



CONNECTING OVER VIDEO ISOLATION DISTANCING

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

COMPILED BY

Dr. Frank Hagenow, CSP

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.

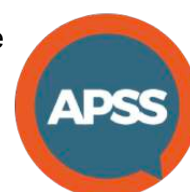
If you're a business leader, our speakers may have solutions for your challenges right now.

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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What Leaders Can Learn From The Corona Crisis

by Dr. Frank Hagenow, CSP

Job advertisements for managers often read like a character description of a superhero:

- A team player, but has charisma
- Confident in a crisis situation, but fair to all employees
- Assertive, but has diplomacy
- Customer-oriented, but efficient
- Innovative, but conscious of tradition

It's like they are looking for a titan who has every superpower going and is always prepared to put these into service at a moment's notice. But there is a discrepancy between ideals and reality, especially in crises which can amplify personal weaknesses and uncertainties. This means that managers often invest a lot of energy into maintaining the appearances of being a sovereign leader.

How Demands Have Changed

When we were hit by the coronavirus worldwide, the previous world order was severely disrupted. And in response to a virus that has had zero respect for national borders, different governments and world leaders have dealt with the situation in very different ways. We've seen everything from 'strict lockdown measures, tight testing and quarantine measures' to 'complete ignorance of the crisis and no social distancing whatsoever.'

*In times of crisis, incompetent leaders look for applause and for someone to blame.
Responsible leaders look for solutions.*

In a crisis like this, demands on managers have changed significantly. Even if there is always a quick call for the strong man with the speedy solutions to all problems, no individual in our globally networked world has the competence to make the right decisions for everyone on his or her own. And it has never been more important to have teamwork when facing complex problem scenarios – where you want to encourage individuals who are closest to challenges to come together and tackle problems they're best placed to solve. This is a time for responsible managers to gather experienced experts together and listen to what they have to say. And it's a time for cool heads and selfless personalities to come together for everyone's benefit.

Affected In Different Ways

As a result of coronavirus (both the number of cases and deaths) many people have been affected in different ways. Essential workers in hospitals, nursing homes, police stations and pharmaceutical companies have been suffering from excessive demands while others have lost some or all of their work, particularly in aviation and tourism. As a consequence

*The only thing
that really
stays the
same is
change.*

of trying to combat the coronavirus, many companies have had to stop or put their businesses on hold indefinitely.

At the beginning of the crisis, for example, the German airline Lufthansa completely closed down one of its subsidiaries, Germanwings, decommissioned all 14 large-capacity Airbus A380 aircrafts, and won't operate them again even after the crisis.

Building A New Trust

Even on a smaller scale, managers have been faced with major challenges. Leaders have had to give up control and build a new trust by maintaining close connection with employees as they work from their homes – motivating and standing by them, even when they are feeling helpless or uncertain. And switching to more digital forms of working and leadership has meant breaking new ground for many managers too.

What Is Expected Of Managers Right Now

These constantly changing situations place completely new and different demands on managers and business leaders. The higher up you are in the hierarchy of a company, the less detailed technical competence is required for your success. Instead, more social competence and better listening skills are required to manage others. And faced with rising complexity and constant change, you need close connection with your colleagues to make better decisions.

Here are four areas where you should focus your efforts:

1. See leadership as being about empowerment and guidance for personal growth for your team members.
2. Engage more frequently with your team to keep them excited from a distance through multiple communication frameworks – where you make it easy for everyone to stay in close contact with you and their peers (both formally and informally).
3. Listen and invest empathy, time, and patience into helping your team to maximize their potential and to perform at their best.
4. Be patient with yourself as you learn new technologies and the art of remote leadership.

Regardless of your management position, choose to question more often and to learn more during this crisis.

Stay safe, stay decent, and stay human.



Dr. Frank Hagenow, CSP

Frank is a German psychologist, CEO coach and author. Through his speeches and coaching, Frank Hagenow supports managers in building long-term trusting relationships with employees and customers. He helps them to make the right decisions in difficult situations and to win over people with ethics and decency. Frank lives in Venice.

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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

A multiple-award-winning leading change speaker. Trusted by the world's biggest brands and organisations. And by government agencies, churches and awesome associations. Tim Wade's fun, dynamic, and engaging on-stage and online keynotes, training, coaching, video solutions, and events help audiences embrace, lead and motivate positive change. Click to connect (and get the Resource Pack too) here:

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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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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.



Scott Friedman, CSP, Global Speaking Fellow

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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Serving The World Starts With You

by Kerrie Phipps

How do I best serve the world right now? This question has both trapped and liberated me throughout my life. It's a question I've been exploring more deeply in recent days and I find joy in challenging times as I explore this and stick to my strengths.

What the world needs right now is YOU, not in the activities that exhaust and defeat you, but in a way that doing what you do and being who you are brings you and others joy. You've probably experienced this joy when you've helped someone in a moment of need. You've possibly also found yourself trapped by expectations of what serving/helping looks like. Let's discover or rediscover the joy that's possible.

What do I mean by "serving the world"? It's different for everyone, so let's explore your world for now, and think about what this means to you. Perhaps you'd refer to it as making a difference, helping the community, or doing meaningful work?

YOU are essential to your world. This is important to remember as you explore how you best serve the world. Serving yourself is like getting your oxygen first, as directed on airplanes in case of emergency. It makes sense that we can be more effective in helping others if we serve from a place of wellbeing. It doesn't serve you or anyone else if you're stumbling around and passing out as you feed others, as you've taken no food or water yourself.

It's about knowing your needs, your gifts and strengths, your emerging interests and awareness of your uniqueness. Listen to yourself to know what's next.

I've grown up in a culture of service, servant leadership and volunteering, although often not in a traditional sense. It involved a family history of military, school, church, and community service. In many ways service was a joy and not at all a chore. However, acting in order to keep others happy, to meet their expectations and try to fit their boxes, I found myself drowning in confusion and fatigue.

At times, roles are created and impressive titles are used to entice people to service, then trapping them in a world of expectations and other pressures that lead to performance anxiety and incongruent choices.

*The Oxford Dictionary defines service as,
"The action of helping or doing work for someone..."
It can be paid or unpaid.*

In 2006 I found myself serving in a way that began with a simple offer to help a friend's company with some calls they needed to make when their National Sales Manager left abruptly. I didn't want that title, and therefore the formality of the role, but from my home office in country NSW, Australia, I unknowingly broke existing sales records for the company, was paid a commission, and was sought after by business leaders in other countries to discover my 'methodology'. I found this surprising as I didn't feel like a skilled sales leader - simply a friend who was sharing a personal story and being a good listener. My enthusiasm, passion and care for people shone through, and I wasn't distracted by the expectations of meeting sales targets. If I'd shifted focus to the numbers, I would lose energy.

Where Do You Gain Energy? Where Do You Lose Energy?

You might not think about this because you're simply enjoying yourself and don't consciously explore what's going on, or if it's deflating you don't want to think of it. However, if you take notice of your internal responses, you sense the insights emerging about how you can best serve the world. The times I act intuitively and from a place of natural energy are usually the times I make a bigger difference than I anticipate.

After leaving my parents' farm as a 17-year-old to become a dental nurse, I found even in unpleasant moments the joy of helping people. Why do we see people collapse into a chair with a smile on their face at the end of a hard day's work or volunteering, perhaps covered in grime, ash, blood and sweat, but smiling? It's the sense of making a difference, of meaningful work.

You might enjoy your efforts because of an innate sense of joy at putting systems in order, following processes to create results, or the sense of connection and gratitude of those who you're helping. We feel rewarded when we give without expectation - even if we're being paid. It's less about the financial reward, and acclaim of others, it's the joy and freedom of serving from a place of authenticity, with your gifts and abilities.

Have you ever found joy in something, then becoming trapped by comparing yourself, feeling the need to do or be more impressive? We can totally lose sight of the fact or be completely unaware, that what people valued in us was our uniqueness.

Covid-19 is a stressful time in so many ways. Let's not stress ourselves more by trying to wear someone else's shoes, hat or weighty coat. Find the liberation in taking time out, even when you have a few minutes going to sleep or waking, to turn your thoughts to, "What is it I do naturally and take for granted that others appreciate?"



Kerrie Phipps

Kerrie is a leadership coach, author and speaker. Kerrie has been serving entrepreneurs, leaders and teams across Asia Pacific for over 20 years. Her passion is connecting and empowering difference-makers to inspire a more connected, compassionate and collaborative world.

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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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The Fruit Lies In The Roots

by Brigadier Sushil Bhasin

The Chinese classic *The Art of War* mentions how wars are won before a single arrow is shot. Such is the power of preparation. Who survives and who thrives or dies in a particular market situation depends not just on how they respond to the challenge in the particular situation, but also how well they have prepared to face a crisis. In other words, one can create a crisis-ready company that not only survives but uses the waves of change as an opportunity to grow in surprising ways.

Earlier, size was considered to be a factor that made companies flabby and slow at responding. Today, the biggest companies on the planet, like Amazon and Facebook, are at the front lines of disruptive digital renovation.

This happens because these are companies that are crisis-ready, which may seem to be a term fraught with contradictions but is a very sensible expression for what these companies stand for. They not only thrive in a state of chaos; they add to it by rewriting the rules every single day. My point is that you cannot fly if you don't have roots. You need to have certain values in your very DNA to be crisis-ready.



The first condition required for both surviving and thriving is the quality of rootedness. Shakespeare makes the ghost of Hamlet's father advise his son to treat the two imposters of success and failure the same. The Indian wisdom tradition says the evolved being is one whose actions remain rooted in his or her ethical foundations, despite the highs and lows of fortune. He or she appears unruffled to the outward eye, despite adversity.

Nice Words But What Do They Mean?

Change is a wave in the ocean of time. There are cyclical changes that can be predicted and therefore responded to our advantage. There are also tsunamis and cyclones that take us by surprise.

Change is a wave in the ocean of time.

You have to be what I call a time-surfer. You cannot control the waves. You have to learn how to surf those waves and stay at the top. And just as nobody becomes a surfer of the high waves in a day, becoming a time-surfer calls for training of your time-entrepreneurship muscles much before the highs as well as lows toss you around.

There is an old saying among the ancient trading community of Marwar in India, that declares that one can't really be called a seasoned trader unless one has experienced bankruptcy thrice. Another variant replaces the word *bankruptcy* with *recession*.

You have to be a time-surfer.

I am sure you get the idea.

So, the best practice for handling failure is to have failed often in the past in small ways as well as spectacularly.

And when these failures happen, it is important to stay rooted within and push oneself to take a different approach towards the problem you are facing.

I am reminded here of a hereditary jeweller and moneylender who inherited a 450-year-old jewellery business only to lose it all. Years of drought had dented the ability of his clients to service the loans. After much thinking, he decided to wind up his business and move to Mumbai, India's commercial capital. He explained how he emerged from his debt-ridden state to create a new business at the age of 45:

"Never borrow from family or friends unless it is a life and death situation. People stop respecting you. Everyone in my wide circle of contacts knew the card that fate had handed me. I visited my rich relatives and told them, 'I may not have the money I used to have, but the doors of my home and office are always open to you. I can still serve you a cup of tea with love.' These people respected the fact that I was holding my fort with quiet dignity.

"One of these relatives directed me to an opportunity. I did not have the required capital, but the relative called a few people and said he would pay if they incurred a loss. The man is very rich, well-connected and influential. The cost of raw materials was a minor sum. However, I did not ask for cash and he did not offer it. I finished the job and in two years I was back on my feet with my dignity intact."

This man, who did not have any formal education beyond primary school, taught me some important lessons about surviving and thriving when life hits you with a tsunami-size whopper like Covid-19. Here are some of them:

1. Downsize to the point that you cannot downsize anymore.
2. Economize by walking the extra mile. Sacrifice convenience for lower costs.
3. Hustle, and use your reflexes fast to deal with opportunities as well as threats.
4. Keep doing this till you reach the save-invest-thrive stage.
5. Always stay connected with your tribe, your network, your mentors, and stay rooted in the knowledge that tough times don't last, the woke hustlers do.

Happy surviving and thriving!



Brigadier Sushil Bhasin

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Trust – The Core Enabler That Influences And Inspires Your Team

by Jonathan Low CSP PCC

These are certainly extraordinary times for leaders.

What Do Employees Need From Leaders?

In a recent survey, Gallup gathered the Covid-19 strategies and policies from the CHROs of 100 of the world's largest organizations and employees who were asked, "what do they need from leaders right now?" The results showed that the four areas employees are currently looking for in leaders are trust, compassion, stability and hope. (Source: [here](#))

Foundation Of Trust

Many would agree that trust is the core that drives motivation, fosters teamwork, influences change and empowers execution for improved performance. This is validated through the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Leadership Vital Sign (LVS) Assessment.

The foundation of trust is built on the competence (your knowledge, skills and attitude), commitment (what you say and do), consistency (how you walk the talk) and care (how do you show care and compassion).

This unprecedented time of crisis due to Covid-19 has certainly been a testing time for leaders. While some leaders may find it challenging, it is also great opportunity for many to shine during this time, especially post circuit breaker/lockdown. Your employees, associates and teams will be looking at you for the direction into the future.

The research by Dennis and Michelle Reina, PhD goes even deeper into the area of trust building. It is fascinating to work with leaders as we raise their awareness and impact on the 16 behaviours that will build or break trust, in the trust of character, trust of communication and trust of capability. Trust builds the bridge between the organization's need for results and the human need for connection.

How To Inspire Trust

Here are my tips on how you as a leader can demonstrate greater compassion to inspire trust:

1. Communicate transparently at regular intervals to your team. Listen, learn and show your support.
2. Be kind to yourself – self compassion.



Trust builds the bridge between the organization's need for results and the human need for connection.

3. Raise your personal self-awareness in the area of emotional intelligence. Recognize your personal and professional trigger points. This will help you respond and navigate better at home and at work.
4. Connect with your clients and business stakeholders. Communicate, listen and care.
5. Strengthen your mental toughness resilience in the five core areas of composure, concentration, confidence, cope-ability and cohesion.
6. Develop real stories of trust, resilience, courage, optimism and unity for your brand and establishment. This will develop trust among your teams with the recognition.

Tough times do not last, but trustworthy, compassionate and resilient leaders do. This will lead to stability and hope so desired by many.

Final Reflection - Power Self Coaching Questions

Here are three self-coaching questions for you as leaders as you continue to develop trust:

1. What would you like to start doing more of?
2. What would you like to start doing less of?
3. What would you like to continue doing?

Tough times do not last, but trustworthy, compassionate and resilient leaders do.

The future will be great for those who are ready. Preparation starts now. Take action to make it amazing, for you, your team and family!



Jonathan Low CSP PCC

Jonathan centres his conference speaking, training programs and leadership coaching work with leaders and organizations to measurably improve their business performance, sales success, service quality and leadership effectiveness. Having inspired more than 500,000 professionals in over 30 countries, Jonathan believes that increased self-awareness accelerates professional relations and business success.

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The Power Of Constraints

by Gunnar Jaschik

One of the best things about being stuck at home during a lockdown, not having a regular office job and no small kids, is the amount of time one gains to do things which otherwise often fall through the cracks.

On the other hand, some of the worst things are the constraints and limits that come as a side effect... or are they?

My Lockdown Mission And Challenge

I started into the lockdown (circuit breaker) determined to finally spend some time to sharpen my profile on social media by developing and publishing valuable content. I dove into research and quickly compiled a lot of great material ready to be transformed into articles and short videos for my audience.

But whenever I got anywhere close to publishing, I couldn't get myself to take the final step. Either I worried that I had not covered all relevant aspects, and thus needed more research, or I got hung up on small technical nuances which kept me from pressing that publish button.

When I finally finished preparations for a short video, my professional microphone simply decided to stop working! What a bummer! I got so close, and now here I was in the middle of this lockdown with my only piece of professional equipment broken. The world wasn't fair!

The Turning Point

I felt stuck! But during my morning cycle, I suddenly had this thought: What if my microphone wanted to tell me something? What if this unusual lockdown situation required an unusual and different approach?

I reflected on how my wife and I had adapted to the lack of supplies in supermarkets over the past couple of weeks. It had helped us discover new and delicious meals by forcing us to be flexible and experiment with new recipes and ingredients.

I also remembered how I had just installed unused IT equipment from our storage, a monitor and keyboard, to improve our home office experience. And I thought about how our daughter had re-decorated her room multiple times, only using what was already available.

The outcomes weren't always perfect, but they were good enough for the moment and a step forward.

If constraints and limits managed to spark creativity, action and discoveries at home, might a similar approach help me in my professional life, too?

I felt I was on to something! After all, my main struggle was to manage my ego and cut through the noise to start finishing and publishing valuable content.

So I decided to *introduce* some constraints to help me overcome this problem.

What Was Holding Me Back?

- **Information Overkill**

The never-ending flow of new ideas and material available through books, articles, social media kept me from seeing clearly and making a final decision on what I wanted to share.

- **Fear Of Failure And Too Many Technical Options**

The quality of content delivery and video production on the internet made me feel like I needed to compete on that level, too.

My Self-Imposed Constraints

1. Limited Sources

I stopped buying new books and radically limited my consumption of articles and social media.

I also decided to be okay with what I could produce with the hardware and software I already owned. I could upgrade at a later stage.

2. Limited Scope

I chose to start by focussing on one idea and topic per video or article only.

3. Limited Size

My videos would be two-and-a-half minutes or less, and my written articles no more than 1300 characters so that they could fit into a standard LinkedIn post.

These changes allowed me to finally cut through the clutter and move from research-mode into publish-mode.

I encourage you to look at your current situation at work or in life. If you feel stuck or frustrated by what's going on, consider the unique and positive aspects of the situation and try to reframe. Maybe some self-imposed constraints could help you see clearer and get you started or even finished with what you intend to achieve.



Gunnar Jaschik

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The World Will Never Be The Same

by Anwar Jumabhoy

"The world will never be the same once you've seen it through the eyes of Forrest Gump."

This was the tagline from this 1994 movie that I love. Tom Hanks starred in this movie that exposed many flaws in the way the world works.

1994 was a significant year for another reason. It was the year Jeff Bezos founded Amazon. This was followed by other entrepreneurs who created technology giants we are familiar with. Innovation was unleashed by the internet and disruption happened!

Entrepreneurs recognizing changing consumer drive disruption. In the 1990s demand patterns were impacted by the ease of access to the internet. In 2020 we are again witnessing changing consumer needs at a time when technology is on steroids!

Before I write my thoughts let me salute the work by doctors, nurses and all front-liners. They have been supported by bold leaders making tough decisions. A few leaders have also had their flaws exposed. I am reminded of another line from the movie; "Sometimes we all do things that, well, just don't make no sense". Making tough decisions is what entrepreneurs and leaders have in common.

Whilst my wife and I live in Kuala Lumpur, our four children have settled in different cities; Singapore, Mumbai, London and San Francisco. We are living connected and disconnected.

Grateful To Technology For Connectivity

We are grateful to be safe and connected. Muslims recently celebrated Hari Raya after a month of fasting – Ramadan, and I was the only one at home. My wife was in Singapore for a visit, unable to return. Same for the kids, who are in lock-downs! Instead of having meals on the same table, we exchanged pictures of meals eaten at different times and made video calls.

We have all spent time reaching out to old friends, relatives and work colleagues to give them a "thumbs up". I don't think there has ever been a time in our life, that the whole world, rich or poor, weak or strong, and people of all faiths, have been united in a simple prayer.

God, please keep us safe and deliver us from this pandemic.

Meanwhile, we have stopped shaking hands, giving hugs and stand further apart from strangers. This imposition of unnatural behaviours has created an awkwardness. I confess, that I do miss the touch, feel as well as smell and hope the new world will allow this to return.

Communities Are Open While Borders Are Closed

My sense of community has changed. We were previously limited by geography – the people you could have a meal with, a drink with or visit. Distances have become irrelevant. For many borders opened, not closed in this period.

This has been my experience with the Asia Professional Speakers Singapore. It was a challenge to get to the physical venue in Singapore. Now, I participate actively and my interaction is no different to members based there. The benefits have been extraordinary. There are so many other communities that have gone online and opened access to the public. Events are happening daily on LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. that provide both a learning and a connecting opportunity.

I have attended many over the last two months. These come to mind; the Global Digital Conference by the Financial Times of London, Bill Gates speaking with Chris Anderson and Arundhati Roy imploring us to emerge from “The Pandemic is a Portal” as better people. We are all equal online participants and united across countries seeking wisdom, hope and courage to build a better world.

Entrepreneurs Are Not Different People, They Just Do Things Differently

This is the mantra of entrepreneurs. Jeff Bezos and others leveraged technology to remake old business models. Today we are seeing entrepreneurs help communities; from distributing food to providing transport, making personal protection equipment, and helping small businesses move onto digital platforms.

Will they go on to build the mega-companies of the 1990s? I do not think so. Not because they cannot, but because their values are different. This new generation of entrepreneurs want to heal the world. Will it lead to a more equitable world where living conditions, access to food, health and education will become universal human rights? I am optimistic.

Other small business owners, like myself, have remade our businesses and learned new skills. What has comforted me and the message I have been able to pass on is simple. Reflect on the setbacks in your life, you were younger, less resilient and less skilled, yet you prevailed.



The world will never be the same. It will be better and more connected.



Anwar Jumabhoy

Anwar is passionate about helping companies find success by adopting the nine “entrepreneurisms”. He is an active virtual speaker and coach, drawing on more than 30 years of management experience. He follows technology companies and trends across the world.

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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.



Avi Liran

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One person, one organisation, one community at a time

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Fight For Your Brand: Strategies To Survive And Thrive

by Jerome Joseph, CSP, Global Speaking Fellow

The world is changing as we see it. Many organisations are in turmoil and struggling to keep pace with what is going on in the world today. In my role as a professional thought leader on branding, and as a veteran brand consultant with 23 years of experience under my belt, I am consistently advising business owners, brand/marketing teams and individuals on what they could start to do during this crisis for their brands. Here is a snapshot of some key strategies that you can start to use today to survive and thrive during these challenging times.

Brand Tip: Have A Brand Plan

This month, I spent multiple hours working with clients to help them craft their brand plan. For me this is a must do activity during this period. Having a brand plan provides you with a clear roadmap and compass for your brand. I want to encourage you to strategically review your brand and start planning ahead. Past global trends have indicated that with any global crisis, there is a recovery period follow by an economic boom. If you follow these patterns historically, then logically this will indicate to you that the world will recover and thrive.

As a brand strategist I ask my clients this: When the time comes, will you be ready for your brand to hit the ground running? Will you be ready to tap on the sweet music of \$\$ from customers ready to spend? For that you need to get planning please! Having a short-term, medium-term and long-term brand strategy in place, is now more crucial than ever before. Sit down with your team and get a clear brand roadmap to provide a strategic compass for your brand during this crisis. Do not stop investing in branding. Always keep your brand present and alive in the minds of your customers and start to think way ahead. Finally, even as you create your brand plan, ensure you have a Plan A and B for different scenarios.



"When the time comes, will you be ready for your brand to hit the ground running?"

Brand Tip: Strategise Your Messages

I saw an advertisement recently using a strong fear angle to get customers to buy their products. I was disappointed, and immediately associated that brand with fear. There are some brands that might be lured into taking the advantage of the fear and panic to promote their products. However, there is a thin line between creating a sense of urgency and a sense of panic.

As you look at the needs of your customers, think about how your message can resonate with your customers. Your message should represent what your brand is about and what you stand for. The idea is to perpetuate a host of proactive measures and not dire consequences of not using your product or service. If you come from a place of fear, your brand will be associated with fear. If you come from a place of hope or positivity, then your brand will be associated with that. Look at the needs of your target audience and work on crafting messages that not only align itself to what your brand stands for but also brings hope and positivity.

Brand Tip: Adapt And Evolve

In the next few months, customer requirements are expected to see a massive and unexpected change. The new norm today is a world of remote working, virtual meetings, social distancing and minimal travel. The question I ask all the companies I consult is, *“How can your products and services serve your customer in the new norm?”* Look at the education sector today. Many education businesses had to adapt to the new norm by launching virtual training and online courses.

One of my clients is a restaurant business. As you would expect, the lockdown has severely impacted their business. My consulting team got them to do a few things. The first thing was to move them to food home delivery. Truth be told, many restaurants were already doing it so we wanted them to do more. We went one step further by getting them to create their own branded DIY secret sauce package and sell it to aspiring home chefs.

“The new norm today is a world of remote working, virtual meetings, social distancing, and minimal travel.”

Now we know that many of us in the lockdown have time on our hands to experiment with cooking. Based on this new norm, my client started to sell their secret sauce to these aspiring chefs. My client has actually seen their business grow from online sales of their food delivery and branded secret sauce pack! They have a significantly higher revenue now than before the crisis.

Brands need to look at their audience segments and find ways that can adapt and evolve their products and services to these segments. Look also at new consumer behaviour patterns emerging during this new norm and adapt and evolve accordingly.

You have to fight for your brand in every possible way. The time is now, and I know you’ve got this! I wish you success in building your world class brand.



Jerome Joseph, CSP, Global Speaking Fellow

Jerome Joseph is ranked no. 2 in the world as a global brand guru. He is the bestselling author of 8 books. He has 23 years of experience, working with clients in 34 countries. He has impacted over 1000 brands globally, consulting and delivering programs on brand strategy, personal branding and internal branding.

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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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Tips To Boost Your Creative Mindset

by Cyriel Kortleven

Attention! The world has changed drastically. Boosting your creative skills becomes more and more important to stay ahead of the competition. Creativity can help you to break your fixed thinking patterns so you can further if you want to access an abundance of ideas, an open attitude and a new world of possibilities.

Welcome To The Never Normal

The world is different. Think on your feet. Adapt to new situations. Keep learning new things on a daily basis. Continuous learning and adapting to new situations has become essential for survival. Creativity and innovation are becoming very important sources of added value. Welcome to the never normal.

Out of the Box or Out of Business?

Move From Idea-killers To “Yes And...”

I have to disappoint you because there isn't a magic formula to get new ideas. A lot of times, new ideas arise on moments when you don't expect them (in the shower, in bed, in a traffic jam). But structured creativity is often hard work. There are a few simple skills that will help you to generate lots of ideas when you need them. For me, the two most important words to develop an open, creative mindset are “Yes, and...” These words combine several values: a positive attitude, openness to possibilities and suspending judgement.

If you can go from a “Yes but” to a “Yes and” attitude then you've already conquered the biggest challenge. And I've made an acronym of the letters “Yes and” with the other basic principles to give a boost to your creative power.

Yes And... Suspend Judgement

Judgement is very important. Your judgement helps you to make thousands of decisions daily. Your judgement is based on your previous experiences and knowledge. By definition, new ideas don't fit into existing schemes of thought so the danger is that judgement very often occurs too fast when a new idea is launched. That's what we call the idea-killers – expressions like “yes, but... no money, no time, it already exists...” In order to process original ideas, we will need to develop a more subtle use of judgement – postpone your judgement and go into a “yes, and” mindset.

Explore: Discover The World With Different Eyes

We trust our perception in order to explore and interpret the world around us. And changing perception is not easy because, patterns creep in. Furthermore, often-repeated patterns tend to become more and more dominant. We can only see what we think is there and science proves that perception consists of information gathered from outside only for 20%; consequently 80% is produced in the brain itself. Exploration or creative perception is recognizing patterns in your own perception and setting yourself free from these. Many changes begin with a new way of looking at things.

Suppose: Use Your Imagination

Visual language is generally less respected than verbal language because most school education strongly emphasises the language of words. This is reflected in companies and organisations where we often notice a lack of visually imaginative skills. But imagination is a crucial skill for a creative thinker. Imagination is the capacity to represent in the mind something that cannot be seen at that moment. It's not only a visual image but also sounds, smell, taste and touch as well as abstract notions such as ideas and concepts. Imagination can be stimulated by asking a lot of questions.

Associate: Create Flexible Connections

Our brain cells are interconnected and continuously transmit signals to one another. Association happens when one thought generates another "this makes me think of..." connection. There's a danger that some connections are stronger than others because they are repeated several times and every repetition reinforces the connection. Forcing yourself to create new connections and associations helps to find less obvious tracks and can generate new ideas. Speeding up while making associations is a good method to find less obvious connections.

Next Idea: Diverge

The first thoughts that arise are based on common sense. That's very efficient and when searching for a solution, we tend to stop when we have found a reasonable solution. Diverging is switching off our spontaneous tendency to stop when a common sense solution has arrived and continuing to come up with ideas. You automatically reach the limits of what you can spontaneously think of and go beyond them. Giving yourself a limited amount of time to diverge is a better way instead of limiting the number of ideas that you want to generate.

Do It Now: Making Ideas Happen

An idea is just a thought of the mind (or some words on a post-it). The real challenge is realizing ideas and making them happen. Making ideas happen is very hard work and having the guts to break some fixed thinking patterns. And you will come across a lot of nearlings. A nearling is a positive word for something new that you did with the right intentions, which has not (yet) led to the right result.

Don't Mind the Change. Change Your Mind.



Cyriel Kortleven

Cyriel Kortleven is an award-winning global keynote speaker on the change mindset. He inspires organisations like Bayer, Nike, IKEA, NASA, and Unilever in 33 different countries on 5 continents. Cyriel is the living embodiment of engagement, using a lot of interaction and humour. Ready for a Belgian boost of creativity?

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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

A transformation expert, Certified Speaking Professional and the author of *Win People Over*, Karen empowers teams to thrive on change. As the co-founder of award-winning organisational development firm, Influence Solutions, and the global leadership summit *Rise Through The Ranks™*, she has inspired thousands from over 70 countries.

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What Is The Most Expensive Word In Business Today

by Joe Augustin

My article title is the opening line of a commercial. “That wasn’t a question,” the ad goes on to say. “‘What?’ *is* the most expensive word in business today”. It’s a clever take by Denmark’s EPOS who specialise in audio technology.

Poor sound certainly does play a significant part in the customer experience, especially in the new normal of online meetings. According to an EPOS report, bad audio during communications with decision-makers has led to the following outcomes:

- Dissatisfied clients (23%)
- Financial loss due to incorrectly undertaking a task (18%)
- Losing a key piece of work or a deal resulting in financial loss to the company (18%)
- Losing a pitch or tender (19%)

Ouch! The good news is that there’s never been a better time to get your audio into shape. Due to advances in manufacturing, it’s actually quite hard to buy a bad microphone. However, the real challenge is to pick up the RIGHT microphone. And of course, there’s much more to sound than JUST a good microphone.

Listen, Set Yourself Up For Even Better Sound

One of the first things to look out for is your environment. Take a moment to listen intently to what happens in your sonic environment. Is there a fan constantly blowing? What about the neighbour’s dog that barks occasionally? Can you hear the hot water dispenser reboiling the water every hour?

Our brains have the ability to ignore these sounds from our environment so they aren’t distracting to us. But they most certainly can be disconcerting for your audience. When you have taken stock of the sounds that occur in your environment, start making a list of things you can do something about – like turning off the water heater.

The first thing is usually just making sure your windows and doors are closed. That helps to keep the outside world outside. You should also think of the space just outside your door – are there doors and windows that could be closed to reduce the noise coming into the space next door to you?

The next thing you should look out for is how echoey your room is. Again, this is something your brain filters out so you may not even notice it. But like before take some time to listen. Clap your hands once and listen for the trail of sound that follows. The harder the surfaces in your room, the more sound will reflect and bounce around before it eventually dies away. Conversely, the more soft surfaces you have, the quicker the sound gets absorbed.

You can improve the acoustics in your office for clarity, by adding some soft, sound-absorbing elements. Most people imagine that professional acoustic foam delivers the best performance but surprisingly, the BEST sound panel you can have would be made of layers and layers of... towels. Blankets, carpets and even bean-bags can help.

The good news is that for some of you, your work is already done. Now that you have kept out as much of the noise as possible by closing your doors and windows, and kept the internal reflection of sound to a minimum, you should be all set because most modern laptops have some pretty decent mics built-in.

But if you really want to raise your audio game, get an external microphone.

Hear, Hear!

Think of a microphone as an ear. And if you were trying to hear someone better, you would just bring your ear closer to them. It's the same for mics. The general rule for microphone use is: the closer the better. It's a general rule because microphones can also be TOO close.

One of the most functional external microphones you probably already have access to is the one on the stereo wired headset you most likely received with your mobile phone. It's a great option because it also means you can hear what's going very clearly while on the call.

If you're not going to be too far from the computer during your call, I'd recommend a simple wired USB mic. These range in price from as low as \$15 up to several hundred dollars. And they take several forms as well, so which you choose depends on what you would like people to hear... and see. Here are three types to consider:

- **Lavalier Microphone**

Small and unobtrusive, you can wear this on your collar. The sound is usually clear but it tends to sound quite flat. You might consider getting a wireless version of this kind of microphone, although I don't think it's a necessity.

- **Condenser Microphone**

Great for a richer sound, but that comes with the drawback of capturing *too much* detail. It's likely to pick up the barking dog from next door, even through the closed window, and can sometimes be too "rumbly."

- **Dynamic Microphone**

This has the advantage of being a little hardier while having most of the features of the condenser mic but with less detail at the very highest and lowest ends of the audio spectrum (which most of us can't hear anyway). They also allow you to get really close to the mic for that "DJ sound" that some people seem to like.

One final consideration is whether you want the audience to SEE the microphone. In general, it should not block your face or the audience will have difficulty reading your facial expressions and connecting with you visually. Remember, a microphone is just a tool to enhance the effectiveness of your communication.



Joe Augustin

Over the past 30 years Joe has produced more than 20,000 hours of programming to a combined audience of more than a million people. He's an emcee, presentation coach and high-end webinar producer.

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Agile Leadership In A Covid-19 New Normal

by c.j. Ng

The Covid-19 outbreak has unfolded into unimaginable permutations. What initially was deemed as an outbreak in China quickly became a global pandemic. Along with the fear of getting it, Covid-19 has affected the world in these three ways:

1. Total Uncertainty

Who would have known that I would be locked out of China, along with thousands of others who are foreigners with valid work or long-term visas with China, and with no specific dates when we could return? How many more could not return home to their hometowns, or could not even reunite with their families? Apart from pandemic prevention, Covid-19 had caused huge uncertainty ranging from travel plans, economic recoveries and how we shall work from now to the foreseeable future.

2. Massive Confusion And Volatility

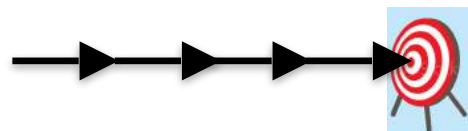
As this is a new virus, no one knew for sure how infectious or deadly it would be, and how it could be prevented or treated. There were frequent policy changes, causing businesses and individuals confusion in how best to cope with rapid changes. There are multiple reports and news articles on how the disease could or should be prevented, often with contradictory advice. Countries that implemented lockdown later realized that lockdowns could be too costly to contain the disease, but are unsure how best to lift those restrictions.

3. Corporate Budget Cuts

If there's any certainty in this outbreak, it will be in the form of near complete corporate budget cuts. Traditional sources of businesses have dried up, and sources of new income have yet to be uncovered. Covid-19 has unleashed a new normal, and new business models will have to be invented to cope with unprecedented tough challenges.

Being Agile In A Covid-19 VUCA World

First of all, perhaps the first question is address is why agile? Why do we need to change to a different way of doing things? Well, unlike situations where things are stable and predictable, we could not use step-by-step procedures or plans to reach our goals.



During a more turbulent situation such as now, due to a lot of unknown and emergent factors, we would have to move in smaller steps and make adjustments along the way to reach goals.



In the Covid-19 new normal, we would not be able to make detailed plans due to ever-changing information, or the lack of information. Sometimes, we don't even know what goals we are heading towards. Instead, we can take smaller actions and see where we could be headed, then recalibrate and move on.

Think Big, Start Nimble

So if you are exploring different options on how you can change to keep up with this new normal, here are two aspects to consider:

1. If you are to reinvent yourself, what would be some of the things that you would like to achieve or materialise?
2. What would then be a first couple of steps that you can start with, knowing that you can adjust your directions to help you get closer to your goals?

Do note that we may not have all the answers, and getting others to contribute their ideas, brainstorm or be sounding boards could yield potentially great insights.

What Should I Focus On?

With limited resources and time to achieve unlimited goals and aspirations, sometimes I find myself lost in choosing the activities to focus on. One agile tool that I find really helpful is to prioritize my activities into four categories. These are:

- Must-haves
- Should-haves
- Could-haves
- Won't-haves

“Must-haves” are the things that we must do, or the whole venture will fail. “Should-haves” are things that will give you a better result but can be omitted if time or resources are really tight. “Could-haves” are things that will be nicer to have but are not essential. “Won’t-haves” are things that are not worthwhile to invest in time and resources at this juncture.

While the Covid-19 new normal might bring a very uncertain future, life will - and has to - go on. With a bit of agility in leading ourselves and others, we might just discover a whole new world!



c.j. Ng

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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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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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