

LEADERSHIP COACHING AND MENTORING –PACK

March 2023

Established in 2006

Welcome to this month's edition. Our highlights include:

Damian Piper CBE our Resilience Coach starts this month edition with: **'March 23 – Springing into growth'** "Spring is a season of growth and transformation, and it's the perfect time to focus on our well-being and development. Just as nature begins to awaken from its winter slumber, we, too can take steps to revitalise our lives and move forward with renewed energy and purpose. Here are six practical ideas I'll be using to help make my 2023 bloom....."

Rebecca Alexander has exclusively written for us: **'Coaching Skills for Leaders'** "Many leaders would like to develop their coaching skills, and for good reasons – it can foster better connections with your team, encourage people to challenge themselves, and as you develop your team's capabilities, they will become less dependent on you....."

Justin Smith, Operations Manager – **'Practice Leadership'**. "Thera East Anglia is investing in its Senior Support Workers and supporting them to development their confidence as leader and role models within teams. Much of the day was about Practice Leadership....."

From me **'Being Married to Mrs Funny Bones'** Humour and laughter have always been incredibly important to our family. We are no different, I imagine, from the majority of families who have faced adversity in some form or other. We have had our share of bereavement (some recently), our youngest daughter copes with autism and a learning disability (plus all the challenges that come with being carers), tough financial challenges with a big mortgage during the early nineties- when the interest rates were sky high and much higher than they are now – the list goes on....."

And there is lots more content. So, let's dive in....

Steve Raw FInstLM, FCMI, GCGI

Email: steve.raw@dosh.org

Blog: www.leadershipintheraw.org

Instagram: @stephenraw6

Twitter: @SteveRaw836

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/steve-raw-72454721/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/steve.raw.771/>

It's not about how good you are

It's how Good You want to be

March 23 – Springing into growth

Spring is a season of growth and transformation, and it's the perfect time to focus on our well-being and development. Just as nature begins to awaken from its winter slumber, we, too can take steps to revitalise our lives and move forward with renewed energy and purpose. Here are six practical ideas I'll be using to help make my 2023 bloom.

Clean up my environment

Spring cleaning is for more than just the house. Taking time to clean up my digital and physical environments is important too. For example, clearing out old papers, decluttering my workspaces, and a good of purge emails & messages. This helps create a sense of order and clarity, making it easier to focus on my goals and priorities. I always find that this helps reduce the psychological drag that builds up due to not knowing what is lurking in my inboxes. Maybe it's just me, or do you ever get that feeling too?

Set new aiming points

Spring is a great time to set new aiming points and intentions for the coming months. Thinking about what I want to achieve and what I practically need to do to get there can be very energising. If you decide to have a go at this idea, then choosing how far you go into the future is a personal preference. When I work with others, they will comment that it does help to set a time frame as it can narrow down the options. How about spending 30 minutes with a beverage of your choice and clarifying life by summer? If you'd like a template to help you do that, then I have a free one, '**set for success**,' available on my website [here](#).

Learn something new

Spring is a season of growth and learning, and it's the perfect time to try something new. Signing up for a class or workshop, learning a new skill, or reconnecting with a hobby. This can help stimulate the mind and expand horizons while giving a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. With so many options available and many for free or at a modest cost, there has never been a better time to learn. When I'm learning, I find the positive knock-on impact on my confidence and well-being is a great bonus too. I'm learning more about the Apple software I use to edit my podcast - Garageband. There is so much to get to grips with.... If you are a Garageband guru, you have my respect.

Practice gratitude

Gratitude is a powerful tool for personal development. Since committing to make gratitude a part of my daily routine, I've not missed a single day – well over 500 now. The reason is that I get real value from it. Often, it's not the big things I note, a supportive friend or family member, a beautiful sunrise, or great food. Focusing on the positive can help to shift my mindset and improve my overall outlook even when dealing with life's inevitable challenges. I've found that developing this into a daily habit increases its value over time as my brain will seek out the things to be grateful for. I think of it as setting my brain's filter to allow more positive things into my conscious mind. Of course, those things are there anyway; it just that it's easy to miss them. How could you set your filter for more gratitude?

Connect with others (or don't...)

As the days become longer and warmer, Spring is a great time for renewal and connection, with increased opportunities to nurture our relationships with others. Making an effort to reach out to friends and family or joining a social group to meet new people are all ideas. Connecting with others can help to reduce stress, improve mood, and foster a sense of community and belonging. However, I'm mindful that this one isn't for everyone. For some people, perhaps with more introverted preferences, spending time alone to reflect and contemplate is equally energising. I strive for a balance on both these and regret it if it is out of whack in either direction.

Practice self-care

If understandably, the winter months have seen a few things slip, Spring is a wonderful time to reconnect with the importance of looking after ourselves. Taking care of ourselves is essential to be at our best. Making time for activities that nourish our minds, bodies, and spirits, whether getting enough sleep, cooking fresh food, or exercising, is an investment that always seems to succeed. I find that prioritising self-care helps reduce stress, increases resilience, and boosts my overall outlook. It doesn't need to take me long. However, it's easy to fall short of everything I'd like. I draw on a mantra of an old cycling coach I had as a schoolboy; some miles are better than no miles. Some self-care is better than no self-care.

So, as we head into Spring, how can nature's example inspire us? Hopefully, there are a few ideas here to explore. I'd love to know yours.

If you'd like other ideas about your effectiveness and resilience, please check out the Effective Challenge podcast. I've returned to podcasting in the last month after an extended break. I'm enjoying getting back behind the microphone and have been humbled by the lovely comments from people. If you are curious and want to explore, I've dug into the archive and pulled out an episode from 2020 where I discuss the concept of weeding our minds. It felt like this episode complimented this article. Find it where you get your podcasts or [here](#).

Be it the article or any of the podcasts, I love to hear your thoughts, comments or questions; please message me – my details are below.

Have a great month.

Damian

damian@effectivechallenge.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/damian-piper/>
www.effectivechallenge.com/podcast



Coaching Skills for Leaders

Many leaders would like to develop their coaching skills, and for good reasons – it can foster better connections with your team, encourage people to challenge themselves, and as you develop your team’s capabilities, they will become less dependent on you.

And contrary to many people’s beliefs, coaching doesn’t have to be that difficult or take that long. One particular coach - Michael Bungay Stanier, or MBS as he’s known - has been working to demystify the coaching process and make it accessible to everyone. His book **The Coaching Habit** is a great place to start. Here’s an overview of the key points:

Tame your advice monster. MBS is spot on when he points out that giving advice is often our default mode as leaders. But that’s a bit like giving someone a fish rather than teaching them how to fish. Instead, try staying curious a little bit longer and rushing to advice-giving a bit more slowly.

You can coach someone in 10 minutes or less

Coaching doesn’t have to be a big, formal, ‘event’. Try to make it a regular and informal – 10 minutes here or there can have a big impact, and is easier to fit in.

Check that the other person wants to be coached.

This isn’t in the book, but I think it’s key. A simple “Would it be helpful to talk about X?”, or “I notice you seem concerned/excited about Y, would now be a good time to talk about it?” will work fine. Respect the other person’s response.

Know how to ask questions. MBS gives a great masterclass in his book – here are just a few:

- Pick a good question (see below for ideas)
- Ask it
- Just ask it once
- Don’t add other questions
- Once you’ve asked the question, shut up, and genuinely listen to the answer
- Get comfortable with silence
- Respond appropriately, perhaps with another question, or a simple acknowledgement.

And now to the actual questions. It’s easy to get hung up on thinking of the perfect question, framed in exactly the right way. Yet this often serves us more than the person we’re speaking to. When I’m

coaching, I often find that the shortest questions produce the biggest breakthroughs. MBS has this 7-step formula:

The Kickstart Question – What’s on your mind?

This helps start any conversation in a way that’s both focused and open, while keeping it natural

The AWE question - And What Else?

AWE stops you jumping in with advice and it gives the other person permission to dive deeper into what’s really on their mind (it’s rarely the first thing they mention). Use AWE throughout the conversation.

The Focus Question – What’s the REAL challenge here for you?

This helps the other person get to the heart of their challenge, and stops them circling.

The Foundation Question – What do you want?

Another question that gets to the heart of the challenge, while generating positivity about a possible solution.

The Lazy Question – How can I help?

This asks the other person to think about what they need, and whether and how you can help them. It saves you some effort, and stops you from offering unwanted suggestions.

The Strategic Question - If you’re saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?

Helps you and the other person work out what’s feasible given current resources and demands.

The Learning Question – What was most useful to you?

This can feel like you’re looking for compliments, but it genuinely helps the other person to extract and summarise their key takeaways from your conversation.

And there you have it. MBS states that some people write or print these out and keep them where they can see them. Pick an appropriate moment, check the other person is happy to proceed, and remember to approach with their best interests at heart – this isn’t a covert way of disciplining someone.

And one last upside – as you become more confident, you might find that you can use these questions outside of work too. They can help you to become a better listener, a closer friend, a better parent and partner. I hope you enjoy trying them out!

But it's often perceived as hard work. Daniel Goleman, author of 'Emotional Intelligence' identified six different leadership styles in 2000. The Coaching Style was the least used, despite being one of the most beneficial. As Goleman wrote in the Harvard Business Review: **“Many leaders told us they don't have the time in this high-pressure economy for the slow and tedious work of teaching people and helping them grow”**. And this was almost a quarter of a century ago – most would agree that life has only sped up since then.

Rebecca Alexander

Executive Coach | 高管教练

rebecca@coaching-studio.co.uk

China | 中国 +86 13121686094

UK | 英国 +44 (0)7957 472155

Wechat: RebeccaAlexander

coaching-studio.co.uk



"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere." - Albert Einstein

KNOWING WHEN YOU'RE WRONG

- Take a step back. Do you feel defensive? Emotions will cloud your judgement.
- Explain your argument in three sentences to an impartial person.
- Does it sound reasonable?
- Look for the common dominator. If you're always right and constantly disagreeing with people, maybe it's you.
- Don't selectively seek out facts to back your argument. Try to see the other point of view.
- Swallow your pride. Say you're sorry and move on, with the respect of your colleagues. No one's always right

Source: Modern Management

Practice Leadership



Thera East Anglia recently held their second Senior Support Worker Development Day. The theme was Practice Leadership, and the day was facilitated by Operational Managers Justin Smith and Yvette Ferguson, and Sophie Davies – PA to Thera East Anglia’s MD as well as Project Manager for Quality & Excellence. Guest presenters were David Parker – Service Quality Director, Keith Page - Executive Assistant to the Service Quality Director, and Tracy Harrison from Thera Trust’s Learning Development team.

Thera East Anglia is investing in it’s Senior Support Workers and supporting them to development their confidence as leader and role models within teams. Much of the day was about Practice Leadership.

“Practice Leadership is a central issue in enabling people providing support to do a good job... Practice Leaders are the custodians of the vision of the team and its culture”

Mansell & Beadle-Brown 2012

We talked about how we can have the best ever PBS training, and the most amazing delivery of how to do active support, but without practice leaders, the time might be wasted. Practice leaders are the link between excellent training and support plans, and people we support actually having a great day with support happening the way *they* want it to happen. Practice leaders need to know their stuff, they need to know how to model great support, they need to be able to support team meetings, and deliver feedback in a timely fashion (positive and constructive)y. On this second development day we revisited the skills and traits of leadership covered on day one.

David and Keith delivered a presentation we call ‘broccoli corner’, which is now part of the Thera East Anglia Happiness Project and invited teams to think about the balance between helping people to remain healthy, with a recognition that people we support will make the occasional unhealthy choice.

Justin spent a little time with the SSWs thinking about the general principles of PBS, and then Sophie and Yvette facilitated some great discussion around the link between what we say and what we do and the importance of sound terminology when writing about the support we provide to people.

At the end of the day, Tracy delivered an excellent presentation around ‘how to have difficult conversations’ with some superb group work.

The SWWs fed back that they felt empowered to lead excellent support as well as provide feedback to the teams they lead.

Watch this space for the third Senior Support Worker Development Day!

Justin Smith



Operations Manager.

PBS Coach and PROACT SCIPr-UK® Instructor

Thera East Anglia



“Learn from the mistakes of others. You can’t live long enough to make them all yourself” Eleanor Roosevelt

Aim for the Platinum Standard

As leaders and managers, we like to aim for the ‘gold standard’ - to treat others as we would like to be treated. How about reaching for the ‘platinum standard’ - to treat others as THEY would like to be treated. It reminds us that not everyone wants the same response (for example an extravert boss might like lots of meetings and chats when they are trying to work something out, whereas an introvert employee facing the same situation might prefer some quiet reflection time).

Attributable to Carol Kauffman and David Noble (authors and leadership coaches) writing in the Jan-Feb 2023 issue of Harvard Business Review

Courtesy of **Rebecca Alexander**,
Executive Coach



Being Married to Mrs Funny Bones



Someone takes a photo of Joyce and me at a Sergeants Mess Summer Ball, interrupting a funny story Joyce is telling me

“Nobody ever mentions ‘Freddy Parrot Face Davies* anymore!” Surprisingly, Joyce had caught me off guard with this statement as we had been discussing something quite serious. A picture of Freddy Parrot Face immediately came into my head, and I collapsed laughing to the surprise of the rest of Sainsbury’s restaurant. I had no idea what people must have thought as coffee was coming through my nostrils - especially as Joyce continued to keep a poker face.

This is not an unusual experience for me when I am with Joyce, my wife of nearly 40 years. I love live comedy, but I have never seen or heard anyone as funny as Joyce. It is not as if I wasn’t warned, as during our first date she continually tried to out-pun me.

Humour and laughter have always been incredibly important to our family. We are no different, I imagine, from the majority of families who have faced adversity in some form or other. We have had our share of bereavement (some recently), our youngest daughter copes with autism and a learning disability (plus all the challenges that come with being carers), tough financial challenges with a big mortgage during the early nineties- when the interest rates were sky high and much higher than they are now – the list goes on.

Joyce is the leader of our gang, so it helps that not only is she inspirational, but she is also incredibly funny. Humour has got us through some incredibly difficult events.

Mrs Funny Bones makes us laugh by:

1. **Observing people’s behaviour.** Some of Joyce’s funniest stories come from her being a regular passenger on public buses - listening to people talking or behaving inappropriately, or even forgetting that they are out in public! It helps that Joyce is a super mimic and good storyteller so that you almost feel as though you are there.
2. **Having A sense of the ridiculous.** I am not sure whether it is because she comes from a large family (her siblings are funny too) or if it is because she comes from Manchester, which is renowned for their sharp wit. Perhaps it is both?

3. **Being Spontaneous** – Joyce will come out with something when we least expect it, and often in a restaurant or at the family dining table, usually when I have just taken a mouthful of food!
4. **Playing to her audience** – Joyce knows what will make us laugh and enjoys that we are a receptive audience.
5. **By being self-deprecating** (a form of self-awareness). Joyce does not take herself too seriously.
6. **Keeping a straight face** when she passes a comment that has us all falling about in heaps of laughter. Did I mention Freddy Parrot Face Davies? I then recognise that twinkle in her eye that signals, ‘I’ve got you again’.

Joyce has often given me the credit as being a useful source for her material – you are welcome.

The Benefits of Humour both at home and the workplace – Six lessons I’ve learned from Joyce:

1. **It releases the tensions** that can build up inside us. We have used this successfully with Bettina, especially during her early years when she struggled to come to terms with her autism and the worry this caused the family.
2. **It gets things into perspective.** It is easy to get things out of proportion. When I am getting uptight about a work situation, Joyce’s reaction is: “Steve has World War III broken out? Or “Has anyone died?” Me: “No Joyce”.
3. **It diffuses hostility.** As per my second point, but this time Joyce will roll her eyes or use a facial expression which will make me laugh. Like the best comedians who come on stage, and you immediately start laughing before they have said anything.
4. **It is infectious** – I have often found humour quickly spreads. Bettina has worked through the autism fog of her early years and now embraces humour and is often the instigator of some of our laughter.
5. **Bounce back Better** enabling us all to be more resilient when we have setbacks
6. **Provides a positive environment** – it is a happy environment which brings out the best in you and helps with your own creativity.

“A sense of humour is part of the art of leadership , of getting along with people, of getting things done” Dwight D Eisenhower

BENEFITS OF HUMOR

When challenged with a problem, people who watched a **comedy video** beforehand were **3.75 times** more likely to solve the problem!



Humor can increase happiness by up to **42%**

Laughter for **10-15 minutes** can...

HA! HA!



Increase Your Heart Rate By **20%**



Improve Blood Flow By **50%**

and burn as many calories as...



5 MINUTES OF AEROBIC EXERCISE



10 MINUTES OF DANCING



15 MINUTES OF MILKING A COW

HUMOR & HAPPINESS

Humor helps connect people by building trust, reducing status differentials, diffusing conflict, and creating positive shared experiences that bring us closer together.

And people with **3** close friends at work are **96%** more likely to be satisfied with their lives.

THANK YOU FOR READING. FOR MORE ON HUMOR AT WORK, PLEASE VISIT:
www.HUMORTHATWORKS.com

And finally at our holiday hotel in Whitby*

Alison, our server, comes up to our dining table and asks what the matter is? She can see and hear me laughing. (I also have a look of shock on my face too).

“Joyce has just eaten my favourite chocolate (a violet cream)” - A chocolate we receive with a coffee at the end of our dinner.

Joyce: “it is because he has not been behaving himself Alison”

Sometimes you can take humour too far – especially when it comes to violet creams.



Our Disney Princess – a picture of Joyce courtesy of Jennifer Raw

Notes:

* Freddy 'Parrot Face' Davies - Sentimental Songs
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pLuALgRihg>

* Our super hotel in Whitby <https://www.saxonville.co.uk/>

Steve Raw

“Live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air’s salubrity” Ralph Waldo Emerson

10 MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR GREAT LEADERS

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|---|--|--|--|
| Share information Communicate the news that you can , so minds don't wander. | Adjust your style You have many different communication styles and personalities on your team. Don't think that you can manage everyone the same way, and don't assume everyone likes to be managed the way you like to be managed. | Have fun Your team wants to enjoy going to work . Play ten minutes! | Raise your hand When your people see you putting in extra hours, they are inspired to jump in and follow your lead. |
| Say thanks People want to feel appreciated! A simple thank-you note doesn't cost a thing , and it makes a huge difference. | | Remove obstacles Bureaucracy stifles creativity and innovation . Cut down some of the paperwork. | Focus your time It's the old 80:20 principle. Focus the majority of your time and attention on the 20% of your people and projects that generate 80% of your results . |
| Empower through delegation We know no one can do it as well as you can, BUT you need to delegate to give yourself time to complete tasks more appropriate for your level. | Set small milestones If you can't match last year's numbers, set milestones that can be reached . | Give feedback Your direct reports want feedback, and it's crucial in making your team as productive as possible . | |

Courtesy of



[European Leadership](#)

Via Mike Metcalfe Community Support Leader (CSL) Thera South West
MY TOP PICKS FROM WWW.TED.COM INSPIRATIONAL PRESENTATIONS JUST FOR YOU

MY TOP PICKS FROM [WWW.TED.COM](http://www.ted.com) INSPIRATIONAL PRESENTATIONS JUST FOR YOU

1. What is happiness, and how can we all get some? Biochemist turned Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard says we can train our minds in habits of well-being, to generate a true sense of serenity and fulfillment.

http://www.ted.com/talks/matthieu_ricard_on_the_habits_of_happiness

2. The place that travel writer Pico Iyer would most like to go? Nowhere. In a counterintuitive and lyrical meditation, Iyer takes a look at the incredible insight that comes with taking time for stillness. In our world of constant movement and distraction, he teases out strategies we all can use to take back a few minutes out of every day.

http://www.ted.com/talks/pico_ayer_the_art_of_stillness

3. When is the last time you did absolutely nothing for 10 whole minutes? Not texting, talking or even thinking? Mindfulness expert Andy Puddicombe describes the transformative power of doing just that: Refreshing your mind for 10 minutes a day, simply by being mindful and experiencing the present moment.

http://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes

4. Anything that is worth pursuing is going to require us to suffer, just a little bit," says surf photographer Chris Burkard, as he explains his obsession with the coldest, choppiest, most isolated beaches on earth. With jaw dropping photos and stories of places few humans have ever seen -- much less surfed -- he draws us into his personal crusade

http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_burkard_the_joy_of_surfing_in_ice_cold_water

TEN WAYS TO.....BE INDISPENSABLE

1. Show commitment – go beyond your basic duties
2. Publicise your achievements
3. Figure out where the business is going....
4.and make yourself an essential part of it
5. Take the initiative
6. Ask for feedback
7. Pay attention. Anticipate what else your company needs
8. Be versatile
9. Network, both inside and outside the company
10. Be likeable

Source: Modern Management magazine.

HOW TO COMMAND PERSONAL PRESENCE AND GRAVITAS AT WORK

Remember, it's a gift from followers linked to the role. Charisma or presence is not so much about what qualities you have but about what other people think you have. Charisma originally defined as a gift from God has been shown in research to be more about a gift from followers – a gift that often comes with senior roles.

Be comfortable, be authentic. It's true to say that charismatic leaders are often seen to be different from the norm, perhaps slightly unconventional in some way. There are workshops available that will teach you how to be more charismatic, sometimes involving wearing a new hat, some odd socks, anything that makes you seem unconventional. But these are best avoided. What's most important is to be clear and confident about your own identity, comfortable in your own skin and with your own sense of self.

Be personal, switch on the charm. Effective leaders appear to have a very high level of social awareness. They can both read a room and work it. They can sense individual moods and changes in moods, so in an event of 100 plus people, they make it feel as if they are only talking to you; they'll be able to move around a room making everyone feel they've had particular attention. Charm, like charisma, can be switched on – it's about paying attention to others and making them feel highly valued by someone with perceived personal or positional power.

Paint a picture of success that is personally desirable. Charismatic leaders make people believe they can achieve more and give people the motivation to want to achieve more. That clarity of vision and ability to make the future look engaging and attractive is all-important in improving performance and steering organisations through periods of change or budget cuts.

Source: Dr Steve Kempster, director of the Lancaster Leadership Centre, Lancaster University Management School, www.lums.lancs.ac.uk and read in my Edge Magazine www.i-l-m.com

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| <p>“The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who have not got it” George Bernard Shaw</p> |
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YOUR ROUTE TO THE TOP

HANDLE TRICKY PEOPLE

Get to the heart. Whether it's a colleague, client or boss, it's better to try to understand tricky people than to avoid them. Work out how they see things and then find a way to work comfortably with them.

Control the control freak. If your boss is the anxious type, pre-empt his concerns. To stop him jumping in as your finger reaches for the send button, share your ideas upfront.

Don't get dumped on. If your manager tends to deliver 'top priority' tasks for 'urgent' projects and then disappear, help her to focus. Ask her to describe her ideal result: what, when, and how does she want it? By forcing her to think it through, you'll avoid unreasonable last-minute changes.

Silence the sceptic. When presenting the new talent-management plan, ask questions to understand what makes the doubters tick. Listen carefully. Identify the root of their problem and you can address their real concerns.

Help shy people shine. A silent figure in the team meeting may be confident on a 1-1 basis. If they're brimming with ideas but can't articulate in a group setting, why not brainstorm instead? Find a way to communicate that works for them.

Calm the stress cadet. If your colleague is in regular meltdown, concentrate her attention on what can be done here and now. Battling a presentation, pitch and project work? Small steps will lead to significant results.

Resist charmers. Don't get taken in by empty, eloquent flair. Ask tough questions to keep them on track. Try: 'What does that mean in practice?' Help them distinguish between dreams and reality and you'll get the best of both.

Look again. Whatever behaviour we're up against, we must be aware of our own impact. Feeling brave? Write a character profile of yourself – which tactics would work for you?

The Mind Gym: Relationships

"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen" John Steinbeck

CRASH COURSE – WORK PAST 60

There was a time when you expected to retire early, but now it looks as if you are going to be working into your late 60s. So how are you going to keep on top of your game and avoid being put out to grass?

Keep fit. Your job may not involve hauling bricks but being physically fit pays dividends: it can help you avoid health problems, keep a psychological edge, stay alert and give you more energy, as well as influence how people think of you. 'Management can be pretty sedentary, and you need to make a positive effort to keep yourself in shape,' says Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology at Lancaster University Management School.

Never stop learning. Organisations have a tendency to give up on training people beyond their fifth decade (this is not the case in my experience in www.thera.co.uk) says Chris Brooks, policy adviser at Age UK 'Identify the skills you need now and in the future, and make it clear that you expect to continue your personal development.' Cognitive stimulation helps keep you mentally agile, says Cooper. 'Go to conferences, meet people and show others that you are in learning mode and haven't given up.'

Present yourself. Out-of-date clothes and grooming send people a message that you are out of touch. 'Invest in haircut and smart clothes, and above all take care that you don't look dowdy,' says Peter Shaw, executive coach at Praesta Partners.

Show some attitude. Make sure your demeanour is positive and be open to innovation. Take the initiative and show others you are still a force to be reckoned with, says Shaw. 'Offer to chair that meeting, take responsibility for a project, offer to do things,' he says. "The moment you are on the back foot you're dead.'

Play to your strengths. You may struggle to compete with the young turks on every front, but you have knowledge and experience that are of great value to your organisation. 'Mentoring employees can be key to retaining talent, and will earn you credibility,' says Cooper.

Think flexible. See if you can negotiate more flexible hours and even work some of the time at home. 'Pace yourself,' says Cooper 'Prioritise what matters and don't consistently work long hours.'

Tweet. Technology is moving fast and it's essential to stay up to date with developments such as social media, even if you're aware of their limitations.

Know your rights. Perception and performance are most important in protecting your employability but know your legal position. 'Under the Age Discrimination Act, employers can't treat you differently because of your age, for example, denying you training.' Says Brooks. You can't be made redundant because of age, so it's important you put up a good case on other criteria.

Source Alexander Garrett in MT Management Today

Dear Steve

The 7 Deadly Sins of Leadership Communications – by [Diana Oakes](#).

Reading David's recent '[Don't do what's in this blog](#)' advice reminded me of a director, who'd been recently appointed to lead a large department in a huge company. He asked me for some tips on how to communicate with his people.

Here's what I gave him:

The 7 Deadly Sins of Leadership Communications:

7. Don't get to know the make-up of your audience.

The way your message will be received depends on dozens of things, including your audience's location, their level of seniority, the type of job they do, their current mood, and so much more...

6. Assume what your audience wants to hear and ignore your Comms team.

What you think you need to tell people is often very different from what they need to hear. You don't have to release embargoed information, but you can still tell people honestly why, and when they will hear more.

5. Avoid keeping your promises.

I sadly see many leaders promising 'more information shortly' and it never materialises. There's no faster way to lose reputation and trust.

4. Use lots of acronyms and business-speak.

No brainer. And my main pet peeve. "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." (A. Einstein). Research shows that over a third of employees don't understand daily workplace communication. Jargon and buzzwords are simply the adult version of 'cool kids speak.'

3. Communicate by email, avoid the camera and the face-to-face meeting.

Choosing the right channel for your message is as important as choosing the right clothes for the weather. Important messages should be communicated in person or on a video call. But always follow up with a written message for clarity and extra detail.

2. Ignore your tone or body language when communicating.

Another sure-fire way to shoot your message in the foot and lack conviction. Pay attention to what your facial expressions and body convey – get someone to watch you and feedback. Are your tone and behaviour in harmony with what you're saying? Do you give out unintended signals that undermine the message?

1. Be vague about what people should do as a result of your message.

The simplest yet the least thought about point when preparing to communicate: what do you want people to know? How do you want them to feel after they read or hear your words? Most importantly, what do you want them to do?

Many thanks Diana

David

Diana Oakes is a Communications Lead at Lloyds Banking Group, and a Fellow of the Institute of Internal Communications. Her debut novel, 'The Light of Kautokeino' will focus on the discrimination suffered even today by the Sámi people of Scandinavia – Europe's last indigenous population.

[@nakedleader](#) across all social media

www.davidtaylorblog.com