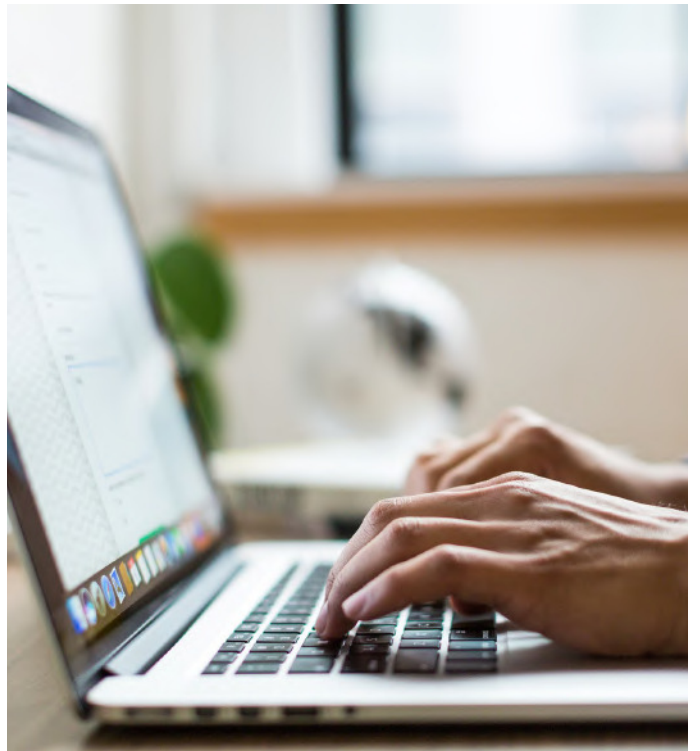
READER-CENTRIC

You know what you want from your written message, but why should you reader care? What's in it for them? Why should they read it and take the action you ask for?

If the reader believes there's a good reason to give time to your message (not just to keep their job), they're more inclined to support your request (promptly).

Here are three ways to foster faith in the value of reading your emails, reports and proposals.

1. Say why

- "Because" is a powerful word. If you explain early why reading your message will lead to benefits for them, for you, for the company or a cause, then they'll be more motivated to read and take action.

- Sharing your purpose is a transparency practice that builds trust.

2. Formatting

- Make it easy for them. Don't make them guess or click and then click and then click and then click or then scroll and scroll and scroll to find the critical details.

- Use bullet points, spacing and bold type to help them scan quickly instead of feeling like they need a shovel to shift and sift.

3. Proofread

- Check that you have spelled names of people, products and companies correctly before printing/sending/posting. Not getting these details right can trigger doubt about your level of respect and professionalism. Is it reasonable to expect Stephan to read on and respond enthusiastically when you address him as Stephanie?

- Deciphering spelling errors, misplaced punctuation and unusual capitalisation slows down reading. The harder you make it to read, the longer it takes for the reader to understand your message and figure out what action they should take. They might give up or their annoyance may influence their response.

TONE-SENSITIVE

"It's not what you said, it's how you said it." That's tone – the 38 percent factor in Mehrabian's communication equation. The readers' interpretation of your tone influences how they respond to you.

Tone tells how…

- the writer feels

- the writer wants the reader to feel

- much the writer cares

- much the writer respects the reader and the situation

Tone tells how…

- channel

- language

- amount of help the writer gives the reader

Compare the following examples. Which one do you think is more likely to receive a positive and prompt response?

- "An application for personal leave from you was received by the HR Department but it cannot be processed because you did not sign both pages and it was signed with a pencil. Sign and submit the form again otherwise it will not be processed. Do not use blue ink or pencil."

- "HR received your personal leave application but there's another step before it can be processed. As your signature is required on both pages, please sign the enclosed form in the flagged places and return it to us. Remember to use a pen with black ink so the application can be completed successfully."

Draw on all the strategies in this article to hone your tone. Take the time to check that your tone is appropriate for the situation and the relationship with your readers.

This will save time for you – not waiting for a response while the reader is walking around the block cooling off; and for your readers – not being distracted by wondering if they have misunderstood, done something wrong, or should start looking for leadership elsewhere.

The Author:

Leanne Wyvill

Communication Confidence Trainer and Coach helping business teams work better together

How To Create Fierce Advocates for your Brand -- Put Your Money Where Their Mouth Is

by Nicole Smith

If I told you there was a way to acquire a $1,000,000 in-kind donation for your organization, would you be interested? One challenge that all non-profits face, large or small, is maximizing the potential of those who give of their time freely to your organizations; volunteers and/or interns. Learning to balance the four following principles can result in fierce advocates for your organization, igniting the unyielding power of Word Of Mouth advertising ultimately resulting in an increase of volunteer and/or intern participation. **Don't underestimate the power of your volunteers and interns. Their untapped potential can get you there.**

COMMUNICATION: A huge part of building a strong volunteer and/or intern team is constant, reliable communication. Communication starts with making sure your volunteers and/or interns understand the purpose of why you exist. From day one, making sure that they are aware of your Vision and Mission will be the spark that gets and keeps them excited. Introducing the philosophy of UBUNTU (I am because we are) is a great way to demonstrate that they are a part of the success of the organization and fulfilling it's mission and vision. Once they have been on-boarded, keep them in the loop with organization happenings, and most importantly, how they can be of help. Make sure they are aware of the impact that their hours donated are making. Communicate, "because you gave xxxxx many hours, our organization was able to provide xxxx meals, xxxx children's programs etc" Make it relative to what your organization does.

Communicating with them directly is huge. Whether it be via text message, hand written or e-card, phone call, or even a personalized e-mail. One to one connection can be HUGE especially if your volunteer team skews older. This conveys that you are not only interested in what they contribute to the organization, but who they are as people as well.

CARE: Make sure they have the proper tools needed to help. There is nothing more frustrating than trying to complete a project with problematic tools, whether it's computers, actual tools or whatever is needed to complete the task. Never ever forget that they are giving your organization the most valuable commodity that exists; their time. Plan ahead what you will have volunteers and/or interns do. They are ok with wasting their own time, but they don't want you to waste it.

CONNECTION: Ask for their feedback and actually listen to them. Then address their concerns. The suggestions that they make that can be implemented, do so. The suggestions that can't at least respond to let them know they have been heard, and although a great idea, it isn't something that can be currently implemented. If it is something that could possibly be implemented in the future let them know. This is a huge way to validate their voice and that the organization values their feedback.

When you are having an organizational event, invite the volunteers and/or interns when appropriate. Staff meetings, organization cookouts, talent shows, organization wide fundraisers, celebratory recap gatherings after pulling off a huge event to name a few.

Provide opportunities for volunteers and/ or interns to get to know, or even work alongside, staff members on organization projects. Allow them to experience first-hand how their contribution is making a difference. Invite them to the end of project celebration, share the test results of a child they tutored. Whatever this may look like for your respective organization....do it.

APPRECIATION: This is quite possibly the single most important aspect of hosting a volunteer and/or internship program. Gratitude. Seriously. Thank them. I know it sounds crazy, but you would be surprised how far a simple "thank you" goes, and even more surprised at how many people don't even realize they don't do it, or even better yet, THINK they are thanking their volunteers or interns but really aren't.

Make sure you are thanking people the way **they need it**. Meaning, you can be writing thank you cards out the wazoo, but would really make them feel special is a phone call from you. Or, you can be saying thank you, but perhaps a $5 gift card for coffee would mean the world to them. Lastly, you may be thanking them publicly, but they don't want the attention, just a simple personalized call or handwritten card will do. Appreciation can range from no or low cost to extravagant events. The real cost comes in NOT appreciating your volunteers and/or interns. Be sure when annual budgets are being created that something is set aside to show appreciation to your volunteers and interns. The ROI on this investment is priceless.

Power of Word of Mouth

Word of mouth marketing is the most valuable source of marketing. According to a Nielsen study, 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family more than they do advertising. Implementing the principles discussed will create fiercely loyal advocates that will promote on behalf of the organization and it programs greater than your wildest dreams. Once volunteers and / or interns feel validated, valued and have bought into your organization's vision, you have positioned your organization for one of the following: Your numbers will increase, your current volunteer/interns will participate more, or better yet, both.

About the Author:

Nicole (@nicolersmithnet) is a Panamanian-American, workforce development specialist, dancer, motivational speaker and published author of Game On! Relentlessly Pursue Your Dreams and the 101 Affirmations Journal Series. She attended Oral Roberts University on a Division I full-ride track scholarship. After graduating, she founded Step It Up! Inc., a non-profit dance organization. Her experience in sports and entertainment, radio, TV and the performing arts has spanned nearly 20 years covering the Chicago, Houston and Miami markets. She has danced and cheered for four Professional and Semi-Professional sports teams, has prepared more than 500 interns to enter the workforce and has inspired crowds upwards of 2000. She received the Emerging Leaders ALIVE Impact Award, was listed as one of WLRN's "Local Women Who Inspire You", and was selected as one of Legacy Miami's MOST PROMINENT AND INFLUENTIAL BLACK WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY OF 2019. She sits on the Board of the Association of Leaders In Volunteer Management, The Arts and Business Council of Miami and Ageless Chic Magazine.
www.nicolersmith.net

Improve your attitude with 5E's—education, experience, environment, empathy, and ethics

by Professor M.S. Rao, Ph.D.

In the 20th century, a lot of research was done to find out what made people successful. It was revealed that it was the attitude that made them successful. Attitude is the main thing that is considered for success everywhere. It outsmarts intelligence, experience, abilities, skills, and capabilities. During the employment interview, the recruiters look for attitude in the candidates. There is a slogan in HR circles, 'Hire for Attitude, Train for Skill.'

Attitude is the way people look at individuals, events, circumstances, situations. A positive attitude is the ability to remain positive despite being encountered with several challenges. It is to accept the realities and remain positive and confident without getting provoked or irritated. A positive attitude increases your self-awareness and helps you understand what is under your control and what is not under your control. You accept the external circumstances that are beyond your control and learn to live

with it with optimism. It breaks barriers and builds bridges. It promotes fraternity and brotherhood. You empathize with others and build compassion to excel as a compassionate leader.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE VERSUS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

Individuals with a positive attitude think that everything happens for a reason and all that happens for good whereas individuals with a negative attitude think that it is the end of the road when things don't fall into place. Individuals with a positive attitude explore opportunities from threats whereas individuals with a negative attitude explore threats from opportunities. Individuals with a positive attitude look at the rising sun whereas individuals with a negative attitude look at the setting sun. Individuals with a positive attitude look at the silver lining over the dark cloud whereas individuals with a negative attitude look at the dark cloud. Individuals with a positive attitude are

part of the solutions, not the problems whereas individuals with a negative attitude are part of the problems, not the solutions. In a nutshell, individuals with a positive attitude are optimistic with a growth mindset whereas individuals with a negative attitude are pessimistic with a fixed mindset.

Individuals with a positive attitude are confident, optimistic, tolerant, flexible, adaptable, responsible, reliable, and humble. In contrast, individuals with a negative attitude are envious, pessimist, and feel inferior to others, and often spread hatred to others. The individuals with a neutral attitude are disconnected, detached, indifferent, and unemotional. When you look at Roman leader, Julius Caesar, he was with a positive attitude, Caligula was with a negative attitude and Nero was with a neutral attitude.

ATTITUDE WITH EXAMPLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Attitude is your ability to appreciate even your enemies when they do better than you. Winston Churchill once remarked, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." Some of the leaders including Hitler and Mussolini destroyed the world with their negative attitude. The difference between Obama and Osama is the only attitude that made the former a hero while the latter a villain.

Attitude matters more in the current volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. It is essential in campus and corporate as the negative attitude often kills productivity and performance in the workplace and the negative attitude shells out unhealthy students from the educational institutions. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize the importance of inculcating a positive attitude in individuals.

There is often a thin line that separates positive and negative attitudes. When individuals cross that thin line, they can become successful leaders. When you look at Obama and Osama, they are great leaders but Obama has a positive attitude while Osama had a negative attitude. Undoubtedly, both are intelligent but the former with a positive attitude

while the latter with a negative attitude. When you look at Winston Churchill and Adolph Hitler, both were intelligent leaders and great orators. The former was with a positive attitude while the latter was with a negative attitude. It is obvious from these examples the importance of attitude over intelligence and eloquence.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE YOUR ATTITUDE

Here are some tips to improve your attitude. Be positive. Visualize success. Set your goals as they remove negative thoughts from your mind and replace them with positive thoughts. Additionally, you are engaged constructively to lead your life with purpose and meaning. Surround with positive and healthy people. Read good books. Learn, unlearn, and relearn. Learn from your failures. Pursue your passions and hobbies to engage your mind creatively. Acquire healthy habits. Do meditation, or yoga, or hit the gym regularly. Eat the right and healthy food. Stop complaining, criticizing, and condemning others. Be a giver, not a taker. Come out of your comfort zone and stretch yourself. Become a volunteer. Join nonprofits to serve others. Work for a cause, not for applause. Express your gratitude every day.

IMPROVE YOUR ATTITUDE WITH 5E's

Attitude is the foundation of your success. It is essential to excel as a leader. The lion is the king of the jungle not because of its strength but because of its attitude. Eagle is the leader among all birds not because of its size but because of its attitude. You can improve your attitude with 5E's—Education, Experience, Environment, Empathy, and Ethics. Emphasize the right education, experience, healthy environment, empathy, and ethics. Surround with healthy friends and inspiring books. No matter where you come from you can improve your attitude by emphasizing 5E's. To conclude, improve your attitude to excel as a leader and soar like an eagle.

About the Author:

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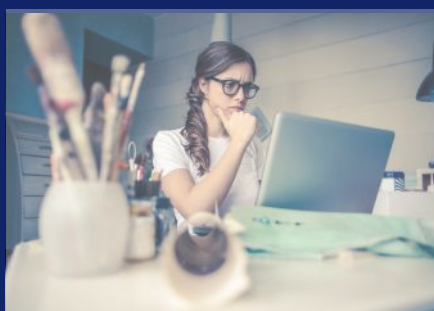
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