

LEADERSHIP COACHING AND MENTORING PACK

April 2024

Established in 2006

Welcome to this month's edition.

Rebecca Alexander opens this month's Leadership Pack with: **'How to brave rejection'** Have you ever wondered how much the fear of rejection might be holding you back?

From me: **'Being Bettina's Dad – Reasons to be Cheerful.'** "As I wake up this morning, I can hear Bettina chattering to herself in between her giggles. She is either telling herself stories or she is recalling funny memories that please her. For me, hearing her is like listening to my favourite music or birdsong. Any fears for my day ahead diminish as I feel Bettina's cheerfulness....."

Damian Piper CBE our Resilience Coach shares another insightful article with us: **Gaining a higher perspective - the weekly review and plan session.** "For many of us the range and frequency of new things coming into our lives significantly outstrips our capacity. Just think about the last five years alone and consider the number of routes new 'things' can enter our world."

Another new article from me: **'Leaders Turn Up'** "This is Sarah, and it doesn't matter what questions you have, Sarah will be able to answer them!" Both Sarah and I were delivering a 'money awareness' workshop in Glenrothes, north of Edinburgh, in Scotland, for a care and support organisation which supports people with a learning disability. Sarah's presentation on state benefits is the most complex of our training and we were delivering workshop to experienced managers." You may have experience, knowledge, and skills, but if you don't turn up, none of those attribute's matter.

There is lots more in this month's edition so let's dive in together.....

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t's not about how good you are.

It's how Good You want to be.

How to brave rejection

Have you ever wondered how much the fear of rejection might be holding you back? In his book **“Rejection Proof – How to beat fear and become invincible”**, author Jia Jiang describes how a fear of rejection stopped him from pursuing his dream of running his own business and kept him trapped – until he took matters into his own hands and embarked on a 100-day experiment to seek out situations where he might be rejected. 100 experiments later, and Jiang was amazed to discover that people say ‘yes’ just as often as they say ‘no’ – and being able to take rejection in your stride greatly enhances our resilience and capability. These are the some of the book’s top tips:

1. **Adopt the right mindset** – as the famous quote says, “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take”. The world could be full of possibilities that you haven’t even considered because of an assumption that the answer will be no. Resolve to stop rejecting yourself before you give others the chance to make that decision.
2. **Give your ‘why’** – in a famous experiment, people waiting in line for a photocopier were more likely to let someone else go in front if the person cutting in had a reason. Be ready to explain clearly and briefly why you’re making a particular request or proposal.
3. **How you communicate is key** – Project confidence, calm and friendliness. Being open and relaxed will help you get your request across. Don’t be overly apologetic.
4. **Normalise feelings of fear** – If you’re criticising yourself for feeling anxious about rejection, don’t! Studies show that our brains respond to social rejection in the same way they respond to actual physical harm. Being fearful of rejection doesn’t indicate you’re about to make a bad request – it’s a normal response and one that you can overcome.
5. **Ask ‘why’ before goodbye** – Jiang explains that even when you get a ‘no’, asking why can lead to a conversation that generates some new options or gives you an opportunity to allay any fears the person you’re asking might have.
6. **Be ready with a back-up request.** Even if your initial request is rejected, a lesser request could still get the go-ahead, partly because people don’t really like to say ‘no’ twice. As Jiang writes, “every ‘no’ is surrounded by a bunch of invisible ‘yeses’.” Be creative in what you’re asking and what other options you might accept.
7. **Collaborate, don’t contend** – practise viewing your request as a joint or team effort in which you and the person you’re asking get the chance to work together to make

something happen. It makes the situation less adversarial and may lead to some unexpected gains.

8. **Choose your audience** – it might seem as though there is an obvious person to ask, but are they the most receptive? Is there another person or department more likely to say yes? Consider your options before you approach.

9. **Remind yourself that if you're rejected, you're in good company.** There are hundreds of lists of successful entrepreneurs, authors and public figures who've been fired or rejected multiple times – among them JK Rowling, Stephen King, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey. Draw upon some of their tenacity and determination to keep yourself going if you get knocked back.

10. **Rethink Rejection** – If your suggestion or request DOES get rejected, remind yourself that that rejection is just one other person's opinion. It's not a final verdict or a 'truth' about you or your ideas. Use the rejection to spur you on to try new avenues or to hone your approach.

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'Being Bettina's Dad – Reasons to be Cheerful.'



Bettina at one with nature

As I wake up this morning, I can hear Bettina chattering to herself in between her giggles. She is either telling herself stories or she is recalling funny memories that please her. For me, hearing her is like listening to my favourite music or birdsong. Any fears for my day ahead diminish as I feel Bettina's cheerfulness.

Who inspires you to be the best version of yourself? Someone who faces challenges, obstacles, and frustrations that you can only imagine. Bettina, my daughter who copes with a learning disability, autism and epilepsy, seems to find something to be cheerful about no matter what adversity presents itself.

Related: [My Inspiration – Leadership in the Raw](#)

Bettina's reasons to be cheerful?

- Living in a house full of laughter. Laughter and cheerfulness are contagious, and in our house, we have all caught it. (Please see Spike Milligan's poem at the end of this story).
Related: [Being Married to Mrs Funny Bones – Leadership in the Raw](#)
- Bettina has a circle of people who are positive and enjoy her company. Bettina actively avoids people who are negative. One of her superhuman strengths is she can recognise the tone and rhythm in someone's voice.
- Her circle tells her how much they love her, and they do this on a regular basis. It is the first thing and the last thing she hears from her parents and her big sister each day.
- The people around her always keep their promises and they never let her down.
- People are tuned into what she is trying to communicate. Verbal communication is still a challenge for Bettina, she struggles to retrieve words she needs. So, Bettina improvises with other communication methods such as writing down notes for us, using Makaton signs to reinforce her speech and using pictures and objects. Those

who are significant in her life recognise her techniques and respond accordingly which delights Bettina.

- Bettina embraces mindfulness – she does not know what that word means but she lives what it means. “Mindfulness means paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, infused with qualities like kindness, curiosity and acceptance.” (Bettina and I had a ‘mindful’ walk together yesterday - we both came back uplifted).

Related: [Being Bettina’s Dad: Bettina transforming my life with mindfulness – Leadership in the Raw](#)

When do you know Bettina is cheerful? (Which is most of the time) – Because:

- Bettina gives you a ‘side eye’ at the dinner table because she knows she is making you laugh and enjoys seeing your reaction.
- Bettina flaps her hands and squeezes her eyes in delight – a classic autism trait showing pleasure.
- As we approach warmer weather Bettina will take herself into our garden and blow bubbles – which are always in plentiful supply.
- She sings and hums when she is drawing. We hear her joy coming from her bedroom in the evening.
- She tells you “So happy.” As her big sister, Jennifer says “we are all living in Bettina’s world.”
- When she kisses your arm, usually when you least expect it, then closes in for a big hug. You cannot buy this kind of affection as it is always on Bettina’s terms.

What Bettina has taught me on how to be cheerful?

- Find something to look forward to. Bettina actively looks for things that she would like in the future. This could be a DVD or going to see the next Disney/Pixar film. Bettina is already excited about her upcoming family holidays. (Bettina memorises the dates).
- Being able to laugh at yourself (often). Bettina will tell you first when she slips up and then often laughs at herself.
- Enjoy reading a book. We have a bookcase in every room in our house. Although Bettina has the most books.
- Listening to music. Bettina often zones out when she hears a favourite song.
- Looking for the good in everything you see, listen, and feel. Bettina does not have prejudices; she is completely free of bias. Bettina gives everyone the benefit of doubt.
- You never stop having the opportunity to change your life. Bettina has reinvented herself so many times since she was a child, coming to terms with her disabilities which she often found painful. “Happiness is not the belief that we don’t need to change; it’s the realisation that we can” Shawn Achor
- If yesterday did not go well tomorrow is a new day and you can start again. At the start of each day Bettina goes again

Related: [Being Bettina’s Dad: Today we go again – Leadership in the Raw](#)

As I wish Bettina a goodnight, Bettina recounts her day and finishes with “so happy” which makes us all cheerful.



There is nothing more cheering for Bettina than collecting seashells on the beach (near her home) in Frinton on Sea.

Smiling Is Infectious
by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

Source: Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org

Gaining a higher perspective - the weekly review and plan session

For many of us the range and frequency of new things coming into our lives significantly outstrips our capacity. Just think about the last five years alone and consider the number of routes new 'things' can enter our world. I guess I need to define what I mean by 'things'. I mean anything that has potential impact on you and requires you to make some kind of decision about what the thing means. This really is the big and small. A ping on your phone with a message in one of the many new 'inboxes' you've acquired. A conversation over breakfast about what to do at the weekend. The team meeting where you picked up actions. The realisation you need to have a 'difficult' conversation with a colleague or family member. The fact you need to buy milk. You get the idea.

In the April newsletter I discussed a range of options to help manage the above. One of the areas which feels like it needs a closer look is something I call the Weekly Review and Plan session. Here goes.

For as long as I can remember I have been interested in the subject of productivity. There's a substantial industry to help people get more of what they want achieved. For some the allure of 'being productive' becomes quite addictive. One of the more common elements within many of the approaches is dedicating time to step-back and assess your world from a higher-perspective. The frequency you need to do that will depend on you and your circumstances. For most people this works out to a weekly activity. This of course needs to be coupled with the more tactical daily and in the moment assessment of what to do next.

So what is the weekly review and plan session?

In short, a time to pause, step back and consider your completed, on-going and future commitments and ensure you are content you have your arms around them in a way that means you are better prepared to deliver and handle what comes your way. Final point by way of introduction. You have a choice to make about personal and professional here. I'd say if you can include both at the same time is best or at the very least do two versions. Over the years of working with people on this subject I've observed no one size fits all. If the Weekly Review and Plan session is something you believe could help you, I'd encourage you to experiment. With that in mind here's an approach on which you could build upon.

Approach to the weekly plan and review

Step 1 – Capture

Most of us have at least 8 to 12 'inboxes'. And by inbox I don't just mean email. I mean anywhere you have inputs that have potential unclarified things you need to do or action. This includes the digital sources such as task managers and calendars but also the physical sources: notebooks, counters, bags etc. Oh, and also let's not forget the inbox in our minds

– those thoughts that so often swirl around. It can be helpful to review the past week and look forward for the following two weeks. That way you capture things you may need to follow up on and things you might need to prepare for or commission to make the coming period more effective.

Step 2 – Clarify

This is a super important step. Often the reason we struggle to make progress with things is because we haven't clarified what the thing actually is and what it means. Typically, the clarify step has three broad categories, actionable material, reference material (no action but useful information) and junk.

Step 3 - Organise

This step involves putting things that you clarified into appropriate places that you can then engage with when you need to. This involves a series of questions for each of the categories of things from step 2. Here are some common examples. You will no doubt want to customise these for yourself.

Actionable material:

- Is this quick – less than a couple of minutes? If yes, do it.
- Is this date specific? Be really disciplined on this. So often people add dates to things that are just not date specific. If it is date specific – put it on your calendar or put it in your task manager with the appropriate deadline.
- What's most appropriate for the non-date specific actions? For example, if there's a question you have for your line manager put it in a place you'll see when you are next with your line manager. Some people create rolling agendas for the key people they have in their lives for this purpose.
- Is the item actionable for someone else? We may capture things that are best handled by someone else. Often people are way too narrow on who the 'someone else' is. Have a good list of people to hand to trigger your thinking about who is best placed to help.
- Do you need to be reminded of this at some point in the future to take action? Have part of your system that brings forward the item to an appropriate point in the future.

Reference material

- Where do you need to put this item that you can find it in the future? Often reference systems get way too complicated. Get your reference material into the simplest version possible. And like your garden weed your reference material regularly to weed out the no longer relevant stuff. That way you'll be more attracted to use the system as opposed to creating small stacks ready to file – that ultimately you ignore.

Junk

- Use your delete key or bin effectively. So often people hang-on to things and pollute their worlds with things that should just be binned. You will have your own threshold as to how much to ditch. It's worth bearing in mind though that your brain will use

energy every time it skims past that stack of papers from the last month's meeting you've been keeping or unruly email inbox to ascertain meaning. In isolation this is not a big deal. However, your brain is doing that hundreds of times a day. It all adds up and adds to brain tiredness.

Some other elements of the weekly review and plan

Here's a few other items that some people find useful in their sessions.

- Using this time each week can be useful to reconnect with your bigger picture goals. Are they still relevant or do they need updating?
- Reconnect to your values and assessing how well you are living them.
- Triggering items that you have delegated but you've not heard about progress.
- Renegotiating personal deadlines with yourself. What is and is not important changes frequently. Stepping back each week to confirm or change what's most important to you will help you handle the day-to-day challenges with a grounded confidence.

If you have not got something like the weekly review as part of your productivity approach, why not give it a go? It does take some effort and discipline to achieve however the peace of mind and effectiveness that can come as a result of doing it, is well worth it.

As always, I'm interested in any questions and or observations you may have.

Damian Piper CBE

Coach & Facilitator

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'The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary' Vince Lombardi
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Leaders Turn Up

"This is Sarah, and it doesn't matter what questions you have, Sarah will be able to answer them!" Both Sarah and I were delivering a 'money awareness' workshop in Glenrothes, north of Edinburgh, in Scotland, for a care and support organisation which supports people with a learning disability. Sarah's presentation on state benefits is the most complex of our training and we were delivering workshop to experienced managers.

It was a tongue-in-cheek moment when I put Sarah on the spot with my introduction, but I was super confident she would deliver - and she did.

The previous week, Sarah had kindly offered to help me with the workshop in Scotland despite living a considerable distance away in England. I must admit it was both a relief and reassurance that I could count on her support.

I knew for certain that Sarah would turn up.



Sarah Bolger Financial Advocate delivering training for www.dosh.org

I assess potential leaders on:

Attitude – A can do attitude. People who get stuff done and get results.

- Commitment – dedicated to the work you do and committed to those around you.
- Vision – a vision of what success looks like what is it that they want to accomplish.
- Inspirational – they capture people’s imaginations.
- Caring about others - ‘It is about others before you. Related: [The first leadership lesson I learned – It is about others before you – Leadership in the Raw](#)
- **They Turn Up**

You can be super talented, have the most experience, knowledge, and skills but if you do not turn up then all those attributes do not mean a thing.

So, what does ‘turning up’ mean?

- Being on time, every day, unless there is an important reason we cannot (such as sickness.) Physically turning up is the most important aspect.
- Turning up Mentally - turning up mentally means that you are ‘switched on’.
- Turning up even when you really do not feel like it.
- You are ready to hit the ground running. You are not waiting for someone to tell you what to do.
- That they can rely on you – you are dependable.
- They are in ‘safe’ hands - they can trust you.
- You do the necessary planning and preparation before you turn up. It does not take much experience for a team to recognise a leader who does not know what they are doing due to a lack of preparation.

As I come towards the end of this career and start my semi-retirement (hopefully finding part-time employment), I reflect on what has given me a competitive edge since entering the world of work over 50 years ago and what I can offer a new employer. There is something I can guarantee: "I promise I will turn up and I will not let you down."

Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org

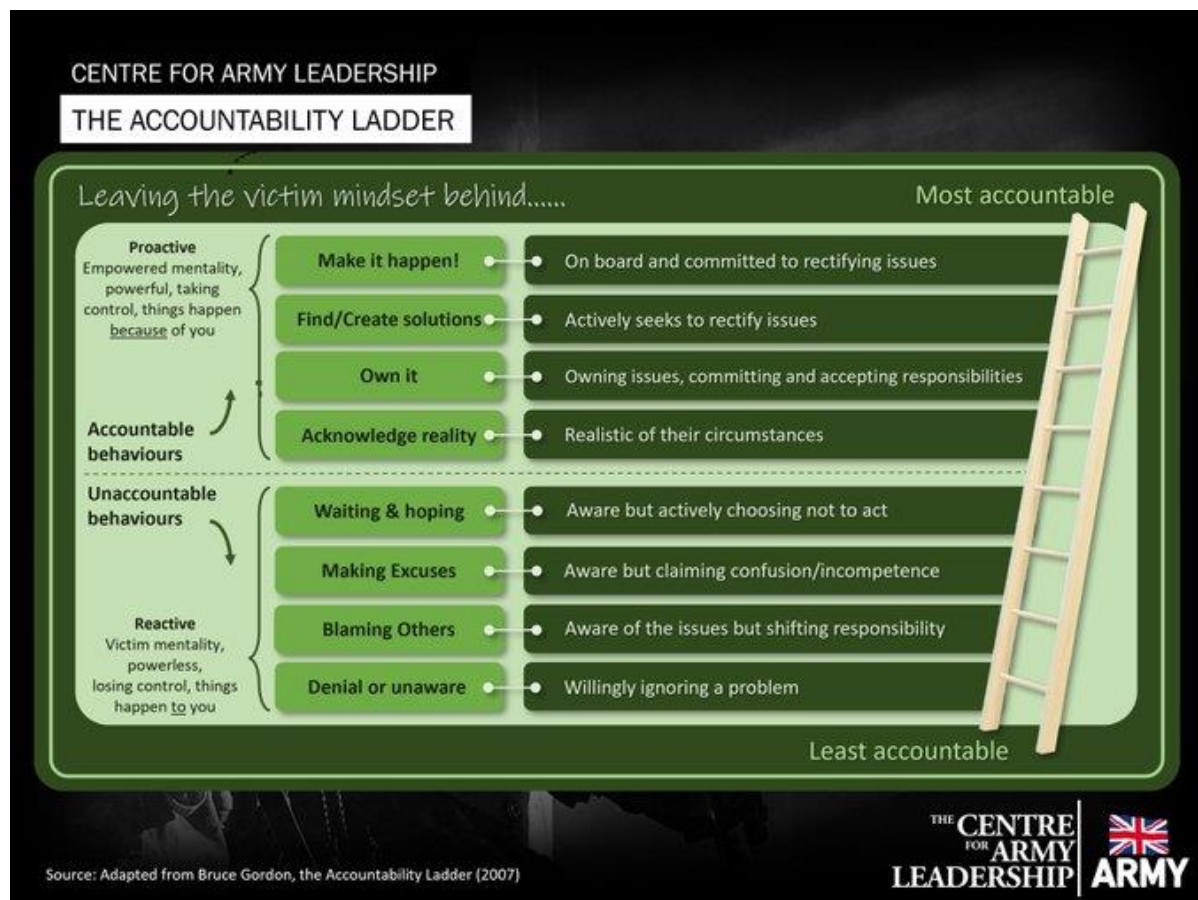
"Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting"

Joyce Meyer

Where do you see yourself on the accountability ladder?

(Centre for Army Leadership)

Whether on operations or in barracks, leaders must accept responsibility for their own decisions as well as being accountable for those of their teams. The best leaders also encourage those around them to be responsible and accountable too, while also recognising the need to actively make things happen rather than waiting and hoping for issues to resolve themselves.



The 8 Secrets to WOW Projects...

Time to read: Forever

Dear Steve

Monday 1 April 2024

1. Projects are complex thingsies, so ensure your project proposal reflects that
2. To get it approved promise massive financial benefits
3. Have at least two co-owners – it splits the workload, which is only fair
4. Focus on process not outcomes – *“It's not the destination, it's the journey”*.

Ralph Waldo Emerson – and he should know, as he was a philosopher.

5. Use Prince 2 – it got the pyramids built in no time
6. If there are any delays, say you are not getting co-operation from other departments
7. If it fails, say it succeeded, and when you are asked about the promised financial benefits, say that processes are more streamlined, people are happier and customers love what you have done – you will likely get promoted
8. And as 8 stands for infinity – for your next project, return to 1

With my love and best wishes to you all

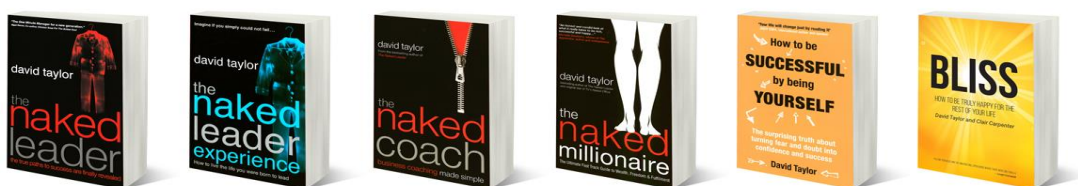
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www.davidtaylorblog.com

David Taylor is my favourite leadership author – I highly recommend his books)



CAREER MASTERCLASS

BEAT CHINESE WHISPERS

Polish your halo. A spotless reputation is the best defence against hearsay. Smash deadlines, exceed targets, honour promises and keep your nose clean. Rise above suspicion and watch the rumour mill bypass you.

Make a pre-emptive strike. Want a whisper-free workforce? Up your internal comms. Whether its weekly meetings, email newsletters or flyers on desks do whatever it takes to bring your team into the loop. They won't huddle and hypothesis if they already know everything there is to know.

Stop stirrers. Identify them and ask them to explain themselves. If they're genuinely worried ('I just wanted to warn people about the restructure I think is coming'), reassure them; if they relish causing unrest, tell them enough is enough.

Distract them. If your team has time to gossip, perhaps their goals aren't stretching enough. There's nothing like a little pressure to focus minds and still wagging tongues.

Turn the tide. Psychologist Anthony Pratkanis argues the best way to kill a rumour is to 'steal its thunder'. Spread a new (true) story, explaining why the rumour exists. If you can't beat them.....

Share critical news early. Don't wait until you have all the answers. That day may never come and in the meantime the whispers will be growing in number (and inaccuracy).

Ask the audience. Once you have delivered your message, encourage people to share their worries and ask questions. Be honest and if you don't know something, promise to find out.

Keep talking. Stop a secondary wave of post-news whispers by making yourself readily available to your team. Make sure they share lingering concerns with you, not the water-cooler coven.

Rise above it. Sometimes, engaging with rumours (even to deny them) only fuels the fire. If the gossip circulating is petty enough to ignore, do just that. It will soon run its course.

The Mind Gym: Relationships is published by Little, Brown

'A professional is someone who can do his best work when he doesn't feel like it.'

Alistair Cooke

BUTTERFLY STORY (*it's about: coaching, teaching, enabling, facilitating, interventions*)

A man found a cocoon for a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared stuck.

The man decided to help the butterfly and with a pair of scissors he cut open the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. Something was strange. The butterfly had a swollen body and shrivelled wings. The man watched the butterfly expecting it to take on its correct proportions. But nothing changed.

The butterfly stayed the same. It was never able to fly. In his kindness and haste the man did not realise that the butterfly's struggle to get through the small opening of the cocoon is nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight.

Like the sapling which grows strong from being buffeted by the wind, in life we all need to struggle sometimes to make us strong.

When we coach and teach others it is helpful to recognize when people need to do things for themselves.

(Ack Paul Matthews)

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches on the soul. And sings the tune without the words and never stops at all' Emily Dickinson

GREAT LEADERS SERVE

See the Future

Engage and Develop Others

Reinvent Continuously

Value Results and Relationships

Embody the Values

See the Future

- What is the purpose of your team?
- Where do you want your team to be in five years?
- What values do you want to drive the behaviour of your team?
- How can you communicate your vision of the future to your team?

Engage and Develop Others

- How much time do you invest looking for talented people to join your organisation?

- What are the key characteristics you look for in the people you select?
- To what extent have you successfully engaged each member of your team?
- What are ten specific things you could do to engage individuals more effectively in the work of the team and the organisation?
- What have you done to suggest to them that when it comes to Heads Down implementation activities, you work for them?
- How are you encouraging the development of your people?

Reinvent Continuously

- Who are your mentors?
- What are you reading or listening to on tape?
- What systems or processes in your area of responsibility need to be changed to enhance performance?
- How could the areas under your leadership be structured differently to enhance performance?

Value Results and Relationships

- How much emphasis do you place on getting results?
- How many of your people would say that you have made a significant investment in their lives?
- What are the ways you have expressed appreciation for work well done in the last thirty days?

Embody the Values

- How can you better integrate your organisational values into how your team operates/
- What are some ways you can communicate your core values into how your team operates?
- How can you alter your daily activities to create greater personal alignment with these values?
- How can you recognise and reward people who embody these values?

Source: Ken Blanchard

Your Route to the Top

Cope with Overload

Take a moment. When a colleague dashes in with five new ‘number one priority’ projects, it’s tempting to panic and leap straight into action. Stop. It may seem like a waste of precious minutes, but forming a plan will save you crucial time later on.

Get stuck in. Once you have a plan in place, be wary of ‘action illusion.’ What can feel like useful preparation (reordering your task list, again) could be glorified procrastination. Decide on your first steps, stop arranging and start doing.

Manage your energy. In a poll of US executives, more than half said Tuesday was their most productive day. Decide which days (and times) are your energy hotspots, then map tasks to match this curve.

Take control. Efficient people focus on what they can change and influence and don’t spend time worrying about what’s beyond their control. Boost your productivity and bust stress by focusing on where you can make a difference.

Let go. Nobody can achieve everything; so don’t try. Could someone else attend the meeting? When others offer help, swallow your pride and trust in their ability.

Keep meetings brief. Alexei Miller, CEO of Gazprom, the largest oil company in Russia, is said to open his meetings with the line ‘you have 15 minutes’ Set the tone by asking ‘what are we trying to achieve?’ then propose a time-efficient way of getting there. Your time is valuable – let others know this.

Say the magic word. ‘No’ is the most useful syllable in time management. Say it respectfully, clearly, and when you need to.

Revive dead time. Stuck in traffic? Train delayed? Transform productivity black spots by keeping a list of ongoing projects with you at all times. It’s surprising what will rise Phoenix-like from the ashes.

The Mind Gym: Relationships

YOUR ATTITUDE & YOU

REMEMBER

MY ATTITUDE



AFFECTS



MY BEHAVIOUR



AFFECTS



YOUR ATTITUDE



AFFECTS



YOUR BEHAVIOUR



AFFECTS



MY ATTITUDE

Source: Harvey Falcon (Trainer and Presenter)