

Lessons from Life and Leadership

www.leadershiplifeandstyle.com





I blog about my lessons from life and from my leadership career. I share my lessons here.

Thank you to everyone that has shared my journey, all the great leaders I have had, my great friends and also a big thank you to the poor leaders and friends as this has been my greatest learning

Visit my site at www.leadershiplifeandstyle.com.au

Bugs on Your Windscreen: Whats Obscuring your Vision?

Wednesday, July 10, 2013



Bugs on your Windscreen, Whats obscuring your Vision?

We liken our lives to a journey; a journey of ups and downs; times of focus; times of emotions.... And we all have memories of holiday road trips where we have undertaken long journeys by car. And whether we have fond memories or not, we all know what tends to accumulate on the windscreen as the journey continues. Squashed bugs on the windscreen and as time goes on, the bugs become a visual

impact to the driver. And if you are like me, we attempt to use the wipers to wash the bugs off, but this usually does nothing more than smear the bugs obscuring our vision even more. So when we do this, we have no option but to stop at a service station and give it a good clean to get our vision back.

So as we go through the journey of our lives what are we accumulating along the way? What is obscuring our vision? And what are we smearing around that blocks and stops us, and forces us to clean up..... The grudges we carry, the jealousy we pick up, the judgements we make the prejudices we encounter, the self-doubt and loathing..... They do nothing for the journey we are on, they block our vision, they obscure our view of ourselves and to become the best version of ourselves, we need perfect clarity of who we are meant to be....we need clarity of our vision.

So if your vision is obscured.....STOP. Give yourself a clean out, its time to renew your vision.

Tony Curl

We bring people to life at our Leadership, Life and Style Website. Start your personal growth journey [HERE](#).

Email Marketing You Can Trust

Is it Trust? or Trust the Most?

Friday, July 19, 2013



Trusting the Most? Almost Trusting
Facing elections here in Australia, voters are faced with a massive quandary. I suppose like many in the world, we are faced with decisions on who we trust with the task of managing our country. To make matters worse, most of us have a distinct lack of trust in politics, parties and members of parliament themselves.

But it's not just in political life that this lack of trust is obvious. It is in the companies we work for, the unions that support our workers. It is all around us in the workplace, and it is everywhere in our lives. It's in our families and friends.

When we reflect on our political decisions, it comes down to the politician we trust the most. Let me repeat that. We decide who we trust the most. In other words, we are saying we ALMOST TRUST YOU. You See.....Trust is complete. When we say I TRUST YOU, it is a complete statement, a complete belief. There are no reservations, no proviso's...IT'S COMPLETE. A person can have no better compliment than to have others say "I TRUST YOU".

Trusting someone the most, is vastly better than saying we trust someone the least....however they are still saying "I ALMOST TRUST YOU" It's not complete. I would like to believe you BUT.....I don't.

So when we trust people, we truly trust them. To deliver on their word; to live with integrity; to be courageous in their beliefs and values and stay true to principles and friends.

When we say I trust you the most....it means I almost trust you to deliver on your word; to live with integrity; to be courageous in your beliefs and stay true to principles and friends. I would like to trust and believe.....but I don't.

With trust comes great responsibility and accountability. Living a life of integrity, courage and belief supports a character that others trust. And sadly, we have found out that sometimes, this just isn't convenient. So we end up in a constant state of "Almost Trust" on deciding who we trust the most.

Tony Curl
Check our our Leadership, Life and Style Website.

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Are we Attacking the Wrong End?

Thursday, July 25, 2013



Are we attacking the Wrong End? I was listening to an enlightening interview the other day with Sally Symonds and she got me thinking of a number of things in our world today. She quoted two statistics that I will share. The first is that 80% of people presenting with medical issues come from life-style related diseases. The other stat, is that within a very short time span (I believe she said 10 years, but I may be wrong) that over 80% of our population will be obese.

Now at times we let statistics like these wash over us, but I remember recently reading about the increasing costs of health care and that in the foreseeable future, costs for healthcare will increase by 35% year on year. The government were using these figures to justify a harder

line approach to costs and expenses, especially in relation to salaries paid to nurses. Or the alternative is to increase taxes...and no-one wants that.

So.....are we attacking the wrong end.

We seem to be tackling the END RESULT of the lifestyle choices that we make. The bad habits that we make in terms of nutrition and recreation. We smoke too much, we drink too much and we do drugs too much. AND we expect the government to pay for the associated and almost certain, health care costs with it.

We call governments who attempt to tackle these issues with increased regulation, a "nanny state" and we bemoan the reduction of our abilities as human to "choose". "Its my choice and what's it got to do with you?" is a common theme we hear. When we see the rate of increased costs, I think it has a lot to do with everyone.

Choice is a big thing for all of us, and we all have the right to choose. When we participate in risky activities or theme parks, we are often asked to sign disclaimers. Many of the lifestyle choices are just as risky, yet where are our disclaimers?

Many in the world work hard at inspiring magic amongst people, bringing people to life and educating and motivating people to make the right choice. To get someone's mind and motivation right is a game-changing experience and we need support to do this. When people are offered insight and education, they will continue to make the right choice.

We have it wrong. Healthy options are often more expensive than cheaper options. Personal growth programs are often seen as unnecessary as many believe learning finished when they leave school.

We have it wrong! By attempting to squeeze costs in a burgeoning area of medical needs, we have the priorities wrong. We need to channel our efforts into educating people and if poor choices remain, we need to instill a greater emphasis on a user pays,

either through greater taxation or other means. But we need to instill greater incentives for education first. And programs that work, in ensuring people make better choices.

With anything, if you want to change the world, you need to change yourself. Mass movements don't start with the masses, so influence a friend. Lets make this happen and as our collective grows, so will influence on more and more people. People make choices, lets make the environment for them to make the best choices.

Until then, we have it wrong.

Tony Curl

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Lessons from Leadercast - Andy Stanley

Saturday, August 03, 2013



Lessons from Leadercast- Brisbane Leadercast came to Brisbane yesterday due to strong perseverance of fellow John Maxwell Team Member Peter Lam. Leadercast is a one-day event broadcast live from Atlanta to over 100,000 leaders around the globe. It's a movement that is changing the way the world thinks about leadership by building leaders worth

following. It happens annually in May, and through the efforts of Peter, for the first time in Australia Leadercast was launched to a small but appreciative audience in Brisbane.

The first speaker was Andy Stanley, best-selling author of over 20 books, and who has over 2.3 million listeners world-wide. The theme for Leadercast 2013 was "Simply Lead" and Andy spoke about how to reduce and remove complexity from our leadership. We need a way to recenter, and to keep our leadership simple. We must find a way to keep the mist from becoming a fog.

Andy keeps his leadership simple with answering three questions.

1. What are we doing?
2. Why are we doing it?
3. Where do I fit in?

The need is to answer these questions in one simple sentence.

So when complexity hits....What are we doing? Does it fit what we do?

So when complexity hits....Why are we doing it? What is the compelling reason we do it?

So when complexity hits....Where do I fit in? What is my unique contribution?

Andy describes these questions as his "In case of Emergency: Break Glass" routine. His ability to withdraw and refocus. And in a world where complexity reigns....the greatest need for leaders is to fight complexity and associated confusion, and to maintain simplicity.

Leaders keep things simple.

Tony Curl

Check out our website for our services and offers.

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Lessons From Leadercast Brisbane: Dave Allen

Sunday, August 11, 2013



Lessons from leadercast: Dave Allen Continuing in the series of learnings from this years Leadercast, rebroadcast in Brisbane in August. Dave Allen spoke about the need to generate space in your life. He used the power of personal stories to great effect to build into his presentation, but the greatest learnings to me was about focus and appropriate engagement.

He described his Perspective and Control Matrix and he described the following quadrants.

- Victim - No Perspective/ No Control
- Crazy Maker - High Perspective / No Control
- Micro Manager - High Control / No Perspective (Vision)
- Captain and Commander - High Perspective / High Control

The Captain and Commander is the only one prepared to offer Appropriate Engagement. Dave talked about some little key concepts like "Mind like water" as water reacts appropriately to what it faces eg ripples through a pebble, or wild due to storms.

Another ideal that hit the spot was, "You need flexibility not perfection". How true is that, as I have seen so many burn out chasing their idea of perfection in the world, life and career....when they needed to be flexible to deal with the world.

Finally, Dave talked about a process to use to clear the mind of clutter. He called the the Master Keys. They are:

1. Anything that is on your mind get it out of your mind – write it down
2. Make outcome/action decisions – what actually needs to get done/learned
3. Use the right maps – step back and see the big picture of what needs to get done

Dave was clear in his message of freeing your mind and focusing on Appropriate Engagement and enabling us with the Master Keys.

Leading and learning go together, and if you wish to lead people, you need to grow. Leaders that don't grow, don't lead for long.

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Why Are You Where You Are, and Not Where You Should be?

Sunday, August 18, 2013



Steve Maraboli describes graveyards as being filled with unfulfilled dreams. And I would believe that no-one could argue with that.

We all have dreams and we all have some goals that we wish to accomplish. The simple fact is that most of us don't chase them. Most of us take our dreams to the grave.

And at times we may find our dreams and goals overwhelming, we find them huge, we find them so far out of reach. So we stop....?

What I know is that stepping towards the best version of me, is a sacrifice I want to make. I'm not hoping it happens, I'm not wishing it happens. I'm not dreaming it happens. I'm making it happen¹

And I'm making it happen by being courageous....I'm making to happen by taking small steps daily. Small steps that take me closer to my goal, closer to my dream, closer to the best version of myself, closer to where I should be.

So I ask you....Why are you where you are? and not where you should be. Today should be the day you courageously follow through and take action on your dreams.

Tony Curl

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The Legacy Of Carter

Monday, September 09, 2013



At times, we grasp for answers. Stuff happens that defies logic. Recently, close friends of ours lost their first born son at just 4 weeks. Carter Desmond, came into this world, and fought every day for his short life. In any way we look at the world, this is just unfair. The amazing support from family and friends was overwhelming, and it would be a fair assertion that everyone were looking for answers.

Was their answers?

Pastor John, who conducted the service, spoke well and re-assured all there that Carter was now in the arms of the lord and was safe. Family members spoke about the special love that the parents had bestowed upon Carter and that Carter had only known love in his short time on earth.

All of which was true. It comforted us all.

It is a shame that we often only learn in times of crisis.

Carter fought for 4 weeks. Every day he fought to survive. He fought infection, he fought through surgery, but most of all he fought for those basic fundamentals of life, that we just take for granted. He fought to live, and we need to ask ourselves the question "Are we fighting to live?"

The stoic support from family and friends was another lesson. Wide eyed, unconditional love and support was evident and clear. And the courage shown by the young couple was inspiring.

The Legacy from Carter.

- · Live life to the fullest. Maximise my potential. Don't take the basics of life for granted.
- · Love my friends and family unconditionally
- · Chase my dreams.

Tony Curl

Visit us at www.ils.net.au for more our our programs and our services to help you chase your dreams

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Transformation Stories

Friday, September 13, 2013



This weekend I fly into Sydney to be a mentor for a group of champions undergoing personal and physical transformation for the Annual Bodytrim challenge. It's a company that I am proud to be associated with as it was their program that enabled me to start my own personal transformation and my journey since.

I am looking forward to hearing the stories from the challengers as I know they will be inspiring, motivating and celebratory.

So what's your story? Are you the hero? Do you have something that will inspire others? Does your story feel celebratory?

You have the power to choose your own story. If you don't like the TV show that is your life, you need to change the program. Fiddling with the colours and the brightness won't make it any better. You need to change that program. So, get off the couch....vision your success and make it happen. We can all do it.

Tony Curl

If you need support changing the program, check out our website here for more information.

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M-brace Life, Move, Motivate, Mobilise!

Monday, September 16, 2013



When you are surrounded by Motivated people, It's not difficult to go with the tide. I spent my weekend with an amazing group of people who have personally transformed their lives by losing weight through the Bodytrim program. I was privileged to be there as an official mentor for the challenge winners and came away inspired from their lessons surrounding their transformation.

The weight loss scenarios in themselves was absolutely incredible, a total of over 610kgs between the 13 challengers, but it was the stories of what they overcame to achieve that cemented the inspiration. There was health stories where they had overcome mild heart attacks, chronic fatigue and other health issues. Overcoming internal doubt, anxiety attacks couples losing weight together and taking a stand. And changes since have seen some move into more advanced exercise options chasing sporting physique goals while others have become personal trainers to support and inspire others. Stories of absolute inspiration where people simply said ENOUGH!!!!. I need to change. NOW! Chasing their dream.

It's difficult to describe the bond that we share after a weekend like this, but it's the start of a lifelong relationship of friendship and support. Its the start of a mutual support and inspiration network.

So we had many emotional discussions with the challengers, with plenty of time for reflection. It got me thinking, that when you are surrounded by Motivated People, its not difficult to be swept with the tide. And the lesson is there for all of us. Surround yourself with people that Move You, Motivate you and who Mobilise you. Move, Motivate, Mobilise.

Doing so will certainly help you M-brace life.

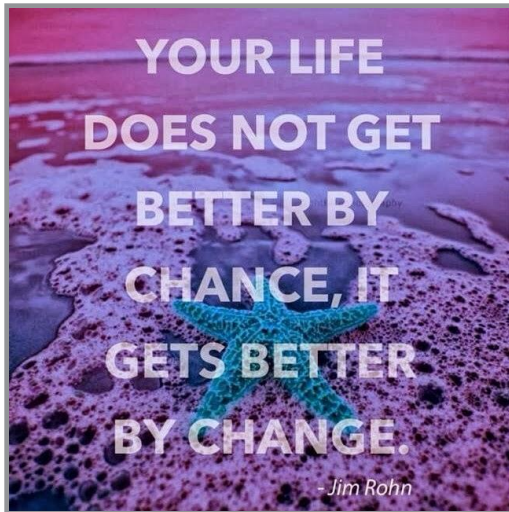
So check who is around you? Have a look now. Do they Move you, do they motivate you and do they mobilise you. If not....why are you there? Mbrace life!

Tony Curl

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Everybody Moves, Everybody Changes.

Monday, September 30, 2013



People either embrace or react to change. We embrace change when we push forward for ourselves, and we react when change is forced upon us. Most of us live within a comfort zone and don't look for change ourselves usually. And when we don't drive change for ourselves, because change is inevitable and part of the natural theme of the universe, it will be forced upon us by others or by circumstances. And we react to it...and usually poorly.

It reminds me of one of my favourite songs from Australian Band Died Pretty. In it Ron Peno sings about.....Everybody

Moves...Everybody Changes. Everybody Moves away from me.

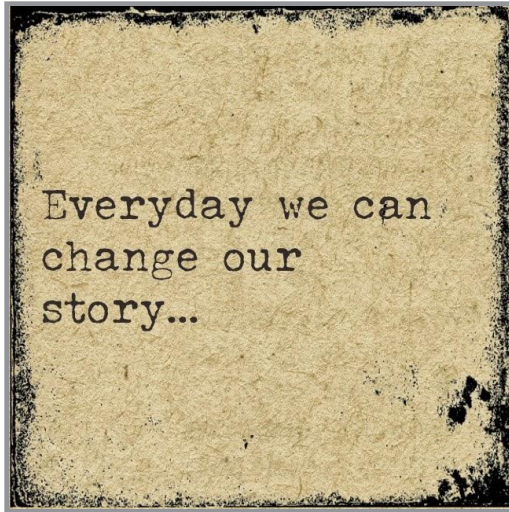
So I ask you, do you push for change, or do you react to change when it's forced upon you.

This song is an Australian Classic and gets covered by a number of artists
Three versions of this song appear below. Enjoy.

Tony Curl

Every Day We Can Change Our Story....

Wednesday, October 16, 2013



Often we sense a feeling of resignation, a feeling of disillusionment and we ask ourselves if this is what life is? And often we feel like this, just when we have made a big breakthrough in our lives and careers, on something we have worked hard on for a long period of time...achieving it seems to drive us into facing a "What's Next" scenario, if we don't have that mapped out.

Conversely, this sense of resignation applies to many people from all walks of life, wishing and wanting more in their life, their career and in their relationships. For many this is due to the fact of a missing

thingcalled action.

Focusing and working on a major goal is great, but that sense of foreboding of what's next when that goal is achieved and plans are not in place for the next stage is real and sends us to depths of where to look next.

And sitting their waiting for someone to be kind enough to take you to the place you wish to go...is certainly the required path to a long lifetime of regret. People don't take you to where you want to go....they take you to where they want you to go....And who knows where that is?

We need to be courageous enough in believing that EVERYDAY is a day to start afresh. Everyday is a day we can embark on our journey. Everyday we can say ENOUGH....and move on. Everyday is a day we can take the lessons from the past and plant the seed for tomorrow. Everyday is a chance to take a fresh step forward.

Tomorrow (Thursday 17th Oct), I am holding a seminar that people have invested in with their time. The crowds may only be small, but these people attending want to know more about how they can enhance and improve their lives and others around them. It is something I am certainly looking forward to, but one thing that has stood out is the amount of others in the world who believe the excuses they tell themselves.....The one that also ridicule and criticise others who want to add value. Unfortunately we mass produce average today, and too many follow the well worn path of excuses and blame.

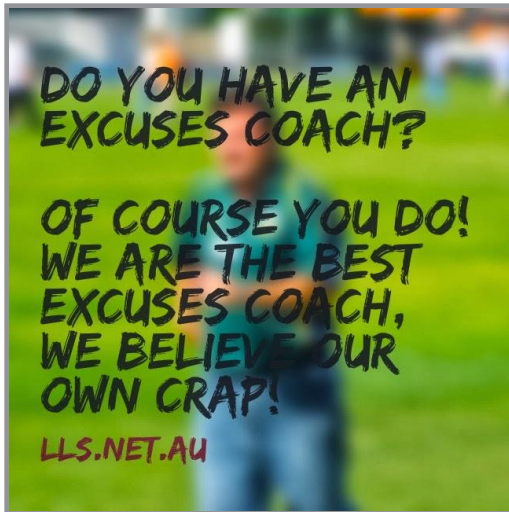
So wherever you find yourself....get your head out of yesterday and everything it gave you, whether it is success or a mess. Today is a new day, today we can step forward..to a better you.

Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

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World's Best Excuses Coaches. We all have one.

Friday, October 18, 2013



I get asked often "What is an Empowerment Coach"? I usually reply with the fact that everyone already has the world's best Excuses Coach, when we actually need someone to empower us to act on our dreams and our goals

We are our own world's best Excuses Coaches....The simple fact is we have amazing BS detectors, but we are simply unable to detect our own. We believe our own crap that we tell ourselves...and the vast majority do nothing because we have been successful in talking ourselves out of doing anything. At least we are successful

in doing nothing.

But why do we allow this? We have everything we need NOW to be a success in what we choose. We have everything, but we listen to our brain's natural resistance to change and cave in. We stay firmly entrenched in our comfort zone.

Nothing great happens in our comfort zone.....this is where safety and security collude to delude us that all is well in the world.....which is just simply false economy. And the reason why?....Change is a constant in the world. We simply cannot just sit back and be warm and safe and removed from change...it is going to happen. And if we don't understand change....and it's forced upon you....the reaction is usually negative.

Being empowered means you take responsibility for change and growth in your life, the positive change that you seek in life and career, but also how we respond to change when it happens outside of our control. Too many people burn out being worried or anxious about change that they have no control over.....

Our excuses, our self-talk, the bullshit we tell ourselves stops most of us from ever achieving anything great that we are destined to achieve. Our fear of failure and our fear of success keeps us firmly rooted.....and stuck in the warm delusion that the comfort zone brings.

Face your fears, deal with your self talk and wade your way through your own crap. Stand up to be counted....FOR YOU....The old saying is that you need to know enough, have grown enough or hurt enough to create change in your life. I also add, you need to care enoughABOUT YOU....

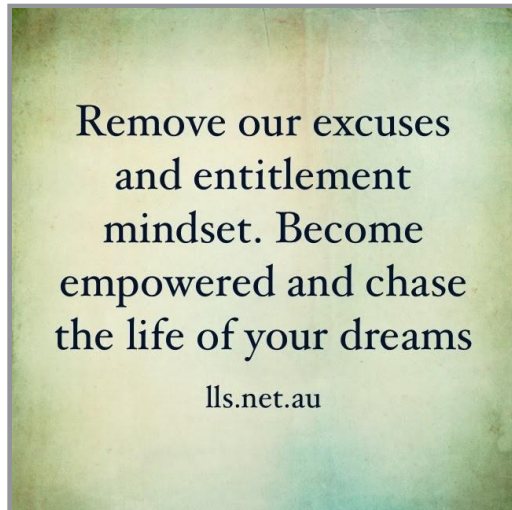
The job of an Empowerment Coach is to empower you to take back control of your life and your career.....to create positive ongoing growth and change and to erase the need of that painful catalyst that forces change upon us.

Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

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Excuses, Entitlement or Empowerment. Which do you Choose?

Wednesday, October 30, 2013



Too many people today live in a world of excuses and entitlement. The excuses they tell themselves and the entitlement they believe they have because others have things better than them. Many people sit on their hands and have wishes for a better life, but are unwilling to make the decisive step forward because of this excuses and entitlement mindset. Action determines results and lack of action results in no results.

Our world today is dominated by average. Average people leading average lives. Average people constantly comparing

themselves to others and believing they have the same rights or entitlements that they have. They miss the fact that people who work hard, achieve more, live more....and if you're not prepared to work hard, don't compare yourself to others. If you are content to live a borderline average life, don't expect others to make your life better. If you are not prepared to work hard for yourself and towards your dreams, don't begrudge the fact that others are.

We need to get out of this excuses and entitlement mindset which we have fueled as a society. You have everything in you to achieve your dreams. You just need to take the first step towards your dreams and goals. Don't go sitting on your hands waiting for the good nature of others to drag you kicking and screaming to your goals. Only you can do that.

Stop listening to your own excuses and if you haven't earned it, don't expect it....Get over the excuses, get over your feeling of entitlement, get out there and make it happen.

The path to your dreams is there. It's called EMPOWERMENT. It's about taking responsibility for yourself and your goals and about taking steps to achieve.

When we embrace empowerment in our world, only then will we truly be removing the excuses and entitlement mindset that drives us to average.

Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

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How is your Personal Growth Plan?

Wednesday, November 06, 2013



Own Your own personal Growth How often do we really step up to the plate and own our own development? I get asked often about numerous things as an Empowerment Coach. Many times people are looking for a certificate to "pad" out a resume.....people are looking for the government to pay....and people want their boss or company to pay. I'd love to do your course Tony, but the boss won't pay for it.....

So in effect, what they are saying is that they really are not interested in investing in themselves. Some may say that is harsh,

but the most successful people in the world today, living fulfilled lives of significance do so because they have accepted the ownership of their personal growth and development.

I speak with many people who bemoan the fact that their boss isn't developing them. Logically I then ask what personal development are they current doing. The answer is almost always NIL. You see we live in a world of excuses. This just provides us another excuse for not accomplishing what it is we were set to do. I believe that everyone has a purpose in life, the reason they were born. And I cannot accept the fact that many on this world were born to be BELOW AVERAGE. We were born for a reason.....and the only reason we allow ourselves to sit BELOW AVERAGE is because we listen to the excuses we tell ourselves.

We have a culture that looks to have a certificate for everything. In my experience, having a certificate listed on your resume doesn't make you better. Having a certificate doesn't improve your results. "Padding Your resume" doesn't make you a leader. BEING A LEADER, getting results....and getting results is what personal development and growth is all about. I have seen too many people with lists of completed certificates who cannot deliver results for themselves and their team. Certificates DO NOT create accountability and attitude is the most important thing for accountability. I have yet to see a Cert IV for Attitude.

Everything you ever wanted to do, ever wanted to be..is before you, if you choose to chase. I know that most will not chase. They will just keep on listening to their bullshit.

So I say, step up to the plate and OWN YOUR OWN PERSONAL GROWTH PLAN. If you want to develop yourself there are many opportunities to do so, you need to find them. Grab yourself a coach, grab yourself a mentor, look for course that will add value to you, your team and your results.

So ask yourself some simple questions. What is your true purpose? Where were you five years ago and where do you want to be in another five? When was the last time you truly drove your own personal growth? Are you happy?

Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

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Isn't it Time?

Monday, December 02, 2013

Isn't it time you made a stand
for you?

Isn't it time to create the life
you desire?

Isn't it time to take action
towards your dreams?

Tony Curl - tonycurl.com

Isn't it time?

Time to stop thinking about what could go wrong.

Time to stop giving yourself reasons not to grow

Time to stop doing "Same Crap, Different Day" Zombie Shuffle

Time to stop dreading the thought of facing the work you hate

Time to stop thinking of "hump day"

Time to stop believing the only great days in your life occur on the weekend.

Time to stop over analyzing your every move

Time to stop gossiping about others

Time to stop comparing yourself to others

Time to stop listening to marketing campaigns that make you feel small, just so you buy a product.

Time to stop dreaming and wishing for change.

Time to stop allowing others to pigeon hole you.

Time to stop going through the motions of a human being

Time to stop thinking you will never find the person to share your life with

Time to stop allowing "life" to take over and "run" your life.

But...

It is time to start

Time to start believing that you are unique

Time to become the best you, to attract the best person.

Time to start working on becoming your greatest version of you.

Time to put into action, everything you have always believed you could do.

Only then, will we see you embrace the potential of every day
and realise the full potential of what you possess.

So is it time for you,

Time to put action in place and take steps towards your dreams and goals. Create some space in your life, reflect and move forward with dedication action.

Tony Curl - tonycurl.com

Create space for you at our NEW YEAR: BETTER YOU workshop on Saturday January 4th, 2014. Brisbane Workshop. Create space, build the year you desire.

Create space for you at our Online NEW YEAR BETTER YOU Workshop, Monday 6th and Wednesday 8th January.

Courage is in your Domain

Tuesday, December 10, 2013



Courage is in your domain!

We lost a great leader in the last week with the passing of Nelson Mandela. Reflecting back on his life, I admire, as do so many others, the strength of character and the courage he showed in standing by his ideals and principles, when many others would have caved during his many years of imprisonment. Thinking of Mandela, brought me to think of Martin Luther King, another leader of great courage, who led the world to a historic rise in human rights, while staring down death threats as others took means to stop him.

Courage is a true strength of leadership, and both Mandela and King typified it, maximised it and changed the world in the process. And in comparison, it helps us to understand our courage, and what we need to do to have courage in our lives.

Have the courage to be you, to follow your path, to follow your dreams and not to be dictated by others or try to be something you are not.

Have the courage to dream, to believe in being the best you and have the courage to put action in place to achieve.

Have the courage to know when you have outgrown someone or something and the ability to set it free as you continue your journey. We progress at different rates and those that start our journey are may not be the ones to see us finish.

Have the courage to speak up, to share you ideas, your thoughts and not allow yourself to remain silent. Don't sit there and be rail-roaded into work, goals that you haven't allowed yourself the opportunity to contribute.

Have the courage to contribute to your life and to enhance the lives of those around you.

Have the courage to stand up when you fall, and believe that the more you fall, the stronger you get and the closer you get to success and significance

Have the courage to put your best foot forward every day, to rise from bed with excitement and anticipation for what that day brings, the potential and the possibilities.

Have the courage to turn your back on your self-doubt and challenge yourself in bringing out the greatest you.

Have the courage to know that facing forward is the way to a good life, and while we can smile at our memories, we know that we do not live in the past.

Have the courage to know that "the good old days: weren't really as good as what you can make today.

Have the courage to allow the world to see the greatest YOU.

Have the courage to live your life.

Tony Curl - tonycurl.com

Wanting to kickstart 2014 in the best possible way. Are you chasing goals? Are you wanting to get better? Join us for the New Year Better You Workshop, developed from Steve Maraboli's Four Pillars of Success - Intent, Vision, Action, Clarity. This proven formula will see you score the goals you want.

Brisbane Full Day Workshop for New Year Better You - Saturday January 4.

Online Webinar for New Year Better You - Monday January 6, Wednesday January 8

Are You Living In Your Sweet Spot?

Wednesday, December 11, 2013



Mr Scott Fay It is my pleasure to share an excerpt from Scott Fay's book "Discover Your Sweet Spot" Book Launches in Early January.

By Scott M. Fay Author, *Discover Your Sweet Spot*

The Sweet Spot is the convergence of three things: Purpose, Passion, and Plan. · Purpose is who you are designed to be. · Passion is what you love to do. · Plan is the strategic convergence of being and doing.

Living and working from our Sweet Spot results from intentional design, not accidental disorder. Similar to what I do with my new landscaping clients, we must design our lives with the end in mind. Unfortunately, too many people just accept their lives rather than lead their lives.

Living to and from your Sweet Spot yields exponential potential.

My mother still tells me that I first found my Sweet Spot at the age of four while playing in the sandbox. Every day in summer, I loved spending time in a gigantic 10-by 15-foot sandpit with toy 'dozers, trailers, and trucks. Like boys my age, I built roads and rivers during playtime. But perhaps unlike other boys, I also built little homes out of sand and then I felt the need to landscape those little properties. I'd use pine cones for shrubs, twigs for trees, and place little stones around freshly-dug miniature swimming pools. In that vast sand pit, I made a little square shop out of red bricks that I'd found lying around from my father's projects. On top of that square shop, I made a flat roof out of pine boards.

I'd spend nearly all day playing in the sand pit. But just before dinnertime, I'd perform a unique ritual. I'd drive the equipment up onto the trailers, hook them up to the trucks, and then drive the trucks back to the square shop with the flat roof. By this time, mom would make a final dinner call and, according to her, I'd spend a couple more minutes at the shop off-loading the equipment, lining up the trailers, and, finally, backing up the trucks. Ritual complete, I'd head off to dinner, satisfied and smiling.

More than forty years later, I still perform an odd ritual. Today my sandpit is a bit larger, though. On most days before dinnertime, I pull into a square shop with a flat roof at 7900 SE Bridge Road in Hobe Sound, Florida. While driving around the lot, I see my employees off-loading the equipment, lining up the trailers, and, finally, backing up the trucks. Waving to them, I see the ritual completed, and then I head off to dinner, satisfied and smiling.

What about you? Have you ever functioned in your Sweet Spot? Do you know what it is? Is your Passion, Purpose, and Plan clear? If so, you don't even need to look to see if you're effective. You already know.

Excerpt taken from *Discover Your Sweet Spot* by Scott M. Fay, published by Morgan James Publishing, available here via Amazon. More info: www.thesweetspotsystem.com

What happens to the 6's?

Friday, December 13, 2013



Grow your leadership. John Maxwell's Law of the Lid is an often quoted leadership theory. And one that rings true. The level of your Leadership ability determines the level of your effectiveness. And the good news is that Leadership ability can be trained.

I have clear examples of this with two leaders I mentored in a previous role. The leaders are Jim and Will, Jim was an 8 and Will was a 4. The impact of networking within this dynamic was interesting. It was a struggle. It added another dynamic to the belief that Leadership ability can be trained, but the leader needs to be open to it. Will struggled to learn or build

from Jim and could never move upwards due to this.

When networking both inside and outside work, the Jim's (8's) associated with other Jim's and Will's(4's) with other Will's. When interchanged networking was forced, they would network ok, but when left under preferential networking they stayed apart.

The other interesting dynamic was the 6's. When networking the 4's stayed together and the 8's stayed together. The 6's however were left in the middle and didn't know where to go. Some felt comfortable networking with the 8's as they wanted to learn, or at least give the perception that they did. Rarely did they network with the 4's, unless they were clearly out of place in the 8's.

The distinguishing difference was the desire to learn, the ability to ask questions and the ability not to make it about themselves. The ones that grew were the sixes who desired to learn and the 8's who desired to give.

A fundamental and rudimentary approach maybe, but one based on experience. So to truly raise your lid, you need a desire to give and a desire to grow. If that comfort zone of yours snuggles around you so tightly that you cannot be enticed out....you don't stand a chance.

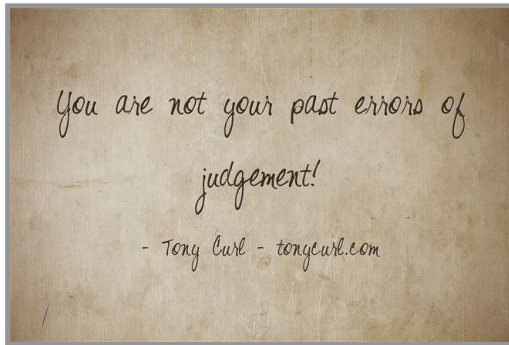
Tony Curl

Brisbane Workshop for our New Year: Better You designed from Steve Maraboli's 4 Pillars of Success

Online Workshop for New Year : Better You.

You Are Not Your Past Errors of Judgement!

Saturday, December 14, 2013



You are not your Past Errors of Judgement! I read recently a post from someone I respect that greatly annoyed me. The post was about a politician, but this isn't a political response. The post was a picture quote.

"In the 1980's Tony Abbot campaigned to have Nelson Mandela executed for terrorism. Today, Tony Abbott says

Mandela was a "Truly Great Man"

The picture has been shared hundreds of times, and comments like "scumbag" and "hypocrite" are littered throughout. I am not hear to debate the qualities of a democratically elected Prime Minister of a country, but I am hear to refute the message it sends.

Very simply. You cannot and should not EVER be defined by your past mistakes or errors in judgement. I speak to many people, who define themselves by the mistakes they have made and cannot move forward. And one of the reasons for this is due to the hypocritical methodology we have in place for our public figures. We see picture quotes about our Prime Minister and a judgement from a period of time 30 years ago, and we look to our mistakes and can't move on.

The world changes and so should we. I sit here and applaud Abbot for evolving and changing as more knowledge and information became available to them. The last person I would want leading this country is someone static and unbending in their approach, not moving, inflexible and unwilling to change.

Then we have the old "leopards don't change their spots" brigade. Again, I would like to believe that this is usually incorrect. Most people can change their spots. Some may be essentially "hard-wired" and unable to be re-programed, but most can be and should be open to change, and we should welcome that in the world. But instead we focus on the minority who re-commit, re-offend and don't learn.

We see double standards at work here. Many people living "normal" lives have done things in the past that they have moved on from, evolved and changed positively. Many do things as we grow that may make us shudder now. Imagine being judged now on that....I'm absolutely positive that of the hundreds of shares and comments this quote is receiving, there are many skeletons in the closet, that they themselves would hate to be judged upon now. Yet they propagate this crap about others and purely for political gain. It is simply wrong!

We hold our politicians to ludicrous standards at time, wanting them to be blemish free and virtuous in approach, having never made a mistake. Risk averse, and perfect. We want them to stop learningthat is the only conclusion I can draw from the continual method to dig up crap from their past. We should be beyond this now.

I want a politician that has a go, has a crack and learns from mistakes. That has the courage to air his view, but also the personal courage not to be rigid and be able to change and adapt as the world changes. I don't want to hold politicians or any high level person, to standards that I, myself don't want to be judged on. I want people leading who have life experience, who are able to learn and grow and who set examples to the rest of us, that we are entitled to make mistakes as long as we grow from them.

And unless you are willing to be judged on your past mistakes, errors of judgement, perceptions of others....don't do the same to prove a political point. And until we stop doing this, for political and/or personal gain, we will always have people who cannot move forward and become the person they are designed to be.

Many of our great leaders have spent time in prison....many of our great leaders have done things they are not proud of. Great Leaders wake up everyday ready to face the possibilities and potential that today brings...and that is why they are great leaders and great people.

Tony Curl New Year Better You Workshop Brisbane New Year Better You Online Workshop

Our Agreement with Reality Determines the Quality of our Auto-Pilot

Wednesday, January 08, 2014



I read recently from the Blog of Ian Dickson that 99.7% of our daily functioning is controlled and driven by our subconscious. Now that is an amazing stat. 99.7% of what we do everyday is controlled subconsciously. That includes our breathing, our heartbeats and blood circulation ...but it also includes our habits

that have formed and control much of our thoughts and views on the world.

Our habits can make us or break us, and I figure that most of us acknowledge that, however I am not sure that we actually do realise the seriousness in relation to our habits. We are truly on Auto-Pilot in so many ways when it comes to us living. The quality of our Auto-Pilot determines the quality of our life.

There is good news. We still have conscious thought. And our agreement of reality can be changed by ourselves. Our view of the world can be changed by what we tell ourselves. You don't have to be stuck with your agreement with reality. If you are unhappy with your view of the world, it can be changed but does requires action, effort and persistence. So stop telling yourself crap....garbage in, garbage out.

Here are some tips.

Start focusing on what is good in your life. No matter how small...by focusing on the positive you start to change your view to positive. And by thinking positive, you start to attract the positive.

Affirm yourself daily. Make a daily agenda item with yourself. Analyse the good things that happened during the day. Recognise the positives and make plans for more tomorrow.

Take action to break bad habits. Get out and go for a walk. Be fully present with loved ones. If people come to whinge, politely refuse to be part of their plan to offload pain into your life.

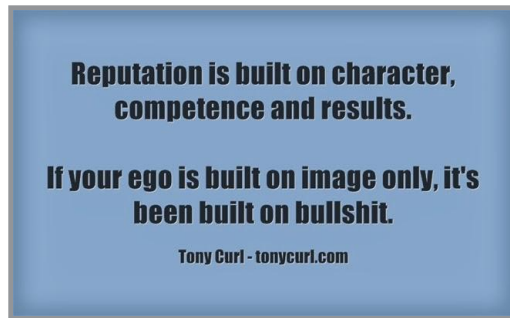
The fact is, we can all do this. And many other strategies are out there. Do you want to share yours?

Tony Curl
Empowerment Coach
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Business Website
Courses now available in Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

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The Leadership Ego Equation

Monday, January 20, 2014



I like my leaders to have an ego. I like them to have pride in their teams, their people and their results. I like their ego to be built upon the respect that people have for them, and their character, competence and their results.

I am reminded of of the Leadercast talk last year from Mike Krzyzewski the coach of the United States Basketball team. He describes his first meeting with the team and advised them NOT to leave their egos at the door. He wanted them to be who they were and he also wanted them to bringing their egos into creating a new team ego, the ego of USA Basketball.

I like leaders to have an ego. To be proud of the standards they have met and aspire to. It is important for a leader to be aware of how others perceive them, and internally we all aspire naturally to being respected by others. That is the ego that I like. Ego built on reputation, built on character, built on competence and built on results.

Ego built on anything else is simply bullshit. Ego, not built on reputation, is basically the story you are telling you and anyone that will listen. Ego not built on substance and built on nothing but the image you want conveyed.

Let me explain. Leader A recently moved divisions in a company in a sideways move. Leader A took the move for valid reasons, however his own ego stops himself from expressing this. He was returning to his original division and in effect returning to his strength zone. His ego and image egets in the way as he "explained" his move to his former team in a different light and in a higher position than what he actually had taken. Now every time he converses by email to his former colleagues, he adjusts his email signature to match the title he told them he had. All image, all ego and totally non-effective. Would you like to work for someone like this?

Leader B left a large retailer two years ago, to join their new start-up competitor. He recently resigned from the new start-up to return "home" to his former employer. He explains he has been "chased" to return for the last 18 months. This is pure ego. Many that speak with this leader advise others to listen and reduce by 75% of what they say. In other words, cut away the bullshit. When it's all about image, you simply cannot achieve for your team or your company as you are more concerned with the presentation of the image. Again, would you like to work for someone that you need to adjust 75% to get the real story?

Ego for ego sake is simply not good. When you present an image, and you deliver something less, the end result is pain personally, within the team and within the company.

Yes I like leaders to have an ego. I like leaders to have pride in their results, their

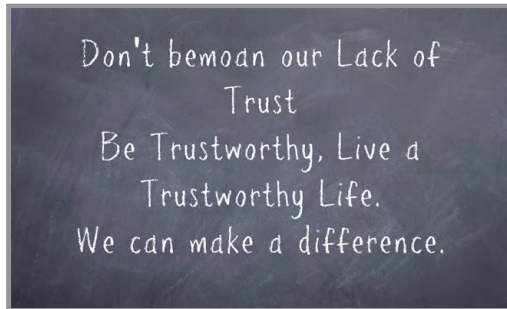
performance and their competence. Ego built on reputation is healthy. Ego built for image is worth nothing.

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Leadership & Empowerment Coach

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Don't Bemoan our Lack of Trust - Make a Difference

Tuesday, January 28, 2014



I have read Stephen M.R Covey books now for a number of years as he made sense of a difficult subject in "Speed of Trust" and "Smart Trust" In Smart Trust he writes about the decline and the decay of trust within our societies and cites the following examples:

- The United States is increasingly becoming a low-trust society as trust drops in Government, Business and Media.
- Trust in the Media reached it's lowest point in 2010 since Gallup started measuring it in the early 1970's.
- Only 46% of informed respondents in the US, and 44% in the UK trust business to do what's right.
- Only 40% of informed respondents in the US and 33% in the UK trust government to do what's right.
- Only 53% of US employees believe their boss is honest.
- 69% of Americans are dissatisfied with the ethical climate in today's society.

There would be no reason to believe that Australia bucks the trend, and a recent book by Geoff Aigner and Liz Skelton, Australian Leader Paradox indicates similar trends where we are unhappy with current leadership in Australia at most levels, but not really sure how to define what we want.

So what do we do with this? Many feel helpless to change this decline and environment. We accept it as part of the landscape and try and weave around the landmines that exist.

When I talk about Building Trust as a leader, I make leaders aware that they need to be trustworthy. They cannot expect others to trust them, if they in fact cannot be trusted. This is the starting point for all of us. If we wish to build a world of greater trust, we need to accept that we need to trust and be trusted. We cannot accept blind trust, as trust only comes from a foundation that has been built.

Can we accept that one person can make a difference. As a general concept, if everyone felt they COULD make a difference, we have an almighty rush of people making a difference...but please remember "Mass Movements do not start with the Masses"...they start with people who want to make a difference and others join over time. Let's make a difference together.

- Don't accept that the Media represents society. Read alternative views and make your own mind up.
- Hold our politicians to account, NOT JUST AT ELECTION TIME, but every time they breach our trust.

- Hold our corporations to account by choosing to deal with those that operate ethically and with a community focus. Let's look beyond compounding profits annually and lets look at leaving the world better.
- Accept that when we use Smart Trust, that at times someone will break our trust. Don't allow that to be the catalyst to revoke our commitment to trust.
- Be the best in whatever you do, to show conclusively that you can be trusted.
- Be open, honest and get better at listening.

By working and living a trustworthy life, together we can make a difference. What other suggestions can you make?

Tony Curl
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Leadership.....Actually it is all About the People!

Monday, February 03, 2014



**Leadership.....Actually
It is all about the People**

I was part of a conference group of 36 leaders for a division of a major company in Australia. We were being addressed by our General Manager of Operations. The group consisted on Four Direct Reports to the GM and 32 Indirect Reports. His speech that

day, changed my path.

"We are not a training company" "It is not my job to develop you, and it is not my job to develop you to the next role. If you believe that you are sadly mistaken"

He made it clear, that we are all paid to do a job, nothing more, nothing less. The expectation of anything resembling development was not on the table..... actually it had obviously fallen off the table and had been kicked out the door.

The overlying message was clear. Do not look to me for development. The underlying message was also clear.....We do not care about our people, only results. Get those results any way you can and that is the only path to the top.

Since then, that company has seen a steady stream of these key leaders leave the company, myself included. Sufficient time has now passed for me to correct these statements. The company does have a strategy of attracting top level talent and potential, but recent history is showing they are unlikely to stay under the current leadership thinking.

Leadership, Sir...is actually all about the people. Developing your people is a key leadership skill, as better people build better business. It's actually simple but is harded for people to do as you need trust, respect and rapport to do this. Without the focus on people, and the focus on building better people, leaders resort to fear, intimidation and manipulation to achieve results, something the politician GM is adept at.

These comments are in line with an outdated mode of management that aimed to suppress people and get them to conform to requirements, as opposed to one that empowers and builds better ways. An environment of check-lists, tick and flicks and cost reduction as opposed to engaged team members building continual improvement with a desire to succeed and build revenue. I would always prefer an environment where teams are striving to achieve their very best, opposed to a "do your job" where the minimum standard is the norm.

Leadership can be trained and within my new world, we aim to make leaders AWARE, build ACTION from awareness then create an ACCOUNTABILITY process. Even Leaders who have come from outdated modes, can change, if they have a desire to learn and activate change. Sustainable results only come from engaged teams. Short Term results always cause loss and pain for both people and companies.

The interesting thing with this company, is that they have had a change of legislation that now sees a limit to the previous marketing they applied. Truly now, any continual revenue increase needs to be aligned to a "better people" philosophy as this may become the sustainable difference. It will be interesting to see if anything changes in that space.

Tony Curl tonycurl.com

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Australian Leadership - Time for Change!

Tuesday, February 04, 2014

*Australian Leadership
Time for Change*

We see an outcry in our country surrounding the lack of support to a request for assistance from a business in Australia with the SPC/Ardmona rejection from the Government. SPC will not be the last business to seek assistance and it certainly

won't be the last to look at closure being the only viable option.

Many of us look to blame, some blame the government, others blame the unions, some blame the supermarkets and then some blame the parent company. Blaming does not help but within all of the above we need to find a new way, if we are to stop this trend. This is just an outcome of a problem that will continue to fester, unless we embrace change together.

Australia is embroiled presently as a land of many contradictions.

- We complain about our government, yet want them to be the saviour of everything that fails
- Our standard of living is high, yet consumer confidence is low.
- Our consumer confidence is low, yet the world sees us as an example.
- Our corporates are derided as greedy, yet our superannuation is in their hands
- We want lower prices, but also want local industry.
- To get lower prices, we have competition through imports.
- Local industry cannot compete on imports. We want government to legislate to save it.
- Our corporates are derided for not supporting local industry, yet we want lower prices.
- We hate paying taxes and we are highly taxed, yet want more government services and fixes.
- At corporate level, we complain about our high wage figures, yet willingly pay senior executives obscene salaries to do their jobs.
- And just quietly, we want our politicians to be real humans yet shoot them down for showing human-like behaviours.

The list could continue, obviously this is a complicated issue that doesn't just fit neatly into one sector to fix. I haven't even broached the environmental and social issues that are starting to stare us down. I wish it was so easy to blame just one sector, but we can't. A new approach is needed to attain a clear vision of Australia, one that incorporates our history of mateship and sense of a fair go. We need government's co-ordinating and controlling where needed and we need the private sector corporates showing concern for more than just profits. We need everyone more concerned with the greater good, than our own agenda. And that's our starting point.

We cannot rebuild the walls around our country and isolate us. Looking forward as a nation across all areas and sectors and decisions are needed on what it is that we can sacrifice. We cannot go up, unless we are willing to give up. Until this debate takes place and action steps outlined, it is clear to me we are just going to lurch from one outcry to the next, and in the worst case scenario come to the end of the line when we realise we cannot afford the Australia we have built. We need to embrace a changed approach


within our leadership across all sectors to achieve this.

Tony Curl Leadership Coach - tonycurl.com

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Welcome to the Corporate Jungle

Monday, February 10, 2014



Welcome to the Corporate
Jungle.
Who's looking after you?

After 35 years of successfully leading teams in the corporate world, I maintain contact with many of the people who I have met, be-friended and mentored. I have skin in their game and understand their feelings. I have become a trusted advisor and coach

to many.

Corporate leadership often feels like a jungle. Some of the symptoms of the corporate jungle are:

- Mixed Priorities
- Poor Communication
- Political Agendas
- Time Pressures and Deadlines
- Team Member problems
- Human Resource Issues
- Lack of support from your direct report/s
- Lack of performance from your team
- Inconsistent Development opportunities
- Behind the scenes meetings and decision-making
- Favouritism
- Hidden Agendas
- The lonely feeling of being lost in a crowded world.
- Poor Work/life balance
- Moving the goal posts or changing the score card.
- Lack of clarity of vision or strategy

Have you felt the impacts of any of the above? Many leaders have felt the above symptoms at one time or another, and it's important to understand you are not be alone.this. What usually happens, is that we gravitate to others we believe we can trust and use them as our venting sparring partners. This creates other issues.....

The corporate jungle, at time, is not a pretty place. And I ask you. **Who is looking after you?** Leaders acknowledge the lack of ongoing, consistent and clear development yet often do little for themselves, believing that the corporation will ultimately service their development. Often the training we receive in corporate life is wasted as follow up and accountability is not part of the training equation. I am guessing that many will attest to this. We come out of training motivated to achieve, to be hit by the corporate jungle the next day, an unsympathetic boss and a demanding team and our learnings are laid to rest.

If you don't value your own development, then it is unlikely others will. If you're not looking after your own development, then who will?

Many corporate leaders won't consider coaching. They see it as an expense and the fear of the unknown and run away from the action of looking for a coach. They look to connect with others in the company. How's that working for you?

My last role in the corporate world had responsibility of a \$300 million portfolio, a direct team of 22 managers and over 300 team members. It was also the role that determined me to jump into my current role of developing and supporting others. I had great leaders in my career, and I had some lousy ones. I only wish I had a coach.

Coaching is a process that is focused on YOU.

- The coach has a priority of seeing you succeed. Making you more effective and better.
- A coach helps you cut away the noise that often envelopes corporate leadership.
- A coach helps you set clear actions and holds you accountable to achieve.
- The coach is free from favouritism and hidden agenda
- A coach will enable you to be YOU and express fears, reluctance, confusion, pride, satisfaction and other emotions without using this information in relation to your performance reviews and promotion opportunities

If you are looking for a coach, what would you look for? I would want a coach who has skin in the game, a coach that earned their stripes, a coach who learned from their failures and mistakes, a coach who achieved success and significance. A coach who has flexibility to coach face-to-face, Skype or by phone. A coach that would provide a return on your investment in your excellence. Surveys by the International Coaching Federation, indicate that 95% of executives that have used a coach have been satisfied with the results contained.

Gain clarity, drive action....get clear on your success. You can do this with a coach.

For more information on what I can offer to you please visit www.leadershiplifeandstyle.com.au and book your free 30 minute consultation to show you how coaching gets results for YOU!

Tony Curl
Leadership & Empowerment Coach
Leadership, Life and Style.

Check out our Next Generation Leaders Group Coaching Program for your effective introduction to coaching. You can expect a high return on investment on this investment. Coaching may also be tax deductible as professional development. Check with your financial expert for more details.

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Process v People

Thursday, April 03, 2014



As an executive coach, I spend time at networking events with a range of other business owners and leaders. These events will usually have a guest speaker who informs and educates the group on their area of specialty. I have come to

appreciate each speaker on their own merits but can tend to categorise them as the following.

- Marketing Guru - To show you the latest and newest way to build a digital and online presence. How to make money on Google and Facebook Advertising.
- Financial Guru - I can fix your broken business in three easy steps
- Compliance Guru - How to comply with the every increasing regulations concerning business.

Today I listened to a Financial Guru present how to fix your business in three steps. Grow Sales, Grow Profit, Grow Cash Flow. He talked about systems and processes and driving your business through processes and scripts. It was suggested that your customer service people work off scripts. Agreed may be a great training tool, but hardly the environment to gain engagement and continual improvement.

Whatever they end up touting, it never changes my ideal, it never changes my belief. simply this. Everything comes down to leadership. Everything! if you don't have the leadership awareness no matter what you are trained, taught, coached; it doesn't work. Leadership is the key.

"Everything rises and falls on Leadership" John C Maxwell

It was suggested that I outsource everything that isn't mission critical for my business. There is some sense to this, but the list included things that i wouldn't. I disagree with outsourcing Customer Complaints and the Recruitment of my staff. And when I think about the why I disagree it comes back to the fundamental way I think about business.

When I think about improving a business, I believe in improving the leaders and the staff in that business. I don't think about putting in a system and a process to control. I think about ways of engaging and empowering my team to deliver more than any system or process can. If I am going to lead a team, surely then I would want to have input into the recruitment of the team.

Business processes and systems can support leadership, but the best way to lift your business is by lifting you and your team. If you rely on systems and processes, you will forever be limited by those same systems and processes. You will have managers controlling process and you will have staff doing the minimum required.

But if you focus on becoming a great leader, you can unleash your team to deliver better results.

By focusing on people, you unleash the energy. By focusing on process, you limit the energy. Everytime you need to choose to harness the power of your people over limiting

them with systems and process

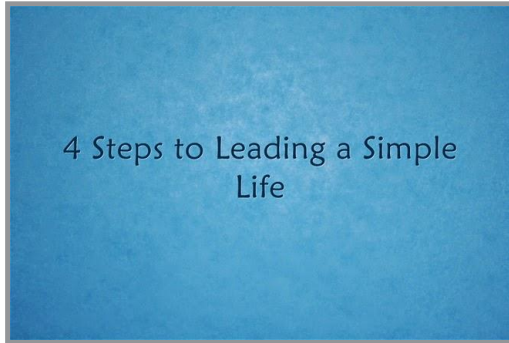
Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

Email Marketing You Can Trust

Amazon.com Widgets

4 Steps to a Simpler Life

Thursday, April 10, 2014



Our lives are hectic. Our lives are busy. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Feelings of being over-worked and under appreciated are common. And it doesn't just stop with our jobs or our work, it continues on with demands from our family and friends and the groups in which we belong. We long for the day we can stop and allow us time to catch up. Like a pinball in an arcade game we bounce from issue to

issue, deadline to deadline, demands to demands.

While our world is certainly getting busier, there are some steps you can take to simplify your life. I am not talking about the "easy life", I am talking about simplifying your life. The only easy life I believe is in when you die and move off this mortal coil. Simplifying your life provides momentum and can create flow in your life, and doing so creates a simpler life.

Step 1. Know what you want! Sounds really simple, doesn't it? Often we don't know what we want. We cannot articulate it. We do know what we don't want, "I don't want to be fat"; "I don't want a bad job"; "I don't want to have a bad day"; "I don't want to have my business fail".... Often the universe will deliver the exact thing we don't want. We end up getting fat, having a bad day and working in a dead-end job.

We get what we focus on. So, focus on what you want! "I want to be healthy and fit"; "I want to work for a great boss in a great job"; "My business will be successful"

We will have multiple "I Wants". What do you want in your career, your family, your social circles, your spiritual and health aspects of your life. Having that clear understanding starts the process of living more simply.

Step 2. Understand what is important. What is helping you and what is hurting you? When people know what they want, they begin to understand what is important to them. They start analyzing what they have in their life and in what they do by simply asking themselves if it is helping them or hurting them achieve what they want. If it helps them, they continue doing it with an increased focus, but if they determine it is hurting them, they let it go.

Ask yourself next time you have time demands. What is important in getting you closer to what you want? Does it hurt me achieving what I want? And act accordingly.

Step 3. Align your actions to what is important. This is the big step, and where most people will fail. It's now about putting action into place.

If being happy at home is important, your actions need to align with that. If working towards a better job is important, your actions need to be in alignment. If you know what you want, and understand what is important but fail to do action, you will fail. Failing

leaves you at the mercy of others. You will also be dis-satisfied because you will not achieve what you want, or do what is important. Align your actions towards your desired outcomes and you are getting closer to living a simpler life.

Step 4. Maintain Clarity. You now need to make sure you keep these steps in focus. At times life will still send you curly ones that are out of your control, so maintaining your clarity is vital as not to lose focus. You can maintain clarity in simple ways, by having a vision board, or even just post-it notes on the bathroom mirror. Keeping your focus and not allowing yourself to drift back to bad habits is only due to maintaining clarity.

Following these steps will allow you to live your life that becomes simpler. They remove things in our lives like needless drama and toxic people and situations, because they know this doesn't help them. Removing toxins and drama doesn't just simplify your life, it will purify your life. Give it a shot, what have you got to lose?

Achieve what you want and simplify your life.

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Your Leadership Pulse - Are You Setting It?

Wednesday, April 23, 2014



During my recent training in Orlando, Florida with the John Maxwell Team, I was a participant in a program called Get My Rhythm conducted by John Scalici. The workshop featured African Drums and a huge range of percussion instruments, all of the 250 participants had one.

The workshop was conducted this way. The big African Drums provided a steady beat.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. The beat rang out over the assembly. Once the beat was established, the percussion instruments were all brought in to play the rhythm as determined by the person playing it. While many wouldn't have believed it, the group played beautiful music. We created music when I was guessing we would create chaos.

There were many lessons involved here. We created music and not chaos. We had leadership, unspoken and clear. we had engagement and we had fun while achieving.

But....for me the biggest lesson was one of that beat. *John described it as our heartbeat or our pulse.* And when we went off rhythm (which we did) we started again by focusing on the pulse. That steadying back beat drove the music and we knew what to listen to and stay tuned to. The music revolved around the beat.

My takeaway from this was strong and I now raise these questions with my clients.

- Who creates the heartbeat or pulse of your business?
- Who creates the heartbeat or pulse of your team?
- Who creates the rhythm?
- Who creates the beautiful music?



It is my belief answering these questions is vital for any business leader. Let me elaborate.

Heartbeat

The heartbeat has to be set by the leader or business owner. This becomes that steadying influence within your team or business. The heartbeat is the vision; the heartbeat is the direction; the heartbeat is a place of comfort from your team that they know and engage in. The heartbeat is the vibe of the business. The heartbeat is the culture of the team. The heartbeat is vital for your leadership and your results.

The leader needs to set the heartbeat. The leader sets the pulse.

Rhythm

The rhythm is created by an engaged team, empowered within the guidelines of the heartbeat (the vision, the direction, the culture of the business). Train and engage your team and watch them make beautiful music, knowing that if they stray, they will come back to the pulse. They come back to the steadying influence of the heartbeat. Do you allow them to create the rhythm?

Sounds Easy?

Right! The problem is many leaders believe they are the best people to set the pulse and the rhythm. They believe they are the best person for the job. They don't empower, engage or train and end up with a disengaged workforce, thus supporting and re-enforcing their own actions. How dangerous is that?

In some cases the leader sets the pulse, but confines his team with stringent process and complicated systems designed to deliver consistency of operation, but limiting engagement and best possible practice initiatives. The music may be audible, but never reaches the "beautiful music" stage. How limiting is that?

In some cases, the leader is weak, the team directionless and the pulse or heartbeat is set by others, whether this suits your company needs or not. How dangerous is that?

So where do you fit? Do you have a leadership pulse? Who is setting it? Does your team know?

Do you have a business heartbeat? Do you have a vision? Is the heartbeat known by the team? Is it a thing of comfort for them?

Reflect on your leadership pulse? Time to revive it!

Tony Curl - leadershiplifeandstyle.com.au

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Leading for the Greater Good.

Tuesday, May 20, 2014



I recently spoke and presented at a Rotary function and during this presentation I conducted a "Wheel of Life" exercise. This exercise is one of the coaching tools I use with clients that allows them to review eight segments of their life and provides them the opportunity to improve through action.

After the presentation I had the pleasure to discuss this further with some of the members. As the segments of the wheel can be flexible and can be changed to suit, one of the members started asking me about the concept of "the Greater Good" and where that fit in the wheel. Many members of community clubs like Rotary have big hearts and have the concept of the greater good firmly placed in their mindset. But shared some concern for it.

I recently wrote about the need for better leadership in Australia, and recent events here have not allayed my fears. Sharing concerns of the rotary members allowed a new perspective as well.

Communities are made up of many who work for the greater good. We see volunteers investing their time for the benefits of the community in many areas. Many of them start their involvement coming into their 50's while others increase their involvement. It is at that age that many start to see their corporate days closing out and they look to add significance and legacy to their lives.

The retirement age has been lifted to 70 here in Australia and is now being phased for the future. At the time of life that many look to ramp up their support for the community, we will see many still focused on working. The greater good misses out.

Additionally we have seen a resurgence of leaders talking up strong choices or tough budgets. I am not here to argue anything from a politic bent, but I must say that we have an entitlement mentality in our country and this extends to any leaders who believe they have a mandate to implement their policies and make their decisions. They govern for the entire country and have a responsibility to do so.

One thing I do know is that trust is missing within our political landscape. People are cynical and history has shown the lies and broken promises and this has bred this ever-increasing cynicism.

Great leaders don't use "jackboots" tactics, as this seems to be the theme when our leaders talk about strong choices or tough decisions.

The greater good is perceived differently by segments of the community. And that is our greatest challenge. We have great people on all sides of politics and if we chose to work together, I am confident they can bring about a much greater governing environment for the greater good.

In the meantime we suffer the government of the day. And then we compound that by providing our check-safes in the senate, effectively reducing the ability of the government to govern. All of which allows the side-shows that we have seen in Australia gain political momentum and build approval ratings.

We have great people on all sides of politics. We just need to get them to work together to bring about a greater Australia. We have the people, do we have the will? We need egos to be left to the side as we drive greater involvement from all sides of politics and all sectors of community.

Do we have a leader that can stand up and bring about a way to lead for the greater good by involving all sectors of community.

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Dumb Leaders Validate Action.

Friday, May 30, 2014



So what's all this about then? Dumb Leaders Validate. Validate what? What are you talking about, Tony?

Now I'm usually not that harsh or judgmental, but I have reflected this week on a couple of leaders I have had, and this thought just jumped at me. Dumb Leaders actually validate themselves by the outcomes they receive. The outcomes they

receive validate their approach to leadership. They lack awareness of leadership skills and abilities and limit their "style" to their own beliefs. In doing this, they run the risk of becoming a dumb leader.

Let me explain. Firstly what is a dumb leader?

- One who believes they are always right.
- They don't value team contributions
- Uses power as an intimidation tool
- Believes they know everything and make the decisions themselves with little consultation
- Have delusions of grandeur and self-importance
- Believe everyone is inherently lazy and treats their team accordingly
- It's usually their way or the highway
- They pay you to do a job. That should be enough. Shouldn't it.

I attended an event here in Brisbane event this week where insightful statistics were highlighted. The stats indicate the level of engagement of people to the job they are employed to do. They supported stats that I had seen previously, and frighteningly show that only 19% of people are engaged in the work they do. And worse still, 61% are not engaged and 20% are actively disengaged. The statistics were presented by Dr. Malcolm Johnson from the Australian Institute of Management.

Other statistics showed detail around our leadership capability. Australian organisations are less capable in Organisational Capability and Innovation, but are strong in corporate governance and financial management. Middle management was highlighted as the weak point, as they struggle at People Management, Performance Leadership, Innovation and Organisational Capability.

Reflect on that for a minute. We have largely a disengaged workforce and the finger points squarely at middle management. People who may have been technically proficient and suddenly find themselves leading others. No skills and no awareness that they have no skills. People don't know, what they don't know, don't they.

Now I have had some poor leaders in my time in the corporate world, but I have also had some great ones. The great ones were intentional in what they did, they learnt more, they grew more, they encouraged more, they engaged more. They produced and performed more through the engagement of their teams.

The poor ones simply didn't.

They took their existing beliefs on people and stayed unaware and rigid. They became a dumb leader. And being a dumb leader, builds disengagement.

Disengagement creates:

- Higher turnover of staff
- Lower productivity of team
- Greater absenteeism
- A no-care safety approach
- Less quality of product and service.

The crazy thing is, this validates the dumb leaders belief system. The outcome is what they believe to be true so they don't change their ways, effectively creating the same outcomes. No awareness, no learning, all blame. It becomes a vicious cycle.

"Everything rises and falls on leadership" - John Maxwell. How true is this!

Leaders that are intentional in growing and learning will engage their team and create better results. Some surveys indicate this is as high as 18% better. What would that 18% lift in performance bring to your business? Your Team? Your Career?

Think and reflect on the potential upside by embracing leadership skills and abilities. Think about what you can do to drive this. And when you have stopped thinking take action steps....today.

Engagement comes from Leadership. If your team isn't engaged, look at the leader first.

Tony Curl
Leadership Coach
Leadership, Life and Style

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My Top Ten Leadership Influences

Tuesday, June 03, 2014



I was reviewing the changes in my life over the last ten years and started to reflect back on the leaders that have influenced me. Recently I shared the great leaders I have worked for in the member section of Leadership, Life and Style and I have honoured them there, but it's time to honour and recognise the leaders from around the world who have influenced my leadership and the values I coach.

1. John C Maxwell

John is the author of the legendary book "*21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*" and about

75 others. I joined the John Maxwell team in 2012 after reading and studying John's works since the 1990's. John's values have resonated with me and his ease and simplicity of his message works. I have read much and at times the message gets diluted by complexity or text book-like language, but John's messages are simple enough for me to understand and his actions and exercises in his books add value. John has written over 75 books and is acknowledged as the number one leadership expert, and he sits atop my list for what he has brought into my life and my leadership.

2. Stephen M.R. Covey

The author of "*Speed of Trust*" and "*Smart Trust*". This choice may surprise some, but trust is one of those commodities that is severely lacking in the world today. We are gradually becoming nations of cynics and mistrusting of many. "*Speed of Trust*" demonstrates the reasons why companies should embrace trust as examples abound of quicker and more efficient companies built on it. Smart Trust details how to make it work in the real world, moving away from blind trust and mistrust and working with smart trust.

3. Stephen R Covey

The author of "*7 Habits of Highly Successful People*", "*The 8th Habit*" and "*The 3rd Alternative*" amongst others. While passed on, Stephen Covey will live on and build leaders around the world. 7 Habits is a "must get in your hands" book and the more people who read that book, and apply the principles, the better the world must get. I frequently masterminded this book with a mate, Court Taylor and those sessions and the learnings from them live on. My advice is to get a copy and share your learnings and actions with a friend.

4. Steve Maraboli

This one may surprise many as Steve is known for his empowering words and books. But his leadership influence is driven from his authentic self and he is a trusted confidant of many companies. His words and purpose is to provide people with the tools of becoming

their greatest self, and it stands to some reason that the same attributes can be utilised firmly to help you become the greatest leader. A deep caring humanitarian, inspiring author of best selling books the latest being "*Unapologetically You*", take his words and wisdom and apply the philosophy to your leadership and you will be surprised how far you can go. He is also the founder of an advanced coaching tool, "*Psycho-Neuro-Actualisation*" which is rapidly gaining traction around the world.

5. Dan Rockwell

From a true leadership influence perspective, it doesn't get better than Dan. He runs the Leadership Freak blog and aims to empower leaders 300 words at a time. Daily. Leaders can be busy, but even the busiest leader can aim to bring 300 words of empowerment into their day. He writes in bullet points and common sense, references often but provides his own slant and opinion. Leadership Freak is a daily must read for many leaders around the world, and is firmly ensconced in my daily agenda.

6.6. MaryJo Asmus

Another one of my favourites that come into my email. Mary is a writer, blogger, coach and consultant and her writings have warmed me considerably in the area of people and culture. A leader is responsible for culture and Mary deals with concerns present today in a matter of fact and easily actionable way. A must read email once received and great clarity often in issues I face.

7. Simon Sinek

"*Start with Why*" and "*Leaders Eat Last*". I almost feel like I don't have to say anything else. We all have something to learn from Simon, whether it is about finding and working through our purpose or whether it is the real servitude behind leadership. Simon has opened the eyes of many new and upcoming leaders and breathed life into our next generation of leaders. For that we should all be thankful. Take the time to read and apply the Simon Sinek formula.

8 Dan McCarthy

Accessibility is a key if you wish to be an influencer and thought leader. Dan accomplishes this with his Great Leadership site. He blogs and writes and collaborates and is the Director of Executive Development Programs at Paul College of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire. His blog is ranked in the best leadership blog lists annually. An influencer outside of his sphere and one that uses common sense and common language to convey strong points.

9. Kevin Eikenberry

Again, another who's emails I get regularly. Known prominently for "*From Bud to Boss*" Kevin assesses and reviews leadership with a slant of improvement both of life and your work outcomes. Common sense approach and simple language ensures that the lessons are readily applied. He runs programs through his company and effectively deal with culture, communication and learnings to grow as a leader.

10. Scott Fay / Ed Decosta / Paul Martinelli / Melissa West / Roddy Gailbraith / Christian Simpson

I cannot complete my top ten influencers without recognising the impacts the teachers from the John Maxwell team have provided me and the entire team of over 3400 coaches worldwide with the team. My summaries will never do them justice, but I will try anyway.

Scott Fay is the author of "*Discover Your Sweet Spot*" one of the best books I have read with some simple, yet detailed strategies to driving the best version of you. "*Ascend*" is Ed Decosta's recent book and it is a classic as Ed takes us on a journey to ascend to our greatest heights. Fantastic analogies and one that will keep you on your toes at times working through the reason behind them. Either way, you will love them.

Melissa has released her book "*Your Daily Wow. Words of Wisdom that will Inspire, Energise and Empower you Every Day*", Paul is a renowned leader in the personal development while Christian is acknowledged as one of the leading teachers of coaching in the world. Roddy is renowned internationally in the public speaking and empowerment mentoring networks.

My access to this amazing team as a member of the John Maxwell team has brought this influence out, and I would recommend each if you were looking for inspiration mentoring or coaching.

Summary

We all have much to learn. And we all learn and grow in our own unique way. This ten have been major influences in my leadership journey and recognise them as such.

I am a firm believer in the saying, that it doesn't matter what is "right or wrong" but what works. I have many influences as a Leadership Coach but the five listed above are my go to, people. The thoughts, opinions and values that resonate within me to take my leadership and coaching to the next level.

Leaders make things simple. The more we complicate, the more chance we have for error. Keeping it simple is one of the main influences I have. If you can keep it simple and easily understood, your people, your team and your business will flourish.

Take my challenge, take the time to honour the great leaders you have worked with and then detail your greatest influences in the leadership world. Share if you wish.

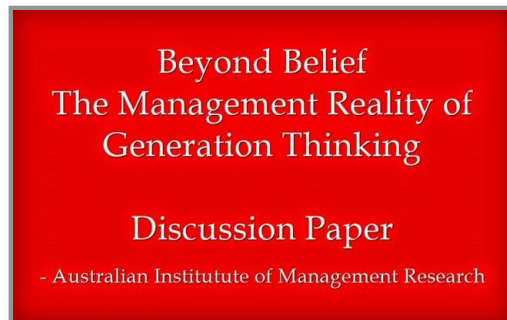
Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

Want any of the books, visit my Leadership Library now.

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Leadership for the Generations - Discussing The Management Reality ...

Wednesday, June 11, 2014



The Australian Institute of Management bring their vision of "Better Managers and Better Leaders for a Better Society" to life with the research they do and programs they offer that broaden the awareness and build skills into executives and businesses. One such research by Dr Malcolm Johnson is a discussion paper "Beyond Belief : The Management Reality of Generational Thinking" spotlighting the generational

debate focusing on young "Gen Y" Leaders and best summed up by :

" In preparing this discussion paper, AIM is saying 'Enough's enough'. The Institute believes that Australian Managers are more sophisticated than this. If they acknowledge the nonsense of running a business by the daily star signs then managing a workforce according to generation stereotype is no less problematic"

My reading of the the research found that the concept of leading people on the basis of the Generation perception was ludicrous and that all leaders should lead people individually and based on the qualities and capabilities of the individual. In particular the following insights caught my attention

- Respect - Everyone wants respect.
- Values - Our values guide motivations of the individual
- Motivation - People are motivated by work/cause/interests that appeal to them.
- Commitment - Where once commitment was measured simply by the hours worked, challenges now exist as to output and outcomes.
- Entitlement - Most people want to do the best they can. Young managers want to excel in the quickest time possible and at this can be interpreted as arrogance of entitlement.
- Communication - Behaviour more than language is the loudest part of communication. The technology of today presents challenges to traditional methods but the importance on senior management to model the required behaviours.
- Work/life balance - Maybe a better way is to look at work/life or life/work integration.
- Retention - Careers evolve over time and the notion of loyalty to an employer is dying with a greater focus of meaning and purpose for the executive.

Dr Johnson concludes the report with

"We conclude that a focus on the individual rather than the stereotype will accelerate the true potential of young managers as they develop the perspectives and practices that matter"

The report focused on the development of our young leaders, and for those charged with the mentoring and development of them to lead them as individuals, not based on a stereotype of their relevant generation perception. And I am in 100% agreement.

Attempting to lead people based on a perception and stereotype is fraught with danger

with the threat of disengagement and lack of growth being negative outcomes of such practices. Leadership isn't easy and in most cases not a natural thing for everybody. Building true leadership comes from a desire to serve people and this is highlighted by this report and so many times from history. Recommendations of quality individual conversations and discussions are referenced often and this is simply the mark of better leadership. One rule for all, may work in some situations for low-skilled employees or routine work, but to truly engage the best qualities of your people, the need is clear to bring them in as an individual, add value and development to them and watch them blossom.

In our Free Ebook "Fuelling Simply Better Leaders" (get it here) we explore some of the traits that great leaders have. While not exhaustive research, we find similarities between the conclusions from the Beyond Belief research and our beliefs in the make-up of great leaders. We state in the book that a great leader:

- Has integrity. People have to believe that you are pursuing your dream because it's the right thing to do, not just because you are ego driven.
- Is a people person. Understands the differences that make people unique and is able to use those individual skills to achieve the goal.
- Is positive. A leader encourages and rewards people and makes you want to do it and do it right. A leader is not a negative person and doesn't waste time and effort telling everyone what they're doing wrong.

The research validates these beliefs and of our values-based leadership coaching programs.. Great Leaders always build trust and rapport with their people, find ways and means to add meaningful development and inspire them into action and their achievement of results. Great leaders do not use a cookie-cutter approach to people or teams based on generalizations and perceptions. They demonstrate true care for their people and they add value to them by serving them.

The thought I leave you all with is this.

Fads come and fads go, but the basic values-based principles of leadership hold true after many years. What sort of leader are you? One enslaved by the latest and the greatest or the one founded on solid principles with the view to keep growing and learning. Leading by perception of the difference of the Generational Stereotype is simply a fad! Treat people as individuals, acknowledge and welcome their uniqueness and watch them blossom and grow.

Tony Curl
Leadership, Life and Style

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Help Me. I have been asked to find a mentor!

Tuesday, June 17, 2014



"I have been asked to find a mentor.....help me".

This question is often asked to me, by middle managers after the suggestion has been passed to them which usually occurs after a performance review. And they will

often have no idea what to do...What to look for and what to expect.

There is a clear distinction here between and coach and a mentor. A **coach** becomes a trusted accountability partner to an executive, diving in with great questions to build action for the client and the coach supports and stretches with accountability. The skill set of the coach is in regards to the depth of questioning for the executive, not his industry specific knowledge or experience. A mentor on the other hand, should act as a guide sharing their industry specific knowledge and experience with the mentee. While certainly not a "tell and do" scenario, the mentor provides options and advice to the situations confronted by the executive.

A good coach will coach across multiple industries and businesses, while a mentor will usually only be found within the industry or specifics of their expertise.

There is an increasing trend in having internal coaches for managers in business and while they are obviously operating at a level of success, results must be impacted by the addition of the perceptions surrounding corporate politics and agendas. Bringing these perceptions into a coaching relationship impacts on the transparency needed to drive lasting goals and actions within the coaching relationship. But enough of that, back to the topic at hand.

"I have been asked to find a mentor".

Sometimes this is much easier said than done. Many middle managers find themselves in this situation as their well-meaning (presumably) boss suggests this as a method to learn, grow and improve their results. It is also common that no suggestions for a mentor are given, as it is then a part of the development of the individual to source the mentor, and make full use of them.

But heaven forbid, if you choose the wrong one....

So what makes a great mentor?

Successful

You need to look at people who are successful in the field. Sustainable, high level results is the outcome you want from a mentor. Consistency of results is paramount. Most people can snag a great result through a short burst of focus, but to have a long history of success and high achievement is the first thing you look for in a mentor.

Willing

Once you have a list of high achievers, look to their track record of developing others. Have they been willing to invest in others as they have progressed? Have they built other great leaders or have they climbed the corporate ladder alone? You don't want to be mentored by a "Lone Ranger". You want to be mentored by the leader who gives with passion and realises their worth is measured not just in who they are, but in who they feed, develop and build. You want a willing and passionate mentor.

People

Delving further into the mentor mix you need, look at how they deal with people. Do they genuinely care about people? Do they have a heart or is it all about the result? Do they listen with empathy and build an individual rapport with their team? A good mentor knows their team as individuals and understands the possibilities this creates for their results.

Motivator

You cannot motivate others if you cannot motivate yourself. A great mentor will be self-motivated and know their team in depth, to create the environment that motivates all. It is a skill to motivate others and the first step is self-awareness and then action to role model. Energy, enthusiasm are all driven from your self-motivation

Confidence

A mentor needs to be confident in their own ability (without delusion or arrogance) and in their own team to handle any situation. An air of confidence is what you see in most senior executives, and this confidence lends itself to supporting others and providing advice.

Connections

As we move through the list it is also beneficial for the mentor to be well-connected and able to introduce you to these connections. Connections are not the sole reason for success, but when well-connected people introduce your skill-set and business to others, it adds some credibility to you. Your performance then becomes the deal-maker or breaker.

Generous.

The final attribute is the one of generosity. Some people cannot give themselves the significance on providing advice and support to others when often there is nothing for themselves to gain. Choose the ones that gain satisfaction by contributing to the career or the business of others.

Summary

In my experience, if you find a mentor with the following attributes, you will be well cared for in a mentoring relationship. You may find one in your company, or you may find someone in your networking association. Most of all start looking.

Most people I have found gain great satisfaction from mentoring someone, and they gain personally from just being asked. And often asking is the hardest thing for a middle manager to do. But if you don't ask, the answer is no.....so by asking and having a negative response, nothing changes. But asking provides a potential positive upside, and it's an opportunity for you to create.

Do you have a mentor? How did you find them? What process did you take to ask?
Please share your experience.

Tony Curl

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Empowerment is not a Quick Fix.

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

Empowerment is not a
quick fix

The concept of empowerment has been around for a long time and yet it is still under-utilised in business today. According to research a number of issues exist that would benefit from greater empowerment within business

1. We have a lack of engagement in our teams
2. Our middle managers are noted for lack of people leadership skill
3. Most businesses focus on short term results and performance.

Most businesses haven't realised the full power of empowerment. These issues paint that picture. By embracing empowerment, business can benefit from unleashing the power of their people. However, what holds us back is the lack of will-power and commitment and the want of a quick fix. Let me share with you a story.

Rex.

Rex was an ex-tradesman who came to work in the big-box hardware retailer where I was the Operations Manager. I met Rex on his first day after he had completed his three day company induction. He was an older worker, who had chosen to go off the tools and 'ease' himself into a quieter life as he neared retirement. I met him as I walked the floor and stopped for a chat to see how he was feeling. He was understandably nervous but came across terrified. I introduced myself and I asked some general questions on his background and his reasons for moving into a retail environment. He seemed pleased to be off the tools and shared his nervousness about the customer service aspects and the challenge this would present to him. And then came the kicker. 'And this empowerment thing..... I'm not sure I am ready to make my own decisions, even though it seems exciting" Our conversation continued and it came to pass that his line manager had given him a cursory introduction around the store and that he was right to go because of his knowledge of the products he would be selling. Then left him to his own devices...his own empowerment

No wonder the poor bloke looked terrified. No buddy working with him, no guidelines discussed.

Just go for it and we can fix the mess as we move on.

Empowerment is not a set and forget process. It is not a quick fix. We cannot just put someone into a work situation, tell them they are empowered and let them loose. I quickly found the line manager of Rex and spoke about my concerns that I had with terrified Rex being empowered with no input from the direct leader. After wading through all of the excuses (yes we had huge growing pains at the time and new people were being added to the team quickly to cope) we developed an onboarding program for Rex together. The line manager then sat down with myself and Rex and went through the program with him and clarified that empowerment is a process that comes with knowledge and awareness. Empowerment comes with the awareness of what decisions can be made, and the impact they have. Without clear guidelines, we cannot expect team members to make good decisions. End of story. And the interesting thing is we saw a new Rex. It felt like

the weight of the world had been lifted off his shoulders.

The story ended well. That onboarding program became the basis for every new team member we brought on board in that store. Rex became a valued team member (and a huge customer favourite) until he retired and the line manager, learning from those experiences has elevated himself into a senior executive role in the business over the 15 years since this incident. Everyone benefited from what this experience taught us.

Obstacles to Empowerment

- To empower, means we share power and spread it around. Many leaders hoard power
- Our belief system prevents us. If we believe people are fundamentally lazy and don't want responsibility, we will remain bound by this belief.
- The leaders most responsible for the implementation of strategy and the ultimate effectiveness of it, our middle managers, are our least trained and developed.
- Our patience for results ensures we are always looking for a quick fix. This negates the process we need to go on to ensure the effectiveness of empowering our people.

Process to Empower

- As the leader, you need to own the process and champion it
- As a leader, understand what you can empower and what you must do for yourself.
- Your people have to go on a course. They must understand the guidelines, align to the vision and strategy and have the confidence to use their own best judgement
- Power is released slowly as the team member builds
- Empowerment is much like the playing field for a football game. Help them understand what they can do while on the field, but also where they step out of bounds. Clear guidelines are needed.

Empowerment helps drive engagement within your team and when you have engagement, you have people who are psychologically committed to you and your business and driving success.

What do you need to do to bring empowerment into you workplace? What is the first step? Are you committed to it's success?

Tony Curl

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5 Leadership Myths Exposed.

Monday, June 30, 2014

Leadership is a confused minefield for the uninitiated. We have thousands of experts out there all sending their messages and the corresponding noise often dilutes the power that leadership brings.

Additionally, I have read some recent articles in which managers have detailed their dissatisfaction with leadership consultants and the results and disruption to the business. "Just Manage", is the message that is ringing out loud and clear.

Why has it come to this?

There are leadership myths. One thing however is clear. If you "manage" people, you are a leader. Managers are leaders. You lead by title and position, but you lead. The only judgement is whether you are a good leader or not.

Which got me thinking about the myths that emanate from those not dialed in to the leadership world. Let us have a look at some of the myths surrounding leadership.

Leadership is a Soft Skill

Leadership is not about campfires and signing the gospel. Leadership is one of the toughest skills to consistently display and act on. It isn't about going soft on people, it isn't about only telling people what they want to hear. Great leaders have the following characteristics

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Build Trust and Respect
- Courage
- Conviction
- Empathy

Many people go with the flow and look for consensus. This is the way of the average. Great leaders do what is right. And that is not a soft skill.

Leadership and management are mutually exclusive

Some people look at leadership like it's a higher plane and only worthy of an exalted few. All leaders have a degree of management built within them. Leaders use their management skills to build effectiveness. They have:

- The ability to prioritize (Time Management)
- Measure effectiveness
- Self-Management

Each good leader understands that management disciplines are required to be truly successful.

People not process

Leadership is about the people, but great leaders know that process is important. Process provides the guidelines to build empowerment and build people engagement. The difference here is that true leaders don't allow the process to constrain the people. They allow the people to improve the process in a state of continual improvement. Poor leaders stick rigidly to the process, limiting people and the business.

Leaders are Born - Leadership is a Natural Skill

Many see leadership as a natural thing, and therefore do not see themselves as leaders. While many can argue that some people are more naturally tuned to leadership, I believe that leadership is a skill and this can be trained.

I do know that leadership qualities must come from within. It is built from character. Our great leaders have a character that lends itself to it and no-one with poor character can truly lead people in a great way. Our character is built from the way we think and the way we perceive the world. We do have the ability to have conscious and rational thought and with this we have the capacity to change the way we think and perceive the world.

Leadership is hard to quantify

"Everything rises and falls on leadership" - John Maxwell. Examine events of history, great companies, great teams and sporting dynasties and at the heart is a leader. Everything great that happens is due to a leader, and with that the reverse is also true. Leadership is about positive business outcomes. It is about engaging your people and having them committed fully to the success of the endeavour. When your people are fully committed you see reductions in costs through

- Less focus on under-performing team members
- Less absenteeism
- Greater retention of people

And you see increases in revenue through engagement and connection with the customer.

Yes, increased exposure and awareness of leadership can not be guaranteed to lead to a 20% increase on the bottom line. It is reliant on the effectiveness and commitment of the leader. However, it is clear that when a leader commits and engages in improving their leadership ability, positive business outcomes do come. This includes greater commercial outcomes.

Summary

Every manager is a leader in some description. I do know that if you do not improve your leadership skills, you are effectively making the choice to limit your people and your business.

Improving your leadership will improve your results both personally and from a business perspective. Leading by title and position only is the hardest leadership you will ever do. We know that as you build your leadership skills, you build better people and you build better engagement and better effectiveness. It gets easier when people choose to follow you, and this only happens through greater application of leadership skills.

Tony Curl

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We can Create Change without Pain.

Wednesday, July 02, 2014

Dr. Steve Maraboli tells us that our greatest messages come from our greatest messes. We can all identify with this concept. Change often only happens through a catalyst, the proverbial "mess", in our lives and with it comes pain. We can become creatures of comfort and the world will conspire at times to give us a whack around the head. And that hurts. The constant we do have in the world is change, and when we resist it, the outcome is usually pain.

Successful people in life, don't wait for the whack around the head. They drive constant change and improvement in their life by constant growth and a thirst for learning. As such they reduce much of the pain that many of us feel.

And you can to.

It starts with a plan.

I ask leaders often about their own personal growth plan, and after careful consideration they usually speak about some rough goals they have, associated with some of the programs they have attended over the last five years, webinars and even email lists they have subscribed to. I allow them to continue and when they finally peter out, they usually go silent and admit they they don't really have one.

You are not on your own.....Most people don't.

You see, for most people, growth is accidental. But it can be intentional. An intentional plan of growth designed to bring out the best you.

Accidental growth happens when we wait for our company to choose what development we need; you may pick up the latest fad leadership/business book; you may click on a link on an email and see a webinar that may have some interest. Yes, you are growing. But without a rhythm or reason and usually the growth gets little traction.

Intentional growth comes from awareness of self. You need to acknowledge your strengths and be aware of the areas which aren't strengths. You set a plan to boost your strength zone and learn and grow with your opportunities. Growth is daily and becomes intentional.

Getting started.

To get started you must answer some honest questions.

1. What do I enjoy doing? Am I any good at it? (It stands to some reason that we usually enjoy doing the things we are good at)
2. What am I good at? (You may seek information from others to gain different perspectives)
3. To be effective, what do I need to improve on?
4. Where do I want to go? What is the farthest I can vision myself going?
5. What is available to me?
6. Who can provide support to me?

7. What am I prepared to do? Risks? Sacrifices.

Answering these questions will provide a platform for you to grow. The answers become the foundation for your personal growth plan.

Start Today and do Something Daily

Intentional growth is something you want happening daily. And you want to start today. What can you do to start the process today. Your growth will continue to be a daily process and will develop and improve overtime. Progress and improvement occurs daily and seldom occurs in a day.

Do you know someone who attended a workshop or seminar and came back overly excited and "told" everyone about their pending changes. In time, the fad disappears and nothing materially happens. Often we expect to get our growth from a one day seminar, a motivational speaker. A huge leap to make and it usually fails to materialise. Now I am not knocking seminars or presentations, but they become more effective when placed within a constant and strategic plan for your growth.

Everyday you need to ask yourself what you will do that helps you drive your growth. If you're not helping yourself, you're effectively hurting yourself.

I have a number of entrepreneurs in my network, who have growth plans and actively drive their own constant improvements. They meet regularly for brainstorming sessions with others in their network to drive synergies and success. A direct contrast to how some executives act and respond.

Summary

Pain drives change for most of us.

The pain of business failure. The pain of poor performance review? The pain of being passed over for promotion? The pain of disciplinary action?

The mess we find ourselves in because we have resisted change or sub-contracted our growth to company mantra. If you don't own your growth plan, don't expect anyone else to.

Having a personal growth plan, cannot be guaranteed to eliminate pain. However my experience indicates that it goes a long way to reducing this pain and leads you closer to success.

Tony Curl

Tony is a Leadership Coach who Fuels Simply Better Leaders. He operates Leadership, Life and Style and works with executives and owners to align their actions to their goals and desired outcomes.

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Great Leaders R.I.S.E.

Monday, July 07, 2014

In Australia, we are increasingly becoming a cynical society. Everyday we get bombarded with news and views that create this cynicism. Our level of mistrust is rising at many levels and at some stage we need to take a stand. And that stands starts with YOU. When I reflect back on the current events and the reasons behind this, I keep coming back to a simple message.

Everything Rises and Falls on Leadership - John Maxwell

No-one is immune from poor leadership and it's reflected within each of our major turmoils that exist. We need to create great leaders and on reflection i know that Great Leaders R.I.S.E.

What are the components of R.I.S.E.

Respect Great Leaders have respect, they demonstrate respect and in turn they get respect. Great leaders respect:

- The people they serve
- The businesses they build
- The customers and clients they have
- The communities they live in

Great leaders are respected because they demonstrate respect.

A simple message here, if you want respect, show respect.

Integrity

Great leaders have integrity. They are honest and transparent and deliver what they say they will. They don't send mixed messages, or hide their intention behind words or committees. They deliver what they say and they say simply what they mean.

Great leaders are honest with people and act with empathy.

Great leaders do what is right. And they deliver this with what is right for the community. During a crisis or an error that is made is when integrity of a leader is surely tested. Having integrity means they also admit their errors and mistakes. Leaders that seek support by admitting errors are respected more than a leader than attempts "bluff and bluster" tactics through a crisis.

Servant Leadership

Great leaders serve their people. Simple. They serve their people, they serve their business, they serve their customers and clients and they serve their communities. To lead you must serve.

It is when leaders are seen to serve themselves that mistrust and cynicism is created. A return (and I do say RETURN) to leaders serving their people is when we will start seeing trust returning to people. Great leaders serve.

Excellence

We live in a world where we mass produce average. Great leaders strive for excellence in everything they do. So they demonstrate respect with excellence, they demonstrate integrity with excellence and they serve with excellence and they produce outcomes and results with excellence.

Great leaders aim for excellence in all they do and that is then reflected back on the people they serve. Businesses with great leaders, produce excellent results.

It starts with you.

Some get frustrated with their beliefs and desire for change. Many want to change the world, but are seemingly unwilling to change themselves. Too many inspirational people have told us that change starts with each one of us. To change the world, we need to change ourselves first. Take the line of thinking and put it to action.

So next time, you look at the world and desire change, ask yourself can I R.I.S.E. to be the role model for the change you desire.

Can you R.I.S.E.?

Tony Curl is a Leadership Coach who works alongside leaders and executives by aligning their actions with their desired outcomes and goals. He has over 29 years experience in Operational Leadership and combines that with international leadership and coaching certifications. He can be contacted by [here](#).

What your business can learn from the NRL.

Monday, July 14, 2014

The NRL recently found themselves embroiled in a major off-field drama where a star of the game was pictured on social media in a position not fitting the sport or his place in it. Sport these days is a business and our associations often make headlines, not just for the game itself, but more so about off field drama and power plays. Do a quick Google search and you can find the following.

"NRL to consider "bad boy" bond""NRL to subtract points for bad behaviour" "How many more scandals can the NRL handle?"

We have had drugs and sex scandals. We have had performance enhancing investigations. We have alcohol and drink driving scandals. We have had domestic violence incidents. Salary cap rorting. Game fixing allegations.....I am sure you getting the picture. That's off the field.

Off the field is also where we see power plays and struggles, influence and bullying tactics. All played out in the media for the world to see. The true influence in rugby league is held by power brokers, vested in media interests and not the actual leadership of the game.

On the field we see the continuing saga of the standards of the referees, illegal play, wrestling tactics, inconsistency from the people who regulate the laws of the game and recently some very serious injuries, that will affect some young men for the rest of the lives.

So while the NRL is dishing out some great product, it's the negative press that dominates. So what can we learn from the NRL

Recruit for Character Some of the great coaches rarely have problems with players or off-field scandal. Why? They start with character. There are many talented players left on the sidelines and backfields of the game of rugby league, because they didn't have the character that matched their talent. At times people make allowances for extremely talented players....great coaches don't.

Act Early

At the first sniff of trouble, act. Many will ignore the first whiff of trouble and conflict. Great leaders don't. It is better to be dealing by the shovel load, than having a truck back up and dump it's load. Act Early. Don't stick your head in the sand. It is far easier to have a process that deals with trouble early, before it becomes a major issue. Take the tip. The early trouble is as unacceptable to your business as what it can lead to.

Communicate Clearly

You need to gain alignment from your team. We all should have a vision for our business or team and that vision needs to be communicated with clarity so they gain alignment and understand their role that they play. When that vision isn't understood, and when that role they play isn't understood is when trouble is just around the corner. Ensure that clarity is obtained and understood. They should be nothing ambiguous about a person's role and accountability in your business.

Focus on the Positive

Focus on the positive and provide recognition and rewards processes. Sport at times takes the positive work as a given and doesn't provide the necessary acknowledgement to the individuals concerned. By focussing on the positive the positive has this funny habit of increasing.

Summary

The key to any business success is learning from our let-downs and the let-downs of others. Build your business on a foundation of values and character, communicate clearly and align your team to a vision and combine that with a capacity to learn and grow and you will attain success.

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5 Key Factors to Build a Growth Environment.

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

People succeed when they embrace the concept of their own growth. They create an awareness and this leads to action and leads ultimately to accountability. Growth occurs when it is intentional, planned and focused on an outcome.

Awareness, Action, Accountability

Yet many will still fail. Why is this? Has this happened to you? You wanted growth, you set a goal, you had intention....you were focused....yet you still didn't make it happen? Maybe it was the environment you found yourself in.

Environment is stronger than Will.

Have you ever been pulled back by those closest to you? Have you ever been pulled back by those that work closest to you? They didn't believe in you, didn't support you, didn't encourage you, motivate you.....I'm hoping you get it. Environment is stronger than will. We need to create a growth environment that brings out the best you have.

How do we create our growth environment?

There are a number of key factors that will help you build a growth environment for you.

1. You are not the best person in the room.

If you're the best person in the room, you are in the wrong room. In a positive growth environment, you want people ahead of you, smarter than you. You want to be with people that are better than you, more successful to create a challenging environment that brings out the best in you. If you are the best in the room, how can you learn from those you associate with?

2. You focus on today and tomorrow, not yesterday.

You have a focus on going forward. While you learn from yesterday, you don't dwell on it. You have plans for tomorrow and the future but you know that it is what you do today that brings tomorrow's success. A growth environment is created by focusing forward and making the most of today.

3. You challenge your comfort zone.

You play in your strength zone and continue to challenge this thing called comfort. You know that nothing great happens inside your comfort zone. You stretch yourself and by doing that you stretch those around you.

4. You build a solid inner circle

You choose those around you. You choose those that motivate and challenge you, provide feedback and support you in your endeavours. You know that to build the greatest you, you need great people around you that compliment your skill set and inspire you. Like-minded people all with a focus of making it work.

5. To fail is to learn, not to fall.

In a growth environment, failure is not the enemy. It is another opportunity to learn and brings you closer to success. Learning from our failures drives us towards success. A positive growth environment helps make this a reality.

Summary

Other factors exist in a growth environment, but for an environment conducive to your success and growth, these factors above are critical.

Assess your current environment, does it contain these key factors? What needs to change? What needs to be improved? What do you need? Who do you need?

About the Writer Tony Curl is a leadership coach and business consultant. He combines international certification with his 30 years of Operational Leadership with some of Australia's biggest retail names. He can be contacted by visiting his website at

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The Past is Behind You

Tuesday, August 12, 2014



The past is the past. Simple. We call it the past, because it has passed us by. It has gone, it's been done, it's had its day. It's done and dusted. If you are dragging yesterday into today, the reality is it is dragging you away from the joy of today. It doesn't matter what happened yesterday; it doesn't matter what happened last week; it doesn't matter what happened ten years ago. It doesn't matter who you had a crush

on in high school. It doesn't matter how you missed your high school football team. It doesn't matter that time you embarrassed yourself in front of your family.

Nothing you do today can change any of that. Let me say that again. NOTHING you do today can change what happened in the past.

The past has been our journey. The past is our history. The past is our learnings. The past is how we have got where we are today. Our actions, our adventures, our misadventures, our mistakes, our problems. They are the foundation of where we are today. AND who we are. Our past does not define us. It has given us the benefit of learning and growing, but it isn't who we are.

We should learn from our past, and that's it. We all make mistakes....all of us. Learn and move on.

In 2011, I was rocked to my very core with a mess that occurred in my life. I lost a lot of things close to me and because of the situation lost some of the very people closest to me. I was shattered. **Shattered**. At the time I didn't see a way forward. I had all the coulda's and shoulda's in the world.

How could this have happened to me? I didn't deserve this! I was wallowing

In the end, the only thing I could do was simple.

What happened, had happened. I couldn't look anywhere else but with me. What did I do to create the mess? What actions of mine had led to the series of events? How had I contributed to this?

I needed to realise my role in the drama and it was only then that I could learn and be better for it, and it was only then that I could move forward. And I needed to move forward and I had to look at each day as a way of getting better within me. And when I got better, the people around me got better.

My mum had been battling cancer, for some time and after this shattering event I was called to serve my mum in her remaining time on this earth. It was special and it was humbling. It was a time when my only concern was my mum's final wishes and my daily focus was on ensuring this.

I still remember my last visit with her. It was a Friday afternoon. She was in her palliative care bed and her frail body was heaving with every breath. She was asleep but far from peaceful. That afternoon I sat in her room just being there. Just being present. I had nowhere else I would rather be. Mum's wishes had been completed. And I just wanted to be there.

She woke briefly and sensed my presence. She asked me just one question after saying hello. The final wish had been to bring back my father's ashes back to Brisbane and complete the plans for mum and dad to be laid together.

"Is everything done?" she asked

"Yes mum", I replied with tears in my eyes. "Thank you."

A long pause took over as I sensed the realisation of what was happening. In time she asked if I was still there and what I would be doing the rest of the day. It was about 4pm in the afternoon. I had nowhere else to go, and let mum know this and I would just stay with her for a while.

"OK, I'll just go back to sleep" mum said in a voice so low and strained that I struggled to hear. "That's ok mum, I'll just stay for a little bit"

I left around 5pm the vision of mum's heaving chest as she struggled for breath in a fitful sleep firmly in my mind. I understood we didn't have much time, but it still came as a shock when we got the call at 8am the next morning, while getting ready to come up and see mum, that she had passed away.

There was sadness, of course. There was relief as mum was no longer in pain and she could finally join dad who had passed away in 1987.

But overall I felt honour.

I felt humbled that I was given this chance to serve my mum and I was privileged for those times we spent together.

I visit mum and dad's memorial site, whenever I need clarity. Whenever I need "me time". I'll sit and have a coffee and allow my thoughts to focus. Rarely does a day go by when I don't think of mum and dad, and it's a common scenario when people lose someone, they feel closer to them after death. Life has a habit of getting in the way, and often we don't make the time to catch up with people we should. Our life gets in the way.

These two events happened for a reason.

They forced me to look internally at my behaviours and at my agenda. Being called to serve my mum highlighted the need to see the real me, what was inside me. I needed to see who I really was. I realised I needed to change.

I could have been bitter! I could have been angry! I could have focused on the regrets. I could have played the blame game. But none of that could change anything.

Both events happened. I chose to look at the lessons I had learnt. Nothing I could do could change what happened. I created a mess and paid for that, and Mum passed away from cancer. I couldn't stop that. I would have if I could have, but I couldn't.

I could only do what I did. I chose to serve my mum and fulfill her dying wishes. And I chose to learn from the mess I created.

The choice was clear. Focusing my energy on the positive learnings and service, allowed me to create a better me. Focusing my energy backwards, would have created a poison within me that eventually would have eaten me from in the inside out.

Around the world, many live in the past. Focusing their energy and emotions on things they cannot control, trying to understand and contemplate the reasoning behind events from the past. A world we live in based on regrets and blame is not a pleasant place to be. We live for yesterday, we live for last week, we live for last year.

We believe in the "good old days", we believe our best is in the past. The only things the past is, is memories and lessons. We Should smile at the memories and we learn from the lessons.

I learnt to live in the present. To make the most of everyday. To continue to live and make the most of what I have and what I can deliver.

What happened has happened. Do the very best you can today. Stop thinking of all the Woulda's, Coulda's and Shoulda's from your past. These thoughts serve you no purpose and can lead to poisoning you.

Focus on what you can do today. And when you learn to think like this, your life gets clearer, your life starts to get simpler. People who focus on making the best out of everyday and making the right decisions and combining with the right actions, lead us on a path to living simply.

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This is an excerpt from my book writing project "Making it Happen, Makes it Happen. Stories to Simplify your Life" . I hope you enjoy. Please join my mailing list for more news on this upcoming book project.

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The Crux of Poor Leadership - "The Powers to Be"

Wednesday, October 01, 2014



Hands Up if you have ever heard those terms in your corporate career?

The Powers to Be.

Usually uttered by line managers when communicating anything they don't agree with to their team. Maybe you have heard these examples.

"It's not my decision to reduce our salary expenses, it's the Powers to Be"

"The Powers to Be now want us to be doing this....."

"We need to be on our best behaviour tomorrow as the Powers to Be are visiting"

The Crux of Poor Leadership Using the "Powers to Be" analogy to describe a decision or a task is the crux of poor leadership. Many leaders use this analogy for many reasons including:

- The leader wants to be liked
- The leader doesn't understand the decision
- The leader doesn't agree with the decision
- The leader is not aligned to vision and strategy
- The leader doesn't have the skills to own the message
- The leader is following the example of his immediate supervisor.

Why?

Using the "Powers to Be" analogy undermines the vision and the strategy and if it buys any motivation, it is temporary and fleeting in effect. Therefore strategy is affected and is executed to the minimum level expected.

One of the challenges any senior executive faces is that of driving and executing strategy. Many surveys indicate that strategy is executed to a 60% effectiveness. Some CEO's I have spoken with are surprised it is that high, but overwhelmingly agree this is one of their greatest challenges. Strategy is executed at Front Line and Middle Management level. Where the rubber meets the road.

On average leaders receive their first leadership training and development after they have held their position for ten years. Additionally many surveys highlight the delusional aspects of many in front line and middle management positions with a higher self-rating of performance and a lower rating via other peers and supervisors.

I hope you're starting to be clearer on the potential reasons.

When leaders use this crux of The Powers to Be it is a true indicator of poor leadership. Whether it is a inability to own the decision or strategy, a lack of awareness of how their behaviours impact others or simply playing politics or being disruptive, it is all based on leadership ability and effectiveness. And that can be fixed.

How to Resolve

The development of leaders must be the domain of senior executives and not the sole domain of the human resource function. The execution of **your strategy** is paramount to the the results of the company and better execution can only be done through better leadership.

All of the symptoms of the "Powers to Be" crux, can be improved by the development of leadership and the subsequent alignment to the strategy. Additionally, the message is owned with greater commitment by lower level managers and leaders and execution improves.

Everytime there is critical communication that needs to delivered to the front line team, it must be clear and the leaders delivering it must own the message and strategy.

How is that achieved? Here are just some examples.

What to fix!

- Communication of Vision and Strategy
- Communication with clarity and confidence
- Training in Crucial Conversations
- Development of influencing others
- Building foundations of Trust and Respect into

Ask yourself these questions.

1. To what level of execution is your strategy being implemented?
2. How do you measure the effectiveness of your front line and middle level leaders?
3. Do you want better performance from your leaders in your company?
4. Do you want to lose the term "Powers to Be" from your company?

Personal Reflections

During my corporate career I had a strong leader who coached and developed us in such a way that every time we communicated to our team, we would link and align it to strategy of the business. The results the team he led achieved were the best within the company and we managed to stay ahead of the game because of this. Other times, I have seen leaders blame "the Powers to Be" for a myriad of things from performance management to customer service initiatives. If your leader doesn't own the message, how can you expect the team they lead to?

Tony Curl is a leadership coach and business consultant. He combines international certification with his 30 years of Operational Leadership with some of Australia's biggest retail names. He works with his clients on overcoming their pain points, gaining clarity and aligning actions to their desired goals. He trains teams to have stronger engagement and alignment with company vision.

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