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**19 ARTICLES TO HELP YOU TO SUCCEED
DURING DIFFICULT TIMES.**

COMPILED BY MEITAL BARUCH

BY 19 AUTHORS ON LEADERSHIP, RESILIENCE, INNOVATION, TEAM BUILDING & CHANGE



About This Book

June 2020

A few weeks ago, 55 members of our association each agreed to write a short article that could offer help, ideas, comfort, perspective, solutions, or just a friendly word to someone out there in the world. A person like you, going through this global pandemic with us. You received 19 of those articles, carefully curated by the person who sent it to you. I truly hope this collection inspires you. Because how my community made this has truly inspired me.

Hi, I'm Cathy Johnson, the 2019-20 President of Asia Professional Speakers Singapore. We are a community of speakers, trainers and subject matter experts who speak for a living. Many of our members speak at conventions or train large groups in organisations around the world. And Covid-19 has decimated that part of their business. Yet they are continuing to help, serve, encourage, support, guide and inspire.

Times like these can reveal the true character of a person. And I am so proud of the character displayed by these people and this community.

It's been a tough time to be the President of this association. It's a tough time to be a leader anywhere. But it's the storm that makes the sailor. What makes it rewarding during the storm is the community rallying around you.

I'd like you to know that our community is rallying around you. We wrote 55 articles. You've received 19 of them here. If you'd like to read the others, come and [visit us online](#) where you'll find all 55. While you're there, you can learn more about our amazing members who are all worth connecting with.

If you're a business leader, our speakers may have solutions for your challenges right now.

If you're interested in professional speaking, it's a tough time right now! But we do have a wonderful community, monthly meetings, virtual training, coaching, mentoring, an upcoming virtual convention and an amazing global community that can support your development.

We're here for you. We're rallying around you.



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Leading With Freedom

by Meital Baruch

Freedom. Mostly we take it for granted. But when something serious happens that is curtailing our free movement, we suddenly realize how indispensable freedom is to our way of life.

While taking my evening walks near my seaside neighborhood, I began to notice many more wild animals roaming about. It is almost as if they are reclaiming their natural habitat as humans retreat. I even saw playful dolphins the other day!

Could it be that our freedom and industry come at a huge cost to others? My mind then wanders to wild animals who are supposed to live in nature but are in cages. They do not have the ability to demand freedom, but it does not mean that it is not important to them. Perhaps my imagination was taking me too far (or Netflix overdose!) but I even began to theorize that Covid-19 is really the result of a well-executed revenge plan by wild animals.

As I drifted back to reality, I started contemplating the significance of freedom in leading multicultural teams. Specifically, how can a leader leverage the benefits that a sense of freedom provides, to enable a productive and happy team.



A good starting point is asking yourself these questions:

1. Do I Encourage My Team To Communicate Freely?

I often hear western-orientated leaders lamenting about their Asian team members keeping quiet in group discussions. But do they really understand the underlying cause? One technology leader recently shared with me that he was so fed up with lack of active participation in R&D sessions that he decided to stop attending them for a while. He was astounded to subsequently find out about the lively discussions and ideas generated in his absence.

Cultural values play an important role in what and how much we share. In many cultures, people are not accustomed to speaking up in front of their boss. But being too respectful may also contribute to disaster.

In the 1997 aviation tragedy of Korean Airlines flight 801, culture seemed to influence the communication style in the cockpit. The first officer politely pointed to instruments, instead of directly challenging the captain by telling him that the plane is about to crash.

Leaders should foster a conducive environment that encourages team members to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions freely. In doing so, leaders should also be cognizant of the cultural background of the team and adjust the communication platforms accordingly.

Covid-19 is a great equalizer. It affects all regardless of class, race, gender or nationality, making it an opportune time to encourage an inclusive communication culture.

2. Do I Give My Team The Freedom To Choose?

Much has been written in western books about the importance of autonomy and independence at work. Autonomy has been identified as a key factor increasing satisfaction and motivation at work. In Asian scripts, however, the focus is much more on the importance of obedience.

The manifestation of these values can be clearly seen in the reaction to Covid-19 lockdowns. In cultures that highly value obedience, leaders do not generally struggle with people disobeying the rules, contrary to western counterparts.

These values are not necessarily contradictory when leading a team. There is a time and a place for employing both, depending on the team's objectives, agenda and members' attributes.

Many years ago, my new boss surprisingly announced, "I don't care when you arrive in the office or how long you stay, as long as you do your job". This was highly liberating for me and pioneering for the time.

"I don't care when you arrive in the office or how long you stay, as long as you do your job".

3. Do I Allow My Team The Freedom To Fail?

How we perceive failure has an impact on how much we allow others to fail. Some cultures believe that everything must be done to avoid failure. Taking risks is not their preferred style. Other cultures believe that embracing failures and making mistakes is the only way to learn and encourage innovation.

Finding the right balance between avoiding and taking risks is the key. You may not want to turn the office into a laboratory, but by allowing your team to experiment from time to time, you give them permission to grow.

In these unprecedented times, society faces many losses encompassing both lives and livelihood. But on the other side of this crisis, there are profound lessons learnt and distinct choices to make. Could it be our calling to spread more freedom to all forms of lives on our planet? Are you ready to lead with Freedom?



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Create A New Human Age

by Cathy Johnson

Our world has changed dramatically. For the foreseeable future, we'll live within a series of tightening and easing restrictions. Yet these very different conditions are the opportunity we have to make a deeply profound improvement in how we live. We have the chance to create greater fulfillment for our family and for ourselves.

Slow Down

For more than 20 years, I've watched as people in organizations became more and more imbalanced in their lives. Each year they spent more and more time working in the office as well as at home, and less and less time connecting with their spouses, kids – and themselves. The result has often been distance, irritation and strife within families, and a lack of self-care. When I ask a coaching client what they do to take care of themselves, they often either look at me quizzically, not understanding the question, or they reply, "Nothing, really."

Now we have the opportunity to do something most of us haven't even thought was possible – to slow down and live life at a different pace. To reconnect with our family, to renew the experiences and bonds that we share, and to create new memories. When we get older, in our 80's or so, not one of our work colleagues will remember or speak about the brilliant reports and presentations we now view as important. Not one. Our family will be there though, and they'll talk about how we were so stressed with work we didn't have time for them, or how we would yell at them if they interrupted us.



But it could be different. Your kids could reminisce about what a great dad/mom you are – how you taught her to ride a bike, how you helped him with math and made it fun. Your husband/wife could tell about life challenges where you both supported each other through them. You could develop a real relationship with your family – and with yourself.

Slow down.

Take Stock

The world will never be the same again – which is good in a way, because we have the chance to make it better. Most of us now have time to really look at the "old world," the old way of living before this pandemic, and to figure out what is worth keeping and what is not.

Here's a way of doing this. Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Relax yourself by taking some slow deep breaths. Then, think back on life before 2020, and make two lists.

- Things about my life that were truly precious and energizing for me
- Things about my life that drained my energy and sucked the life right out of me



Think about this in terms of work, relationships, health and balance. The purpose here is to take stock so we can reorient our lives in ways that are more life-giving.

Do It Differently

Maria Branyas, the oldest woman in Spain (113 years old!), got Covid-19 in April, spent weeks in isolation, and is now negative for the virus. When she got out, she wrote this:

"I don't quite understand what's going on in the world. But I think nothing will be the same again. And don't think about redoing, recovering, rebuilding. It needs to be done all over again and differently... but believe me, you need a new order, a change in the hierarchy of values and priorities, a New Human Age."

What kind of future do we want? What kind of home life? What kind of work life? What kind of world do we want to live in? What values and priorities matter? We have been given a precious and expensive gift – expensive because many people have and will lose their livelihoods and their lives to this virus. So it's up to us to use this gift to significantly improve our own lives and those of people around us. We can choose to change how we're being in the world – to slow down and listen, to see people as people and not doers, to show empathy and love, to be inclusive and open with others. To be more truly human.



And that's how we can **create a new human age**.

See people as people and not doers, show empathy and love.



Cathy Johnson, MBA, PCC

Cathy has worked with hundreds of clients in more than 20 countries to develop greater presence, authentic leadership and more effective teams. She is a speaker and President of Asia Professional Speakers Singapore 2019-20, an ICF-certified professional coach, and an experienced facilitator with global organizations, with a focus on developing demonstratable competence in conversations, and sustainable change.

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Open Your Eyes: Answers To Your Covid-19 Issues Are All Around You

by Dr. Philip Merry

At this time all of us are looking for answers to the issues that we face in the era of Covid-19. Issues like:

- Why did it happen?
- Will I be safe?
- Will my family be safe?
- Will my business survive?
- How can I develop the new skills that I need in the post Covid-19 world?

What if there is a field of energy that you could turn to that gives you help and insight to face these questions? What if there was a way of “connecting the dots going forward?”

I want to share that you have an inbuilt answering device that you have used many times before. All of us have had the experience of thinking of somebody, only for that person to appear in our lives within a short time.

- You get a phone call from the person that you have just been thinking of.
- You come across a book that gives the answers to a tricky business question.
- You meet somebody who is an expert in the subject of your next keynote.

Most people shrug their shoulders and say “well that was interesting or unusual” and then just go about their daily lives.

Let me advise you to explore these events more carefully, because these unusual coincidences – I call them messages from the “quantum highway” – are sent to you explicitly to guide you. For thousands of years, humankind has been harvesting these miracle answers to support them on life’s journey, and I have spent the last ten years investigating this phenomenon. It is a process called synchronicity, (or quantum entanglement). Synchronicity is like an internal GPS that helps you find answers to life’s challenges.

Let me give you a brief outline of the science.

100 years ago, there was a revolution in the field of physics which moved us from a Newtonian mindset to a quantum mindset. Newton’s view of the world had been the predominant mindset for 400 years, i.e. that the universe is made up of solid matter which is separate from other solid matter. In such a world, there is no need for belief in god or miracles or strange connection between humans; humans are matter and so are separate from each other. Logic explains everything.

Much progress was made as a result of Newtonian thinking. But the only trouble was that these strange miraculous events that challenged logic continued to happen. Scientists dealt with this by keeping quiet, or by saying they were anomalies.

Fast forward 400 years to the advent of quantum physics which now is the accepted wisdom on how the universe is organised. We are 99% energy and only 1% is matter. And through the concept of quantum entanglement, we now know that we are energetically connected to each other. So, it is no wonder that when your sister in London is sick, you can energetically sense that in Singapore. Quantum physics and quantum entanglement have explained how this happens.

We are in a world where the understanding of synchronicity has come of age. And the encouraging thing is that synchronicities happen more in times of change such as the one we are now experiencing. As our normal view of the world changes in this era of Covid-19 look out for and follow those synchronicities.

For at the end of each synchronicity is a miracle waiting to happen.

Tips To Accelerate The Occurrence Of Synchronicities

1. Be In Flow

Be in the present moment; don't worry about the past, don't think about the future. Synchronicity happens when you are in the here and now.

2. Believe In Support From Spirit

There is a source energy that you cannot see, some call it god and some call it the quantum field. Believe that it is supporting you.

3. Seize This Time

The time synchronicity happens most is in transition periods. So at this time of Covid-19 keep your eyes open.

4. Set Your Intention

Be clear about your question. It can be a broad question like, "I want to find the way to function in this time of Covid-19". Or you can say, "I want 20% profit in the first quarter of 2021." The clearer you are, the more likely a synchronicity will come your way.

5. Be Curious To Follow Anything Unusual That Happens Out Of The Blue

Synchronistic events occur outside of our usual way of operating in the world.



Philip Merry PhD, MSc, CSP, Global Speaking Fellow

Philip has led global leadership and team cross-cultural events for 41 years in 61 countries, and is passionate about the power of synchronicity and intuition to transform yourself and your business. UK born, Singapore based since 1990, Philip holds a MSc in Business and Research, and a PhD in Synchronicity and Leadership.

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Acknowledging “I Don’t Know” Can Activate Your Leadership Superpower

by Karen Leong

“I’m a traditional banker. I don’t know tech. But when I landed the role, it turned out to be an enabler.” A leader who heads digital transformation at a major bank once said this at a panel discussion I moderated.

“Had I come from a tech background, I would have operated in the realm of the possible”, she added. “However, because I did not deep dive into the technology aspects, but looked at what customers wanted, I could focus on the desirable.”

Her embracing of an “I don’t know” mantra struck a chord. These were not words you expect to hear from a seasoned corporate leader. The deeper lesson here could be applicable to every area of our life.

And that is, ‘I don’t know’ can activate your leadership superpower.

I know that acknowledging our limitations goes against the grain of everything that we have been brought up to believe. We were told to study hard to ace exams and avoid not knowing in school. When we entered the working world, we were hired, rewarded, even promoted for our knowledge and what hints of competence knowledge provides.

Yet, when we take on the mantle of leadership, this quest to know everything can be counter-productive, even disempowering, in a world of constant change and rapid disruption, where adapting requires acknowledging we do not have ready-made solutions to fresh challenges.

Here are three reasons why:

1. Knowing Can Quash Initiative And Innovation

Steve Jobs famously said: "It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do." Yet micromanaging is everywhere. When we believe we know everything, we are unlikely to allow others to share their perspectives. This not only prevents new innovative ideas from being surfaced, but also inhibits the professional growth of people we work with.

I once coached a leader who was so beholden to knowing everything that she could even complete her staff’s sentences. Naturally, her team soon stopped speaking up and went along with whatever she said. Then she complained they were not proactive and did not offer any good suggestions.

2. Knowing Can Limit Our Perspectives And Quality Of Decision-Making

When we believe we know we are less likely to ask questions. We tend to talk more and listen less. Talking may help clarify our thoughts, but it is listening that helps us learn, discover more information and options and widens our horizons. Thus *not knowing* broadens our perspectives, enhances the quality of our decision making and often makes them more inclusive.

3. Having To Know Everything Generates Undue Stress

As the world becomes increasingly digital, with new technologies reshaping our world, leaders will lead people smarter than them, in roles that did not even exist just a few years ago. Trying to cope with this and also aiming to be domain matter experts in a dozen different disciplines can be a futile quest.

For too long, we have bought into the invincibility of the all-knowing leader. While this style does have its time and place, its vulnerabilities have been exposed as the world battles Covid-19 – probably one of the most massive disruptions of this age.

Enlightened leadership is having the courage to acknowledge we do not know everything, and the clarity that we do not need to if we have the right team with the expertise working on it and can count on their expertise in critical areas. This point is emphasized by Jim Whitehurst, president of IBM, “Being open about the things I did not know actually had the opposite effect than I would have thought. It helped me build credibility.”

Each one of us can easily unleash our *I don't know* superpower with some fairly straightforward actions. Here are five of them:

1. Learn to say it out aloud. Try it. There! See that wasn't so hard after all. And didn't it feel liberating?
2. Listen when people who know respond to you.
3. As they share, look for those pieces of the puzzle that can help you assemble the bigger picture and make better decisions.
4. Remember, you as the leader have the bigger picture, even though the people you lead may be domain matter experts. You can hone and trust your people skills to coordinate efforts and support them in achieving the task on hand.
5. Most importantly, encourage your team members to learn new things and grow, so that they stay engaged, happy and motivated.

The opposite of knowing is not ignorance, but learning.

Riding the *I don't know* train can be scary. However, when we embrace our curiosity in people and things, we tap into a courage to unleash the power of not knowing. This invites people to jump in with us. It enables us to fully leverage the collective genius, creativity and passion of our teams.

Don't take my word for it. Try it, and experience the difference.



Karen Leong, CSP

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Angel Of Delight

by Avi Liran

I could not fall asleep; I had been invited to conduct a workshop for cancer patients and their family at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital. I tossed and turned throughout the night, suffering from a severe attack of imposter syndrome: “Who am I to deliver our light-hearted messages to people who are in combat with death? I was afraid my message of joy might be offensive and hurt their feelings?”

If I were a phone, my screen would be signalling a low charge warning. Driving to the hospital, I was praying for energy, for a sign to ensure me that I could pull this off. I thought about calling in to say that I am sick, then found myself already parking the car at the hospital.

Exhausted and worried I had one more issue. My anxiety was churning my gut to produce a lot of gas. I headed straight for the toilet, opened the door, and saw an incredible sight; an Asian looking man in his thirties peeing and singing a gospel song out loud. “The Joy of the Lord is my strength...” I started laughing and could not stop, it was hilarious. The funny man started to laugh too and for a few minutes we were both laughing like crazy.

I introduced myself and asked, “Do you always sing when you pee?”. He answered with a smile “My name is Onassis. I am a hand therapist and a pastor. I am singing the song that I will be singing for my congregation this Sunday. I work in a very stressful environment. I see patients after trauma, many of them are depressed and exude negativities. Singing also refuels the joy within me, it gives me the strength to continue giving from my Heart to others.”

Our joyous meeting had charged my battery, but I still needed an espresso, so I offered to treat my new friend to a coffee. Onassis politely refused, then insisted that I follow him to his clinic so that he may brew me a coffee in his pantry! I shared with him my insecure fears about performing to a group of terminally ill people and my weariness from sleeplessness.

“Once the patients believe, healing is exponentially faster.”

I noticed a few wooden cylinder sticks like mini ice-cream cones on his table. Each one had different type of surface, “What are these?” I asked. “I use these to help people re-learn to feel and decode different kinds of surfaces.”

I asked, “What is the portion of motivation and physical therapy in your practice?” “80/20”, he replied. “When people come to me, they usually relive in their heads the critical moment when their hand was cut. Many of them blame themselves for their stupidity and cling to the agony of their loss. In that state, they make very little progress even if my therapy session is the best. You see, Avi, many of them are in a very bad emotional state of mind. They are stuck in victimhood, denial, frustration, and depression. Some lose the sense of hope. Their system produces stress hormones which suppress the effectiveness of their immune system. I motivate them by telling them that the light at the end of the dark tunnel is near because there is a curve. Once they pass it, they will see the big light. Now they need to put their other hand on my shoulder and walk after me. You see, Avi, motivation is 80% of what we really do. Once the patients believe, healing is exponentially faster. Now you go to the second floor and do your workshop. You will rock”.

I showered Onassis with thanks, then dashed down to fearlessly deliver one of my best workshops so far. At the end of the workshop, a beautiful lady approached me with her two young daughters and said: “Avi, over six months ago, doctors told me I had only three to six months more to live. Today, in your workshop, I smiled, learned, and laughed with my daughters. The ability for the girls to see me happy and not suffering is a precious gift that you gave us. I hope they will always remember these delightful moments with me today.” Tenderly she then took off her shoe to reveal a blister that almost covered almost her entire foot and said. “When cancer pain presents, it can seem unbearable, and this is the result of the medication, but when I can laugh and smile like today, much of the pain subsides, then I am able to sleep without medication. Thank you, Avi, for what you shared with all of us today.”

“... but when I can laugh and smile like today, much of the pain subsides, then I am able to sleep without medication.”

Onassis was my ‘Angel of Delight’. Whether our restroom meeting was divine intervention or coincidence, his compassion, hospitality, generosity, support, and spontaneous coaching made a difference in my life and transmitted an immediate positive ripple effect on to others.



Each one of us has the capacity to delight. Do not underestimate your ability to delightfully contribute. Every action of delight does make a difference.

During the pandemic crisis, millions of people around the world made the choice to contribute to others in need. Their generosity transformed ubiquitous feelings of helplessness, worries and fear into being useful, helpful, and hopeful.

The question is: for whom will you be an angel of delight for today? There is no better time than now to grow your angel wings, to soar and make a difference.



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Let Your Heart Lead

by Shikha Rinchin Tiku

Amidst the global pandemic, compassionate leadership has become more a need than just a want. Isolation, economic instability, and fear of the future have become a part of everyday conversations. Your otherwise roaring teams are therefore vulnerable and in need of constant assurance and empathy. At this point they need someone to look up to, someone who can tell them that it is going to be okay so that they come to work with a spring in their step, and not with fear gripping their hearts.

Compassionate leadership has been spoken and written about over the decades. But as we see today, it has become a glue that is holding millions of people together in the current situation. It's not just the corporate leaders, but also global health forum leaders and the country leaders who are practising compassionate leadership in one way or the other.

Thupten Jinpa, Tibetan scholar and English translator to Dalai Lama, defines compassion as "a mental state endowed with a sense of concern for the suffering of others and aspiration to see that suffering relieved."

Jinpa explains that every expression of compassion has three aspects to it:

1. The cognitive aspect – "I understand your problems".
2. The affective aspect – "I feel what you feel".
3. The drive or motivational aspect – "I want to help you out of this".

These three aspects need to be constantly communicated through your actions in some way or the other, so that your team members stay motivated and positive in the current scenario.

Here is how you can practice compassionate leadership with your team:

Over-communicate

Share business updates regularly with your team. Tell them what visibility you have of the business and the clients. Be candid in your conversations and try to address all the business-related queries that your team might have. The best assurance comes with the truth. *This is one of the best ways to express compassion through the cognitive aspect.* It proactively says, "I understand your problems. Here are the real data and facts to keep you updated about our situation".

Allow Coping Time And Some More

With schools and nurseries closed, the majority of the workforce working from home and restricted access to most of the amenities, the day-to-day lives of everyone has changed considerably. While everybody is trying to adjust to the current situation, they still might require flexibility and maybe some more "me time" to cope with this change. Ensure that you allow enough flexibility for the team members to manage their personal lives too. Reshuffle some calls to slots that best suit everyone, encourage teams to collaborate and cooperate with each other. *These express compassion by reflecting the drive aspect, "I want to help you out of this."*



Share Your Story

Tell your teammates how you're coping with the present times. Share the situations which are tough on you and the ones which feel right. When you bare your heart in front of the team, you come out as someone who is real and relatable, and that helps the team deal with this situation better. You can always share tips that you follow to manage your life in the new scenario and maybe ask for suggestions too. *The affective aspect is effectively covered by sharing your story.* It simply says, "I feel what you feel."

Recreate Coffee-time Moments

While life may have thrown an unexpected move on all of us, a little fun and humour can brighten up these gloomy days, and create a better team bonding. You need not do anything fancy, just have some unscripted humour, talk about some fun days and memories of the team. You could also use some quick virtual games or some fun activities that your teammates could enjoy. This could be a refreshing change from the work in isolation that no one is used to and caters to the social needs of the team. *This again is the drive or motivational aspect of compassion that you could use to positively influence your team.*

Create Opportunities For Wins

Currently, the amount of work and the number of projects may vary for each business. However, try to create opportunities for your team members to get a sense of accomplishment. You could have them streamline internal processes, create new processes, share ideas to improve the business or even share their own personal wins (fitness, creativity, or anything that could inspire others). Such win posts could boost the morale of the team manifold and inspire them to stay productive.

In summary, as a manager, you would have worked out all that has to be managed. As a leader, let your heart lead your interactions with your team.



Shikha Rinchin Tiku

Rinchin is a published poet and author who takes deep interest in sharing her view of society, religion, and spirituality through her poetry and blogs. As a learning consultant, Rinchin helps organisations globally create engaging learning content in the areas of sales, leadership and employee engagement.

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Simplify

by Tim Wade

Work, family, health, connections, volunteer, gym, marketing, home fixes, read, learn, do that course... There's just not enough time to do it all! If only everything could stop for a few weeks so I could get stuff done and define my new normal...

ZAP!

And here we are. Then somehow I became busier in different ways, feeling overloaded, frustrated. The usual solutions didn't work. "Increase productivity!" ... awesome, but I got distracted by all the new things I needed to do. "Increase self-discipline!" ... great, but I couldn't quite discipline myself enough to do it. So here's an unusual solution: simplify. Simplifying means removing the overload and creating margin. Then create your new normal EVAs - Essential Victory Activities.

During our Covid-19 isolation we enforced simplification by closing non-essential businesses. Could this work on our non-essential stuff? If we delete, donate, trash and prioritise... we end up with... life alignment. Closing non-essentials in our home, work, and workload management will keep us focused on our EVAs and living life on purpose; improving relationships, increasing productivity and... creating margin.

Margin

Like a margin in an exercise book, or around a printed page, there is a space reserved for nothing. Our lives need that margin too. Space; a buffer of nothing. It's used in design (white space, negative space), coaching and counselling (active silence), in the structure of the universe (er... *Space*), and we need it in our lives too.

Margin requires boundaries; rules so you keep it empty, not filling it with more. Declutter the physical space and the useless busywork, and that to-do-list mind-chatter that steals your focus. That "Too Due" list is weighing you down. Lighten up. Eliminate to illuminate. Keep only essentials: your EVAs. Create margin by removing the overload and the overtime. Own your load, own your time. Simple.

Remove The Overload

Be ruthless. Imagine you're at gunpoint: you have to choose what stays, what goes.

- Work projects overloading? Eliminate 20% of them, decide to defer 60% of the less important ones. What's left will be the most valuable 20%. Work on value. Simple.
- Social media and websites everywhere? Delete dormant and dead profiles and sites. Copy useful content before deleting, to republish on the remaining sites. Simple.
- Business systems chaos? Simplify your creation, connection and delivery systems, and ease of consumption by your audience. Ask IT, or get ruthless yourself. Process review time. Ask for help if you need it. Simple.
- Staring at clothes you haven't worn for years? Recognise that a \$600 pair of Versace jeans from 2004 that still don't fit even after losing weight is worth zero in your wardrobe but a lot to someone else who will give it life. Sell it or donate it to the Salvos. Liberate your wardrobe. Then resolve to give away two items before buying one new one. Simple!

- Too many books? Donate anything you won't read within 24 months. Buy them on Kindle if you must. Use the extra space for clarity not for more unused stuff. Simple.
- Unused stuff? Sell or donate it away if it's without real meaning or value, or is long-term unused. Some unused stuff has value and use, like a fire extinguisher. Obviously keep those. But for other stuff, like my awards or gifts from speaking clients, I take photos of them to use on my website (useful) and store or release the item. The wonderful ones can stay on my shelves. They "spark joy." The generic or thoughtless ones go. Simple.
- Online photos? I consolidated all of them into Google Photos. Amazingly there are over 200,000 in there. Our daughter, Zoe, shouldn't have to go through over a million blurred and irrelevant photos to find some good ones after we die. She might delete them all and miss the good ones. So once a month, my wife and I delete at least 1000 useless photos from our collection. We turn it into a fun, family activity of going through memories while deleting the "meh" and the duplicates. Our goal: an essential 5000. A huge job. And time-consuming. But it needs to be done so we're chunking it down and making it fun. Simple.
- Online business documents? Same idea as the photos, but for business. Trash archived nonsense. Create a quarterly Dropbox Delete Day. Make a competition of it. Simple?

I'll share a *Resource Pack* with more ideas that expand on these (link in my bio below), but for now: simplify. It's like clearing mental garbage. The result: more clarity, more focus, aligned results, peace. Thank me later. You're welcome now.

Completed EVAs Deliver Daily Wins

I love the idea of getting up at 5 a.m. and winning before 8 a.m. ... except I'm asleep then. Besides, some wins can only come after 5 p.m., like family time. Instead ask: what EVA can I complete NOW? You'll need to choose your Essential Victory Values, and then add Essential Victory Activities. For example, my five essential values are Faith, Fitness, Family, Impact and Growth, all underpinned by Fun. I'll share my activities in the Resource Pack where, ironically, I have more space to share my ideas.

Perhaps now is the perfect time for you to define your new normal EVAs. I'm happy to help you define yours, simply connect! But try doing it yourself first. With your EVAs, every day can be a victory regardless of project-driven or trigger-driven work (like writing proposals or delivering speeches). And with margin, you'll find peace, creativity, joy and that me-time you've been missing. But beware of fake essentials that threaten your margin. Our creative thinking comes alive within those margins; even the name Eva means 'life,' and our EVAs create our space for our life-alignment.

So... Simplify. Create EVAs. Cherish your margin. And to start: simplify.



Tim Wade

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Ready To Reflect For Mother Earth?

by Andrea T Edwards, CSP

We all have a chance, a beautiful opportunity, to create the world anew. While it's a very challenging time, we have been given a *gift* from Mother Earth – the gift of time to deeply reflect. A time to reconsider how we live our lives and how we shape our collective future. It feels like we've been given a big time out and sent to our rooms, asked to reflect and consider the world we create at the other side of this crisis.

Will humanity take this chance to reflect and change our ways? Or will we miss it, waiting for the next crisis to hit, and the next, and the next? Because with the climate crisis and deepening global inequality, if we do not change, we are ensuring a permanent state of crisis. Do you want that? I certainly don't.

"We've all been sent to our bedrooms for a time out, where we are being asked to reflect and consider our actions."

We can no longer ignore the peril we are in. It's predicted that major ecosystems will start collapsing before 2030 – yes, in our lifetime! Yet we continue to chop down life-giving trees, and we glory in excessive consumption, all while the world gets warmer, the oceans too, with emissions going in one direction – up! We continue to pass nature's tipping points and don't seem capable of grasping the impact it will have on all of our lives.

Young People Are Frightened

When my son was 11, he told me, *"Mum, if it gets too hot to be outside because of global warming, I am going to commit suicide."*

That devastated me! Our children know. They see a future of unbearable hardship. Is that all we are prepared to offer them? We cannot wait for our children to grow up and act. We don't have time. The time to act – and the opportunity – is now.

Deepening Inequality Is A Huge Issue

We have other huge challenges too. Deepening inequality is accelerating due to Covid-19. This puts women and children in greater danger of human slavery and abuse, with millions of jobs at risk or gone. We have an enormous human crisis on our hands, with The World Food Program stating 30 million people face famine, while the World Bank claim that 60 million more people have been pushed into extreme poverty.

"The only way to get out of permanent crisis is for us ALL to reflect on what must change."

This pandemic and the economic fall-out is a terrible experience to live through. However, we must claim this unique opportunity to rewrite our collective future. A future where the sustainability and health of all life on Planet Earth is at the centre of our plans.

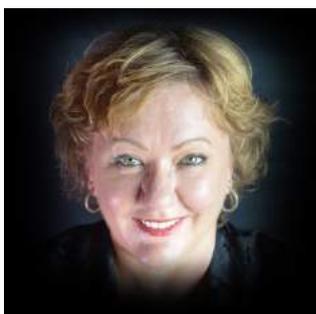
Questions For Reflection

With this gift of time, let's ask ourselves some searching questions and find the answers, together.



1. Are you happy with your life – family, home, community, sense of achievement and contribution? Is it time for new directions?
2. Are you questioning the frantic pace of life we left behind? Do we want it to continue?
3. Are you proud of the company you work for? Is it contributing positively towards all life on earth, or is shareholder value more important?
4. Is it time we demand business to change dramatically, versus the lack of consideration of earth's finite resources, with no responsibility for the waste left behind?
5. Are we individually ready to face up to our part in devastation and suffering? Do we continue to accept children suffering in mines to make our phones or computers? Women suffering in the garment industry for fast fashion? Companies like Ikea producing #FastFurniture, made from illegal logging, to feed our insatiable appetites for new?
6. Are you wasting less, buying less, saying no to #SingleUsePlastic, consuming less meat, shopping locally, making plans to reduce your emissions?
7. Is your country polluted and full of rubbish? Are you ready to demand action from the businesses who have profited from it for decades?
8. Is it time to close the wildlife markets, while creating new livelihoods for those reliant on their income?
9. What about overfishing and destruction in the seas? What's the real impact? What's the risk to us?
10. Are you working to be part of the solution to end inequality, in all its forms?
11. What parts of life from *before* should we get rid of? I want the false, ego-centric, hero-worshipping, sales-funnel-pushing nonsense gone. I want us to be real. To be meaningful. You?
12. And to the parents, are we acting to ensure our children have a beautiful future?

We face big challenges. Will you join me? Will you reflect and raise your voice to demand change - on social media, in your communities, your company, and on stage? Will you join a rising chorus demanding better for all life on Planet Earth?



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A globally award-winning B2B communications professional, and expert in social leadership, content marketing, and employee advocacy, Andrea works with the world's largest companies on the transformation needed within to maximize business growth digitally. Own your voice, own your future.

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Four Keys To Thriving In Tough Times

by Karolina Gwinner

If someone told you a few months ago that soon the world as we know it was going to press pause on significant human activity, would you have believed them? Would you have listened to a story of how humans had to stop travelling, going to the office, or even socializing with one another, their own families included?

What sounded like a scene from the thriller movie *Contagion* suddenly became our new reality; a reality so different from what we're used to. It's been unsettling, challenging and hard to predict, as no one knows what the ultimate impact of this pandemic will be, or how long it will truly impact our lives.

Does it mean we should put our lives on hold and wait for better times? Or is there something we can do to thrive in this new reality? From my experience working with incredible leaders, I observed that they perceive challenging times as an opportunity to step up and put their leadership skills to test. They focus on what they can change and take action on their ideas, instead of dwelling on things they cannot change.

As a result, these leaders become wiser, embrace change faster, and shape the new reality for themselves and everyone around them.

Sounds compelling, right? Here are four keys to getting you started on this path:

1. Reflect

All too often we forget to reflect on what really matters to us. As a result, we might be moving ahead, but in the wrong direction. Now, as our life takes an unexpected turn, it's an opportunity to recalibrate our direction. To do that, let's ask ourselves, "what truly matters to me?" Getting some clarity on this enables us to become more intentional about where we're heading, and how to lead our life to get there. Consequently, we start investing more time, energy and attention into things that matter, and ultimately, learn how to let go of things that don't.

Invest more time, energy and attention into what truly matters to you.

2. Reconnect

Humans are social. Our earliest ancestors organized themselves into tribes and communities at the dawn of humanity. It's not natural for us to go through self-isolation, lockdown and physical distancing from each other. Is it any wonder that, when confronted with the new stay-at-home reality, many feel stressed, overwhelmed and even depressed.

However, as we reconnect (virtually of course) with others, we quickly realise that we're all in this together, more dependent on one another than ever before, and that we can empower each other to adapt to the new reality, see new opportunities, and keep our spirits up, despite the lockdown.

3. Recharge

In challenging times, the demand for our support is likely to rise, so we must not forget that our own batteries have limits and need regular recharging to keep us going. There is nothing egotistical about making time for yourself in your daily routine. In fact, successful people emphasize how essential their “me time” is to ensure they can give their best to others, as well as in everything else they do. It also helps them to sustain their performance over time.

If you don't stop regularly to refuel, the lack of fuel will ultimately stop you.

4. Reinvent

Some people keep referring to, “when things go back to normal.” What does that mean? Do we really want to go back to the ‘old normal’, after all we’ve been through? If we did that, wouldn’t it show that we didn’t learn any lessons from this challenging experience?

Before the pandemic, our world was spinning out of control. We were all lost in *busyness*, we let our egos grow out of proportion, and our feelings fooled us into believing we were invincible. Suddenly the world slowed *us* down, so we had to face the reality we created, and it’s given us a huge nudge to change what hasn’t been working for a long time. It’s tested our humanity, and reports around the world indicate we are kinder, more authentic and thoughtful because of this experience. Let’s not go back to where we were - mindless and lost. Let’s use this shift as a stepping stone to reinvent the future, benefitting all life on earth.

Stepping Up And Thriving In Tough Times

I believe that tough times are here for a reason. They have the power to teach us some long-forgotten values, like humility, respect for ourselves and the world we live in. They help us to connect on a deeper level with more care, authenticity and compassion.

Let’s learn these lessons and step up to the challenge of leading the world to a brighter and more sustainable future for ourselves and our children. Let’s ask ourselves: *what if the current pandemic is not a threat, but a golden opportunity for us to recalibrate our direction and reinvent our future?*

What if the current pandemic is not a threat, but a golden opportunity for us to recalibrate our direction and reinvent our future?

Let’s keep searching for ideas that will make us energised, empowered and inspired to take value-driven action. This is how we start thriving in tough times and make a positive impact on the world around us!



Karolina Gwinner

Karolina is a high-energy and performance-driven leadership trainer and speaker. She empowers leaders to thrive in uncertainty, maximise their performance and become more influential. In 2019 Karolina was nominated as the Knowledge Partner of Women Leaders Institute. She is also the Speaker Training Lead for KeyNote Women Speakers.

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Why Let A Good Pandemic Go To Waste?

by Scott Friedman

As news about Covid-19 spread across Asia in mid-February, my mother pleaded with me. “Please don’t go and take the risk. Stay in the US and be safe. Don’t make me ground you like I did when you were a kid.”

“Mom, I have to honor my commitments and speak to the groups that hired me.”

“You’ll see, they will all cancel,” Mom replied. And sure enough, my Mom jinxed the trip! All but one cancelled. And on March 18 after my one and only speech, I flew back to Colorado.

One thing I’m grateful for is that every time I face a challenge in my life, my thoughts always turn to what I’m grateful for. When my car was stolen, I thought how lucky I was to have a car and so many of life’s luxuries. When I had a heart attack while at the hospital, I was grateful to actually be in the hospital when I had the heart attack. And very grateful to get a second chance at life. And now this: Covid-19! What’s the silver lining? What’s the blessing?

The Silver Lining

What is it we are supposed to learn? The gift will be different for every person. A good place to start is to realize that things happen the best for the people who make the best out of the things that happen. If you come from the perspective of knowing that there are many gifts in this pandemic, then your focus will be on finding the gifts and making the most of them, instead of playing the self-pity game and longing for the way life used to be.

Things happen the best for the people who make the best out of the things that happen.

So, let’s look for the gifts! What is it for you? What did you learn about your values? What will be different about you moving forward? As we look to create a more meaningful future, I’m reminded of one of my favorite Buddhist prayers:

“Grant that I may be given appropriate difficulties and sufferings on this journey, so that my heart may be truly awakened and my practice of liberation and universal compassion may be truly filled. For it is felt that if we have no struggles in life, we have no opportunity for genuine growth.”

Do you feel you’ve had *too much opportunity* for genuine growth in the past few months?

Turn On Your GPS

As you’re creating your desired future, keep your GPS turned on.

Gratitude

Appreciate the life we have and those with whom we want to share it. Feel the gratitude of making a difference in the lives of others. One idea that I have found helpful in keeping your focus outward and not inward is what I call, “*Hero of the day.*”

Reach out to one person every day and let them know how grateful you are for them being in your life. You can use the actual term “hero of the day” or just let them know you are grateful. Get creative about the way you honor them. If once a day is too much for you, try doing it once a week. It is guaranteed to make them feel better and you as well.

*Fragrance
always clings to
the hand that
gives roses.*

Play

Play starts with accepting our current reality - all the pressure, stress, anxiety, and heartache we may have at any given time. It’s the ability to let go of anger, resentment, blame, and all negative emotions of the past. Focus positively on the present. Play is being in the state of flow, accepting the current moment, and making the most of it.

Play starts with a good sense of humor. It’s learning to laugh at ourselves. If you can laugh at yourself, you will always be amused. Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, when asked how he created such an amazing learning environment at General Electric, replied that he encouraged his employees to take their work seriously and take themselves lightly. Good advice for all.

Ask yourself the question, “Do you want it to be fun?” Hopefully, the answer is yes. Then the next question is, “How can I make this more fun?” Create opportunities and take responsibility for making it more fun.

Surprise

This is the element of the unexpected. It’s serving with kindness and empathy. It’s catching people doing something good and rewarding them with something they would appreciate. It’s finding out what’s high on their joy list and honoring them with that. It can be something as simple as finding out their favorite candy or snack and hiding it in their workspace or where they are sure to find it. One of my favorite ways to surprise others is by capturing a photo from Facebook and getting it printed on a mug. Then I will either hide the mug where they will eventually discover it, or drink out of the mug when we are together and see how long it takes them to notice. I’ve had wait staff serve my honorees coffee or tea in those photo mugs, which always brings a laugh when they finally figure it out. Recently, I sent pizza to my six neighbors as a surprise, and to have some fun and lighten up the pandemic a little. We received some fun gifts back, and it seems there are more smiles around the neighborhood because of it.

As you’re creating the desired destination for you and your organization, I highly recommend turning on your GPS - and you’re guaranteed to enjoy more of the journey.



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Former President of the National Speakers Association, Scott speaks over 50 times a year on employee innovation and engagement, customer experience and how to create a happier, healthier workplace. Scott is author of many books, including *Celebrate! Lessons Learned from the World’s Most Admired Organizations*, *A Celebration a Day! 365 Ways to a Happier, Healthier Workplace*, and *Happily Ever Laughter - How to Engage Any Audience*.

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Learning Through Crisis

by Wendy Tan

The world is learning how to emerge from the crisis safely. Businesses are learning how to survive the crisis. Entrepreneurs are learning what products and services will thrive. Professionals are learning new ways of working. Learning is more important than ever. And I don't just mean attending virtual workshops.

In normal times, we draw on best practices, proven strategies or copy competitors' success. This is nothing like normal. We are all on a level playing field because no one knows for sure what the future holds. We have a novel problem to solve without a tried and test solution.

So what do we fall back on? Our map, our questions, and our ability to learn.

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survive nor the most intelligent.
But the one most responsive to change."
- Charles Darwin*

Create Our Own Map

Why is a map important? A map is like a process. It shows us how to get from point A to B. This map is created in our head. What are the first few steps we need to take? What parts in this big picture do we need more information on? Who are the players or clients we need to involve? What new technology do we need to understand? This map informs us what to do and what is the next step in solving this novel problem.

Sometimes we don't see the entire map, but we have a sense of the next few steps. As we walk these few steps, the terrain reveals itself, we navigate again and walk the next few steps. This idea is borrowed from the Chinese saying, "crossing the river by touching the stones".

Action idea: Create your own map.

Use Questions To Lead The Way

New questions lead to new perspectives, actions and outcomes. Questions are what we need answers to in order to inform our decisions. Questions spring from our desire to understand the world. Powerful questions include:

- What is different now and in the past? What assumptions are no longer valid? For example, it was assumed that we needed to come to an office to work, but this crisis has proven this assumption wrong.
- How is customer behaviour changing? This question helps us be sensitive to change.
- What are the new needs or pain points? What would make life better? This points towards opportunities.
- What are the themes or hot topics? This helps us see what is emerging.

- What is the missing piece in the jigsaw? Is there a coherent whole emerging? These questions get us to search for what's missing.

The quality of our questions determines the intelligence we gather.

Action idea: Formulate 3 or 4 questions to gather intelligence.

Talk To Customers, Employees And Peers

One of your key success factors is the number of conversations you have with your customers, employees and peers. Get real data from the ground. By the time insights surface in a report or on a website, it is already old information. When the world is changing quickly, talking with people gives us real-time insights.

Then brainstorm with a group of strategic-minded people. You will gain perspectives that we cannot think of by ourselves. Talking is a window for new ideas to emerge. Then formulate your hypotheses on the needs and how to solve these needs.

Action idea: Identify 5 customers and peers to talk to.

*To learn anew, create your map, use powerful questions,
and talk to your customers and peers.*

Learning is not just attending workshops or consuming content. Wearing the hat of a researcher or an innovator, learning is noticing what is happening around us, making meaning from it and experimenting what is needed to be successful. This form of learning is active and reflective; it requires us to continuously take action and then also pause to reflect on what we have got, before taking action again. Preliminary findings from my PhD research suggests that skilful learners are able to change their minds quickly and follow their curiosity to find answers to their questions. In this way, we see emergent patterns faster than others.

So as you navigate yourself, your family, your team or your organization out of this crisis, instead of asking what others are doing in the hope of replicating their success, create your own map, ask questions, talk to customers, peers and employees, and learn anew. Despite the thick cloud of uncertainty, your learning will help you find a path out of this crisis!



Wendy Tan

An entrepreneur, author and speaker, Wendy's work in learning innovatively and career development has won the InnovPlus Spark and HRO Today Thought Leadership Awards. A Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), a designation that only 15% of speakers globally possess, Wendy is the author of *Wholeness in a Disruptive World: Pearls of Wisdom from East and West*.

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Grounding In Turbulent Times

by Dr. Lakshmi Ramachandran, PhD

A virus has shaken our world, creating turbulence, with its rippling effects affecting all 7.8 billion people on this planet. In no time, our invisible enemy took control, shackling us before we could even realize, making everything in the past seem like an illusion. With distress in the present, future looks uncertain and bleak. Finding a grounding in such shaky times with huge socio-economic impacts is tough.

What Do We Hold On To In Shaky Times?

I was already having a lot going on in my space! Meeting the demands of a full-time job, tending to two young kids, and at the same time, nurturing a dream to make a difference in people's lives as a writer, speaker and coach. With the advent of Covid-19, I found myself grappling with reality, struggling to get through my primary work and family commitments.

I felt the stress, my mind and heart all over the place. *I was doing a lot, yet doing nothing!*

Grounding The Self

I observed new behaviors in me and people around. For instance, looking up Covid-19 news, symptoms, and drowning in such information every single day. Reading about deaths, domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, and feeling angry, helpless, frustrated and desperate! Even worse, having a heightened sense of doubt and judgement about other people. The awareness of this, caught me by surprise. Clearly, this crisis has put humanity to a trying test, where we are forced to separate, yet our survival still depends on our interconnectedness.

With this profound realization, I could realign to the core of who I am. When we ground ourselves, we can live our life's purpose fully even on shaky grounds. It then becomes possible to help others without fear/judgement, to go through each day with gratitude rather than complaints, and to find joy in things within our reach.

I share below five powerful ways to find your grounding in shaky times:

1. You Have The Power To Choose

No matter what the situation is outside of you, we still have the power to choose how we want to feel and what we want to do. For example, I chose to be informed rather than drown in excessive information. I eliminated the habit of looking up Covid-19 news the first thing in the morning or just before going to sleep. This helped me not only protect precious hours but also helped me conserve my energy, as negative news can drain energy.



"I choose to be carefree, by being careful, and not careless and fearful."

2. Let Go What Is Beyond Your Reach

I realized that political, healthcare, economic decisions etc. are beyond my control. It is useless to be agitated when I don't have the power, expertise or the right means to influence decisions. If you find yourself in similar situations, where you feel compelled to argue/comment, just let it go! If it really bothers you, then ask this question, *"What can I do within my power, influence, and expertise to make a difference?"* An example is a thoroughly researched and analytical article! I stress on thoroughly researched, as there is so much fake scientific information out there, it's imperative to double check the source and ensure that the articles are peer-reviewed/verified.

3. Embrace Silence Over Noise; Stillness Over Action

Action is good, but have you gotten into an action frenzy? It is important to learn, be creative and do new things. But it is even more important to do it as an enjoyable activity rather than another stressful race. A helpful question to ask is: *"What am I doing with my existing skill sets and knowledge?"* There's really no point in accumulating information and skills without putting them to use!

"Sometimes, it helps to be still, reflect on the learnings, rather than setting out to do more."

4. Focus On What's Important NOW

Everything may look and seem important. If you feel there is so much to do, so much to learn, and so little time, you are under overwhelm/stress! One way to overcome this is by asking, *"Where is my focus needed, right now, in this moment?"* The answer will help you prioritize and help develop the patience to let things happen at the right time.

5. Love Is An Amazing Source Of Energy

An emotion that gives energy is love. Remember that crisis spares no one, and doesn't distinguish between boundaries, the poor or rich, male or female! So be kind, fair and loving. Instead of worrying about people affected by Covid-19, send them love.

It is possible to express love in many ways and a great way of showing and experiencing love is through giving!



Dr. Lakshmi Ramachandran, PhD

Lakshmi is curious about life at a scientific and spiritual level. This has led her through a doctorate in cell and molecular biology, and a meaningful journey as a mother, author, speaker and coach. In 2020, she founded *aproductivelife.org* to redefine productivity as a measure of contentment and to inspire people to live a fulfilling life.

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How I Uncovered My Gift In Crisis

by Coen Tan

Covid-19 is a pandemic that has killed hundreds of thousands and has infected millions, disrupted lives, and upended economies and businesses around the world. As a speaker and trainer, I've had income loss, cancellations and deferment of speeches and training workshops. However, for me, it brought about another enormous challenge.

My Unique Challenge Posed By Covid-19

Since I was a small child, I have been aware that I was highly sensitive to the emotions of people around me, and I would often internalise the emotions. Not only would I cry when watching sad movies, I would often feel prolonged feelings of sadness, fear and anger after interacting with other people, and not even know where those feelings came from. When I was younger, I would struggle to deal with all the *emotional information* that I had unwittingly collected. Whenever I expressed my feelings and observations, I would often be dismissed as being “overly sensitive” and “thinking too much.”

It was not until I had grown up and became more aware and exposed, that I've understood that I am an empath. According to Dr. Judith Orloff, author of *The Empath's Survival Guide*, empaths are highly aware of the emotions of those around them, to the point of feeling those emotions themselves. They often lack the filters most people use to protect themselves from excessive stimulation.

As an empath, I really struggled with the pervading negativity that the Covid-19 pandemic brought about. Every day, the news and social media are full of updates about the Covid-19 situation. I see people going into a frenzy of panic buying, fear of losing their jobs, their income and business, grief and sadness from losing loved ones. I've even read articles of the rising incidences of domestic violence brought about by victims being locked down at home with their abusers. I realized that to protect my *emotional garden*, I've had to give myself a break from the news, and from scrolling through social media feeds.

During that much needed break, I asked myself the question, “what is the opportunity here to offer my unique gifts?”

Uncovering The Gifts Within

I realized that as an empath I could use the one gift that I possess in abundance: empathy.

In the tremendously insightful book *The Power of Moments*, authors Dan and Chip Heath share that we do not remember every single moment of our lives. We recall moments that are both memorable and meaningful, moments when we experienced intense emotions. They further broke down these moments into three types: Peaks, Pits and Transitions.

- Peaks: moments of elevated joy, pride, connections and insights (e.g. wedding, receiving a prize, a promotion)
- Pits: moments of hardship, pain or anxiety (e.g. family bereavement, divorce, retrenchment)
- Transitions: moments where people make intellectual (e.g. new work), social (e.g. new community), and environment (e.g. new home) changes

The ways we can deepen our relationships and strengthen our *heart-share* and *mind-share* in the minds of our clients, suppliers, colleagues and loved ones, are to:

- Commemorate and celebrate the Peaks
- Fill the Pits
- Smoothen the Transitions

“We can deepen our relationships and strengthen our heart-share and mind-share in the minds of our clients, suppliers, colleagues and loved ones.”

Offering My Gift

That was what I did. I realized that many people are panicking from how their lives will be affected by Covid-19, and many others are making the transitions to working from home, especially those who have to care for their children who are learning from home too. It was the perfect opportunity for me to reach out to them.

I was glad I did just that. I’ve found that people, while still staying busy, are more open to just catching up. It’s become easier because instead of having to sync up time to catch up over coffee, people are happy to just take pockets of thirty minutes to an hour here and there to simply catch up over Zoom calls. What’s even more surprising for me was also how these short catch-up calls turn into deeper connections. While I used to feel in the past that people were more focused on talking about goals and successes, I’ve found that people are now more open to sharing their struggles and challenges. All I’ve needed to do was ask simple questions like, “How have you been coping? What is challenging in your life? How may I help?”

A Surprising Outcome

As a result of simply reaching out to catch up, and offering a listening ear and companionship, I’ve strengthened my relationships with my existing clients, forged connections with new business collaborators. Through these conversations, I was also able to uncover problem areas and needs of clients that my clients and I previously never knew existed. That has also led to me clinching new consulting and coaching projects. In fact, some of these projects are more aligned to my areas of expertise, and have resulted in me having the best first five months of a calendar year in terms of business revenue.

If we can connect to our gifts of deeper humanity, we will be relevant to the new normal.

The post-Covid-19 environment may be drastically different from what we’ve been used to in the past. If we can connect to our gifts of deeper humanity, we will be relevant to the new normal.

It is time to “human up!”



Coen Tan

Over the last 10 years, Coen has inspired more than 20,000 individuals in over 10 countries through speaking, training and coaching in the areas of executive communications, and business storytelling.

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Are You In Your Own Way?

by Cindy Tien

A coaching client of mine, Lily, recently called me and started bawling over the phone. “I’m such a bad mother,” she sobbed. Lily shared that she is having problems managing her behaviours when she is at home, and she gets triggered into rage easily whenever her children starts to get rowdy or fight with each other. And when that happens, she cannot help but to snap, scream or even aggressively hit them. These behaviours have caused her children to be terrified of her and her husband to be cold towards her. Suffice to say, her out-of-control behaviours have brought her family a lot of distress, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic season where they must be home with each other every day.

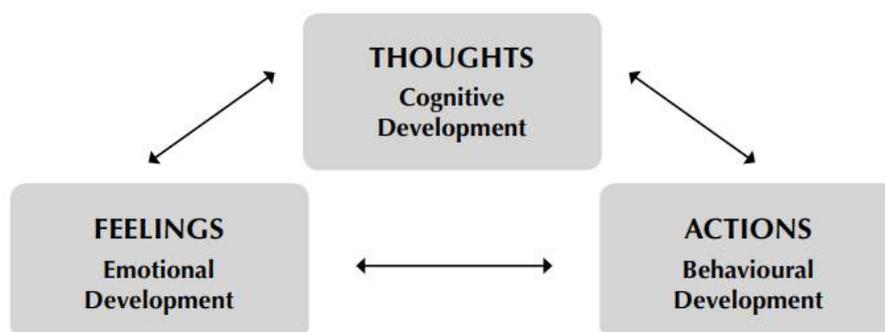
Bad Auto-Pilot

Have you ever been in a situation like that before? Where you go into an auto-pilot mode of doing something which is out of your control? For example, some of us may use profanity when we get irritated, or criticize our spouse when they do things that do not meet our expectations, or hyena-yell at our children when they misbehave. And often our intentions are not bad, after all these are people we love, but somehow we cannot control our behaviour.

If this sounds familiar to you, here’s what has happened: we have developed a pattern of behaviour. And as the word “pattern” implies, it is something that repeats itself. All of us have different patterns that we may not be conscious of. And because we are repeating these behaviours over and over again, they become solidified to such an extent that they become an addictive habit, which is difficult to change. Our patterns of behaviour can lead us to success, failure, or mediocrity. So unless we take the time observe our usual patterns and change them, we will always be a slave to them.

Patterns Of Behaviour

Our behaviours are prompted by our feelings, and our feelings are prompted by our thoughts. And the loop of our thoughts, feelings and actions goes in a continuous cycle until we choose to break this chain.



And it usually starts with one thought. In Lily’s case, whenever her children get rowdy the first thought that comes to her mind is, “Why the hell are you all doing this to me again?” And when she thinks that way, anger rises within her which become an uncontrollable rage, causing her to blow up, resulting in her aggressive behaviours. So our behaviours (actions) really stem from our thoughts.

So what can we do? Here's a suggestion: NIP it in the bud - Nail, Interrupt, Practice.

1. Nail

Nail that thought. When an event that triggers a negative thought occurs, STOP. Recognize that thought and do not react. This requires us to practice mindfulness and to slow down the need to react immediately. Give yourself a minute to observe that thought by walking away, getting a drink of water, or doing something to disengage from the situation. Make time daily to observe your thoughts and to ask yourself why you might think those thoughts.

2. Interrupt

If you know that your thought is not a healthy one, change it! We are not robots, we have options and we can choose. So interrupt that thought and replace it with something else. Using Lily's example again, instead of allowing the thought of, "Why the hell are you doing this to me," to sink in too deep, she could interrupt it by asking herself an empowering question. For example, she could ask, "how can I use my influencing skills now?" Or, "how can I handle this situation in a calm and assertive manner?" Interrupt that thought and change it to something empowering for you. Ask a quality question.

*"The quality of your life
is a direct reflection of
the quality of the questions
you are asking yourself."
- Tony Robbins*

3. Practice

Is this going to be easy? No way! Remember that your patterns might have been solidified for years and it is going to take time to change them. It probably won't be successful the first few times you try to do it, and it can feel frustrating because you are defying your usual pattern. Practice interrupting your thought pattern repeatedly until it becomes a new pattern for you: a pattern of success.

So the next time you sense that your internal fire alarm is about to go off, or when you feel that you are repeating nasty behaviours incessantly, remember to NIP your thoughts before they spiral into a vicious cycle of unhealthy patterns of behaviours. And most importantly, be patient and compassionate with yourself and do not give up!



Cindy Tien

Since 2013, Cindy has inspired corporate clients and individuals to build their personal brands through speaking engagements, seminars, and coaching programs. With over two decades of experience in client-facing roles, Cindy takes pride in helping individuals develop true presence with authentic confidence and external influence. Connect with Cindy at:

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What's Possible At The Intersection Of Families, Business, and Learning?

by Tim Hamons

Parents, hands up if you have created something surprising and meaningful with your children during the lockdown period? And hands up if you're now ready for it to be over?

One thing is certain: with all the pent-up energy in our children and ourselves, we need to create something for them, with them. It's a question of survival and sanity, both for them and us. I'm sure you've seen many inspired examples of families coming up with cool things with their kids. What can we do with this moving forward? What's possible for children and families in the overlaps between home, school and our professional worlds?

What new worlds of learning and possibilities can open up when we accept the invitation to play?

Kids need active play. When our 4-year-old Zelig asked mommy if she would make a slide, she built him a sturdy, sizeable indoor slide with steps and various features. Zelig played on this so much that it needed to be reinforced twice. After sliding every way he could think of, he would invent new ways to use it - while singing songs, or racing together with various toys, objects, and siblings, as a prop with other games. Zelig also asked for a café, and a theatre, which Irene happily made (each one took around half a day to make). They were both humble masterpieces of foam board construction with moveable and collapsible elements, signage, and accessories.



Our daughters Xaen and Aurora both organized and delivered different levels of tutoring. Xaen would assemble a group of Zelig's favorite stuffed toy animal friends to form a collaborative learning team, and Zelig would call each by name to answer a question. Singing, drawing, and telling stories was a way to encourage and reward behaviors, and reinforce learning and lessons. Even older brother Jeri, who is often absorbed with projects, found the opportunity to bond with and teach his younger brother.

As we begin to shift out of global lockdowns and closures of workplaces and homes, what do we want to keep and create for our families and our children?

It's wonderful to observe and experience all of this happening. Of course, the love for our children will drive a parent to figure out how to do whatever we can for them. But during Covid-19 things were different. The longer duration at home, the combination of social, economic, environmental, emotional impacts, the greater call for redesigning our lives and our world. I have considered how we might form a bridge between our children, our homes, and our professional worlds as a way to bring more fulfillment to their lives and our own, as well as a more meaningful and sustainable future.

So let's look at three ideas. Consider them invitations for you to accept moving forward.

Use What You Have

During this time, we've had to re-think how we get things done. So, when our child asks us for something and shopping is no longer an option, other natural instincts kick in to fill the void. With our love and ingenuity, we will find a way to make something work using only what's available. Cardboard french fries were borrowed from the café to teach math and counting. To build large play structures, Irene used recycled boards from client events. Our planet would be grateful.

Find A Bridge Between Your World And Theirs

Our daughter Xaen reflected that to be a more effective teacher was to be more like a friend, and teach at the child's level. Aurora would make her laugh and tell stories through her toys. Every brother or sister knows they have a different opportunity for teaching and connecting which even the best-designated teachers are not afforded. My observation is that they brought out the best in each other.

Accept The Invitation To Play

Kids are our ultimate teachers when it comes to our creative capacity for play. When my wife's and my own head was too full from work, we would simply step outside and submit to our child's invitations. "Daddy, make my friends talk", was an invitation to a form of improvised storytelling with our child's soft toys and vehicles. For Irene, building a happy play structure gave her mind a joyful reset and a sense of hands-on accomplishment.

How Might We Integrate Kids Into Our Life And Work?

Kids love learning, and they want to be a part of the work we do. We draw and use visual storytelling for our clients. During Circuit Breaker I made short videos sharing a simple drawing and a message of encouragement. Zelig joined me drawing alongside on our giant whiteboard, as a kind of improvised and collaborative storytelling.

Growing means adapting. We have all learned to be more tolerant of the signs of home and family on our work Zoom calls. As we begin to shift out of global lockdowns and closures of workplaces and homes, what do we want to keep and create? What have we learned as parents during this time about working alongside our families, and integrating family and professional life? Can we give incentives for parents to create more home-based learning experiences and platforms? Can families and children play a different role in business?

Zelig will be returning to school in a few days. While I welcome a return of structure (and perhaps a bit of sanity), I know that I will miss his invitations. I am energized with understanding how this time with him has brought out the best of each member of our family, and the possibilities of what we can create together.

What have we learned as parents during this time about working alongside our families?



Tim Hamons

For the past 15 years, Tim has supported leaders and teams to make positive change using the power of visual storytelling and creative facilitation. He inspires individuals to embrace drawing as their best tool for thinking, solving problems, and re-imagining possibilities.

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How Steep Is The Climb?

by Khyati Kapai

In a study led by the University of Virginia, researchers analysed people judging how steep a hill was. The results were that participants perceived the hill as 30 percent *steeper* when they were in a sad mood, and judged it as being 20 percent *less steep* when accompanied by a friend. This led to the finding that the brain perceives challenges differently depending on our mood and sense of social support. In fact, positive psychologists confirm that brains fuelled with positivity and social connection are more motivated, resilient, creative and effective at problem solving. This is the mindset we need most for the challenging opportunities ahead.

“Brains fuelled with positivity and social connection are more motivated, resilient, creative and effective at problem solving.”

Challenges related to Covid-19 may feel insurmountable and dizzying. But by scaling the heights of our mental resilience as well as the breadth and depth of our social connections, we can conquer new summits. Here are five climbing tips from someone scared of heights.

1. Climbing With Friends

Face-to-face interactions are incomparable, but how inclusive are they? How connected do you feel to a speaker from the back of a room full of people compared to listening to her across the web camera with your headphones on? On digital platforms everyone is a tile, so we may, in fact, find it easier to foster equality and inclusiveness.



After a recent online workshop, one participant shared that a colleague she met in the virtual breakout room was one she had worked with in the same building for six years, but they had never met before!

Recently, a stadium seated 10,000 soccer fans, all on Zoom, to create a virtual grandstand. This allowed more fans to have access to the same experience. In a world of physical distancing, are we being innovative about harnessing social connection virtually?

In a world of physical distancing, are we being innovative about harnessing social connection virtually?

2. Climbing With Rhythm

Has your work and personal life fused into one long and exhausting day? We need to instil work habits that honour the boundaries between personal and professional life to prevent burnout. Humans are designed to be rhythmic. Without the change in environment for most of us, we have skipped transitioning into the different parts of our day.



Productivity gurus tell us to approach our day as a series of work-sprints, which are fuelled by intermittent renewal. This will help us maintain our energy levels and enthusiasm throughout the day.

3. Climbing With Focus

Have we forgotten that multi-tasking is a myth? Too often we are digitally distracted while trying to focus on a task. We think we are working smart by clearing emails while, say, supervising home-based learning. But if both tasks require sufficient attention, we are, in fact, switch-tasking at a rate which is depleting our mental resources. I have adopted the following approach to the work portion of my day. I pre-determine whether my next work-sprint is going to be a period of creativity or period of clearing (clearing emails, admin). While I am writing this article, I am signed out of email and Whatsapp Web, and my phone is nowhere near me (the temptation is too great). Lasting happiness is what we experience when we perceive progress towards our goals. If my first work-sprint of the day is a creative one, the sense of accomplishment fuels me throughout the day.

“If my first work-sprint of the day is a creative one, the sense of accomplishment fuels me throughout the day.”

4. Climbing With Breaks

How many breaks do you really get working from home? We are burning out from all-day marathons. Talking to a friend, playing a game, taking a walk outside, a shower, a yoga session, meditation – these are all “non-screen time” breaks that reset me for the next work-sprint.



Sometimes, if there just isn't time to take a break, breathe into your next sprint. Even a few deep breaths can be a powerful weapon against stress. Try it now before you continue reading.

5. Climbing With Protection

How are you protecting yourself from fatigue and stress? The Dalai Lama indicates that discipline is a form of self-protection. One of the greatest forms of self-care we can show ourselves is to exercise discipline in the choices we make. Maintaining the discipline to take breaks as well as being intentional about my use of technology and devices have been my greatest forms of self-protection. What are yours?

*“It's not the mountain we conquer but ourselves.”
- Edmund Hillary*



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Leadership During Crisis - Lessons Learnt

by Janet Yung

I had the privilege to interview a very experienced business leader who has weathered the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, the SARS crisis in 2003, the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and is tackling the Covid-19 pandemic head-on with his global organization.

To him, leveraging the power of people rather than hunkering down in such times is critical. The following is an excerpt of his answers to my questions during an interview for the *Leadership During Crisis* online summit series. In particular I asked him, "Based on your experience, what are the crucial aspects a leader should look into during a crisis?" Here is the wisdom he shared.

There are 6 areas a leader should look into when leading an organization through a crisis.

1. Crisis Strategy

The leader first needs to accept that there is a crisis situation and show a sense of urgency when managing the crisis. It is also crucial for the leader to acknowledge that he may not be the expert and is willing to work with his team to gain knowledge and understand the issues that the organization is facing and how to address it as a team.



2. Personal Leadership

It is crucial that a leader does not delay action but takes ownership to gather the necessary information and resources while gathering his/ her team members to address the situation immediately in a crisis situation.

3. Crisis Response Team

In a larger organization, especially one with presence regionally, it is crucial that there is a Crisis Response Team which will coordinate efforts and share success stories where everyone can learn from. In addition, this will quicken the learning process for the entire organization as each front facing team implements, adapts and evaluate the steps taken during the crisis.

4. Communication

During a crisis situation, communication within the team and with all relevant stakeholders are crucial. It is better to over-communicate than under-communicate in such times. As mentioned above, sharing of each other's successes will motivate the team to be creative and innovate in such times.

5. Monitoring The Health Of The Business

In a pandemic situation, the first focus will be the health of your team members both physically and emotionally.

In addition, the constant monitoring of the given situation will allow you to re-allocate your assets in terms of people, technology and equipment according to the needs of the situation. This will allow a business to make itself more efficient and improve productivity while adapting to the situation. Critical questions to ask especially when the crisis situation prolongs are: How would you reshape or adapt your organization to improve productivity? Does your organization need to operate in a different way to adapt to the new external environment? What are the things that impact your customers and how can you help resolve them?

6. Financial Health Of The Organization

In any crisis, the liquidity and working capital of the organization is critical to ensure continued operations. Focus on ensuring adequate cash flow through reducing non-essential expenses, increasing the rate of debt collection, etc.

Through the past crises, he learnt that staying calm with a different sense of urgency, leading by example with the ability to change and adapt, the importance of constant communication and the right communication strategies both internally and externally with stakeholders.

During a crisis, leaders should focus on staying calm, leading by example, adaptability, constant communication, and the right communication strategies with stakeholders.

He generously shared his views on these additional areas:

- How should one prepare themselves and their organizations to tap on the opportunities that will present from this Covid-19 crisis?
- How can one future-proof or crisis-proof their organization?

Click on this link to read the full article: *Leadership during Crisis – Lessons Learnt By An Experienced and Veteran Business Leader From Past Crises*

With the current Covid-19 crisis creating turmoil not only for businesses but also for individuals who may be thrown into financial or emotional turmoil, I interviewed 30 outstanding individuals, entrepreneurs and business leaders across 10 countries and created the free *Leadership During Crisis* online summit series to share inspiring stories of how individuals and leaders overcame their emotional, business and financial issues. We also learn from entrepreneurs and business leaders on leadership and communication strategies and how they are leading their teams forward in these uncertain times to help get through this crisis together.



Janet Yung

With 3 decades of corporate and business experience and as a Standards of Leadership award winner, Janet is known for her thought leadership in bringing clarity to personal and organizational growth, leadership and engagement through her customized training and consultations.

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Spring Will Come Again

by Benjamin Cheng

In a recent APSS Careology call hosted by Ron Kaufman, we were asked about our mood during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. My three answers were Worried, Glad and Excited.

1. Worried

I am worried for the medical workers who are in the frontline of this battle. Three of my family members are in the field of medical services, and I have not seen them for many weeks. I am concerned about the economy and how many of my friends will survive. Many businesses will be affected, and owners will be worried about their company's cash flow. Many freelancers and self-employed will have their livelihoods in jeopardy.

2. Glad

I am not glad about what happened, but I am glad it did, because Singapore is going to experience a change in leadership within the next few years. The 4G leaders are being put through one of the toughest tests since our independence in 1965. The true leaders will rise up and shine, while some will fade away. I am also glad both my teenage children are experiencing this pandemic, because it will help to strengthen them mentally and emotionally.

3. Excited

I am excited about what will happen after this pandemic. During a leadership coaching session with a client recently, she asked me, "Will this virus go away like SARS, or will it be here to stay?" My response was, "What will happen if it's here to stay? What are you going to do about it? What happens when it goes away? What are you doing now to get yourself ready for both scenarios?"

Global Economic Recovery

I believe that the speed of global economic recovery will be the fastest we have ever seen in history. Why is that so?

Imagine compressing a metal spring. The harder you compress, the stronger it will bounce back. During this pandemic, many countries are in lockdown. With people all over the world having to stay home, they cannot carry on with their usual activities, so many have a lot of pent up energy.



As I connect with friends around the world, I hear that many of them are very restless. They are like the compressed metal spring, ready to burst out. But at the same time, others are getting very creative coming up with new ideas and creating new business propositions.

When this pandemic is over, I feel sure we will see a scurry of activities and new businesses surfacing. So are you preparing yourselves and your team members for the future? Now is the time to equip, to train, to retool, and get ready.

When circumstances compress the spring in your life, as long as you do not lose the life in your spring, you will spring back much stronger.

Prepare Like An Athlete

Those who have good time management will find that there is ample time in hand to do many things. Clear out your old garage, read books you bought years ago, connect with old friends you have not seen for years. You will find there are a lot things you can work on. More importantly, prepare for the future with the discipline of a professional athlete. Invest time to work on your physical health and fitness, strengthen your mental resilience, and improve your emotional stability. Most importantly, understand your sense of purpose for what you are doing and what you are going to do in the future.

Be Inspired To Inspire

One of my mentors used to say, “Do not walk away from negative people. *Run* away from them.” During this period, think about the people you are communicating with. Are they negative naysayers who believe that this will be the end of mankind? Or are they positive, constructive and helpful?

“Do not walk away from negative people. Run away from them.”

Speak to different people, and ask them what they think of the future. Ask them why they think the way they do. All it takes is one positive sentence, one constructive idea, or one helpful thought. It could inspire hope for everyone around them about the great future of mankind. As we are being inspired, go forth and spread the fire of hope to inspire others.

Spring Will Come Again

Never lose the life in your spring, once the winter of this pandemic is over, another season of spring will arrive. Get ready now to make the most of the opportunity. It will be time to bounce back, burst out, live your life to the fullest, and spring forth into what could be one of your greatest successes and one of the best times of your life.



Benjamin Cheng

For the last 20 years, Ben has inspired more than 100 organisations in over 30 countries through his business consulting, executive coaching, inspirational speaking and corporate training in the areas of business, leadership and sales.

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The New Normal Or The New Extraordinary?

by Natalie Turner

I've been musing about the term 'new normal.' In some ways it speaks of change, but in other ways I hear a longing for things to return to what they once were. Normal implies 'stasis', a sense of being the same, of not changing. However, the world we now walk into is far from being normal, new or otherwise. If we are honest, our earth was sick, and we were far from knowing how to save ourselves.

Interestingly, according to a poll conducted by the Farming and Countryside Commission and the Food Foundation in the UK, an overwhelming majority hope to see some personal and social changes, with fewer than one in ten wanting to return to how things were before. People are noticing cleaner air, a stronger sense of community, being more in touch with friends and family, if only remotely, valuing food and sharing with neighbours.

We are all trying out new things and noticing differences, at home, and in our work. Personally, I am learning how to use new technologies, build an in-house studio to deliver speeches, and facilitate and train groups to innovate. My husband, who is a professional DJ, has become a global virtual DJ with weekly Stir Crazy LIVE and Sunday Soul Session music events! What have you been learning over the last few months?



Innovation Is Our *Not So New* Survival Skill

Human beings are incredibly resourceful and innovative. We wouldn't have lasted this long if this were not so; and maybe, now more than ever, our ability to innovate, or to create something of worth or value out of ideas that are new to us, is our survival skill. Knowing how we can contribute our skills, and, if we are leading or managing others, to harness the diversity of their skills and mindsets, and passions and experiences, is of utmost importance. We need to collectively create what life will look like going forwards and how to navigate uncertainty and unpredictability. Whether you work alone or with others, here are some ideas to help you do this:

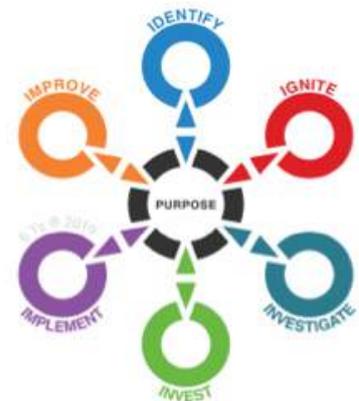
1. Encourage a daily individual and/or team mindfulness practice. This will help to clear stress and tension and move your mind into the sketchpad of the brain, the pre-frontal cortex from where you can strategise, imagine and create.
2. Spend time thinking about you and your team's PURPOSE. Why are you doing what you are doing? What impact are you hoping to create? Promote and encourage conversation that will help you align on a collective purpose.
3. Get to know each other's strengths, through the lens of making new ideas work. Who is good at IDENTIFYING opportunities or IGNITING new ideas? Who is good at INVESTIGATING or getting INVESTMENT? Who is good at getting things done and IMPLEMENTING and IMPROVING? Play to your strengths.

4. Be innovative in how you work. Experiment with collaborative design technologies such as Mural or Miro which will help you to create together new ideas for the future. Create new visual story together.

We need to create a new narrative, a new story, a new vision that brings the very best out of us, and not just any types of innovation, but ideas that are PURPOSEFUL, that can help to promote and uplift the well-being of people and planet.

Create A New Extraordinary

So, as we slowly start to leave our homes, practice social distancing, contact tracing, and plan for business continuity to mitigate the risk of a future pandemics; as spaces and boundaries between home and work blur, and work becomes more about what we do, not a place we go to, let us think about how we reinvent, not only our lives, but, the social and economic systems in which we operate. Let us create new ways of harnessing the skills of the teams in which we work, giving equal weight to each person's unique value and importance. All of them, all of us, are indeed innovators.



Let us not create a 'new normal'. Let us lift our vision higher and create a 'new extraordinary'. An imaginative life that is able to invent, create, sense and make a new narrative for our shared existence.

This calls for dreamers and doers, of those who can identify opportunities, and ignite new ideas, of those who can investigate and invest with courage, of those who can implement and improve and make sure we are learning, continually learning from all that we do.

The earth has turned, and a new opportunity has emerged. Now is the time for us to operate at our very best and live extraordinary lives.

The earth has taken a breath and started to heal itself. Now, in the words of Thomas Berry, 'we must dream our way forwards, we must summon ways of seeing that we know nothing of yet.'



Natalie Turner

Natalie Turner is the author of the award-winning book *Yes, You Can Innovate. Discover your Innovation Strengths and Develop your Creative Potential*. She is also a keynote speaker and the inventor of The Six 'I's® of Innovation.

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