

LEADERSHIP and ENGAGEMENT –PACK

November 2019 (Established 2006)

Some years ago I wrote a blog post <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/01/29/the-makings-of-a-good-to-great-boss/> (appears as the last article in this edition) I commented on one of those three bosses: “You feel excited by what is coming next. You never quite know what to expect when you receive an email, or see her name come up on your phone, but whatever you are going to be asked to do you know it is going to be fun” A few weeks ago I received one of those emails! I am now the ‘Head of Workforce Strategy and Engagement for the Thera Group’. I am both excited and honoured to be trusted with this new position for www.thera.co.uk.

Damian Piper, our resident Performance coach and consultant, starts this edition with: ‘Levels of engagement - influencing the gains and drains?’ Have you checked out Damian’s podcasts yet? They are available at: www.effectivechallenge.com/podcasts or on all the major podcast platforms.

A key part of my CPD is when I take in an article from Meike Beckford (Lead Director of Dosh Ltd) so here is a new post from Meike: **Highlights from an MBA: Innovation** “This is the first in what will hopefully be a short series where I share some ideas from my Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) with the aim of introducing you to some new ideas, questions and perspectives to help you develop yourself and your organisation.....”

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. My colleague, Sarah Bolger, asks what that actually means. Please read Sarah’s article “Be aware, be very aware!”

In October’s edition I wrote about how my youngest daughter, Bettina, has made me a better person: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2019/10/04/being-bettinas-dad-find-people-who-make-you-better/> **this month edition features part 2, this time about the Dosh team.** <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2019/10/25/find-people-who-make-you-better-part-2/> I want to take the opportunity to thank the Dosh Board of Directors and team members (past and present) for making me a better person over the last 10 years.

This month’s quotes have been taken from my wife’s @JoyceRaw1 and @livelikearaw twitter feeds – thanks Joyce. I am also live on Twitter: @SteveRaw836 sharing leadership thoughts at 7am, 7 days a week. We welcome new followers! **New on social media: Instagram @thera.leadership**

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It’s not about how good you are,

It’s how Good You want to be

Levels of engagement - influencing the gains and drains?

Staff engagement staff is a topic organisations would like to improve. Over the years of working with organisations I see an overreliance on an annual staff survey to understand the current level of engagement. These do have an important part to play although for me they are typically driven by the mood or experience of the respondent at the time of submitting. They are also less good at understanding the particular engagement needs of the individual. I can't imagine there are too many organisations that don't want full engagement from their whole workforce so decoding the particular needs is a goal worth pursuing.

I argue that the environment we operate in has a significant impact on our level of engagement. By environment I literally mean anything that impacts on an individual. Examples include job objectives, the technology a person uses, relationships, meetings, the accommodation and even the temperature of the room. Hopefully you are getting the idea. It's the big and the small. Undertaking an 'environment audit' is a proactive activity that if the results are acted upon can help influence the level of engagement and drive up performance as a result.

Some people have probably heard of the expression 'the aggregation of marginal gains'. Built on the foundations of many improvement philosophies, this expression was first coined by Sir Dave Brailsford when he was part of the leadership setup at British Cycling. It refers to the combination of lots of small changes to generate a bigger improvement. I heard an expression recently from Ben Morton (on Twitter as @bmleadership) which describes the inverse of marginal gains. He called this the 'aggregation of margin drains'. I think both these expressions can play a part in auditing our environment. Here's how.

With increasing engagement as your goal, assess your environment for the things that you could introduce (the gains) to increase engagement and the things you could eradicate (the drains) which detract from your engagement. I'd encourage you to get really practical here. Here's a three real examples of things people have done when I've worked with them:

- 1) Change the time of the regular team meeting (to better accommodate the school drop off time of one of the team members).
- 2) Reverse the meeting agenda of project reviews to ensure the bigger topics are tackled when people are fresher at the beginning of the meeting (and action updates are left to the end when energy has probably dipped, and bladders are probably full).
- 3) Change the room configuration to create a quiet space for people to work without distraction.

None of the above cost money. They do however acknowledge things that detracted from people being able to give their all. Have a go either as an individual to see what you come up with. Alternatively, do the exercise with your line manager or as a team. You may be surprised by what shows up and more importantly the engagement improvement as a result of taking action.

As always I'm interested in any thoughts or observations you may have.

Damian Piper

Change coach and consultant

I've got a personal goal to do what I can to support people with performance development. Please subscribe to receive my thought-provoking updates designed to take your performance to the next level: <https://effectivechallenge.com/blog/>

While I have your attention - if you're more 🧐 than 🗯️ then please listen to the Effective Challenge Podcast. Feel free to share if you think others may benefit from its content.



www.effectivechallenge.com/podcasts

SOFT REMINDER: Not everything that weighs you down is yours to carry

Highlights from an MBA: Innovation

This is the first in what will hopefully be a short series where I share some ideas from my Master's in Business Administration (MBA) with the aim of introducing you to some new ideas, questions and perspectives to help you develop yourself and your organisation and to challenge me to summarise what I have actually learnt!

First up, innovation: A few things stood out for me which I wanted to share with you.

What are innovation and entrepreneurship? Not what you first think!

It's not just the one big new idea. You're not only innovating if you create a new product or start-up; it is an attitude and approach that includes everyone and everything along the journey, whether or not you get to the (intended) destination. It can happen inside or outside an organisation and can be incremental (small) or disruptive (big). There are also different approaches, whether it's the formal business case, or something much more emergent: using iterative design, testing with customers and developing organically. It is not the role of a particular department, job or (type of) person; a lot is down to attitude and culture, whether individually or across your company.

Triggers for innovation

What circumstances or challenges are ripe for innovation? There are many things internally and externally that create opportunities for innovation (with thanks to Peter Drucker's sources of innovation):

- 1) Unexpected success or failure – what new things can you learn?
- 2) The incongruity between reality and expectation – if reality doesn't match what you want or need, how can you influence that?
- 3) Process need – if something's not working right, do you need a different approach?
- 4) Changes in industry or market structure – what worked well 10 years ago, might not be so great now. Competitors, customers and the environment you work in constantly change, so you must too.

- 5) Demographic changes – what is happening around you and in the wider society that might change demands and your potential customers?
- 6) Changes in perception, mood and meaning – do you have your ear to the ground for changing social trends, new ideas and expectations?
- 7) New knowledge – the classic domain of R&D departments, but something you can source more widely too, reading industry trends and even this leadership pack.

Models of innovation

Innovation can be triggered by something new, or by something lacking – ‘**a resilient mind-set can transform scarcity into opportunity**’ (Radjou et al 2012) This idea has given rise to ‘Jugaad innovation’, the idea that you can think flexibly, do more with less and seek opportunity in adversity – try [this TED talk](#) to learn more.

Another approach is to adopt open innovation. A concept developed by Henry Chesbrough (which he explains in [this video](#)) based on the idea that, no matter how good your organisation, you can’t have a monopoly on all the good people and ideas! It encourages you to bring the outside in and let the inside out: so look around at what others are doing and use it, but also share what you’re doing so others can take it off in new directions.

Openness to innovation

All these ideas took me to thinking about how open we are to innovation. It can be a term that turns people off or that they actively resist, if it is seen as a synonym for cuts, the latest fad or the preserve of Silicon Valley. That is a particular risk in my own industry of social care, where it can be further held back by risk-aversion, a lack of collaboration and a blame culture that stops people wanting to try anything new. But it can be something for everyone.

So, how do you foster innovation? For me, a lot comes back to culture and organisational structure.

- Look at the triggers for innovation – who is looking out for these?
- Who raises problems and suggests solutions and where do they go?
- Who is listening to what is happening outside the organisation?

The answer really should be everyone! If innovation only happens in the R&D department and new initiatives only come from the top, you’re missing a lot of opportunities. How are you fostering a resilient and creative team and organisation? Can people speak up, challenge and try new things with support and without blame?

As my organisation grows and develops, this is definitely something I will keep coming back to, so we don’t miss out on the talent we have throughout the team or opportunities to partner and collaborate with those around us. Ultimately, it comes down to how you can lead your organisation to best develop and achieve its mission.

With thanks to [Lancaster University Management School](#), Prof Magnus George and the whole Executive MBA team and cohort.

You can follow me on twitter @MeikeB88 and my organisation @DoshTweets www.dosh.org.

“You don’t need to know all the answers, you just need to be courageous enough to take the first step and trust where it leads” Bronnie Ware

Be aware, be very aware!

<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/11/29/be-aware-diabetes-awareness-month/>

November is Diabetes Awareness Month but what does that actually mean. Well, to be truthful, probably not a lot to most people. Unless it involves someone that you are close to, a friend or family member, there is never that need to delve that little bit deeper than seeing it on social media and maybe scrolling past it or maybe hitting the like button just to look involved. I am as guilty of that as the next person until for us, all of a sudden, it did actually mean something.

In 2013, our little boy Charlie was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and that day is ingrained in my memory. I remember every word that the GP said to me and then once we got to the Hospital everything became a blur of urgency, medicines, explanations, injections, insulin. People were using medical jargon I did not understand like DKA and to be honest it was downright scary. I wasn’t aware when we went in that within a few weeks I would be an expert on nutrition, biology, chemistry, food science and begin thinking like a Chemist. They also don’t tell you when you are in hospital that you will become more determined than you ever thought possible to ensure that your little one doesn’t get left out of things. The hardest thing for me is when school friends don’t invite him to playdates, parties and sleepovers because other parents are scared of the responsibility. And too right. I would be the same in their shoes. We go on every school trip with him and my Husband even went on his residential trip this year so he now knows how to build a raft and has many a campfire song up his sleeve!

If you have no experience of anyone with diabetes, firstly I am so pleased for you, but secondly I would say it’s more important for you to make yourself aware of the symptoms as you won’t have the knowledge that naturally comes from knowing a sufferer. Every 6 seconds someone in the World dies from a diabetes related complication but although there are nearly 3 million people living with the condition in the UK alone, only 10% of them have Type 1 like Charlie so people don’t always understand it or are even aware of it. There are over 29,000 children in our Country with Type 1 and this scary number is growing by about 4% every year especially in children under the age of 5. Nobody knows why. It has nothing to do with diet or exercise and is not hereditary.

Let me explain. There are two main types of diabetes. Most people when they think of diabetes think of Type 2 which is where the Pancreas doesn’t produce enough insulin or the body doesn’t react properly to insulin. It usually, but not always, appears in people over the age of 40 and is generally treated with diet and activity although medication or insulin can be often required.

Type 1 diabetes, like Charlies, on the other hand, is a very different disease. It is an autoimmune disease which mainly affects children and has no cure. The pancreas does not produce insulin at all and as a parent you have to literally step in and be the pancreas for them. I can’t remember my career counsellor mentioning that job!! For you or me, our bodies naturally produce substances to keep our blood glucose at a safe level but for Charlie that’s a full time job! He has to test his blood 10-15 times a day, he has to calculate how much carbohydrate is in everything that he eats and I mean everything and then he has to work out the correct amount of insulin to give to counteract the

food. We try our best to control his levels but it's impossible. You must have heard the phrase "like plaiting fog" well I think it was meant for us. Everything affects him. Eating, not eating, exercise, just sitting around, being unwell, being too cold, being too hot, stress, excitement and the best one of all... growing up! Yes that's right growth hormones are my worst fear especially as they tend to kick in more when Charlie sleeps. During the day Charlie can tell me when he feels "low" or "high" – that always gets a few funny stares in public. When he is asleep though he can't do that obviously so we test his blood 2-3 times throughout every night. It was like at the age of 7 we had a new-born again but without the nappies thankfully! Most parents are so glad when they get their children to bed but for us we can't wait for him to get up safely in the morning.

SO ... What do you all now need to do? Well, as a parent you definitely need to know what to look for and act quickly. Type 1 diabetes hides very easily in childhood ailments and is often passed off by GPs as flu sometimes with fatal consequences. Thankfully, my GP was fantastic but that's not always the case. The things that you need to look for are below but there are far more symptoms

1. Feeling more tired than usual.
2. Losing weight
3. Going to the toilet more often
4. Being more thirsty than usual.

In hindsight Charlies symptoms were coming on for probably over a year.

He started by vomiting. Not regularly so that you would be concerned, just maybe once every 6 weeks or so. He was never ill before or after vomiting and was full of life at that point. He would simply stop in his tracks, vomit and then run off again as though nothing had happened. **I put it down to excitement or his food not having settled!!**

Then his legs ached. **Growing pains I said.**

A rash. **It's so hot this summer it must be heat rash!!**

Then he started to drink more. **Remember that hot Summer?**

Go to the toilet more. **Well he was drinking more it just made sense.**

Then came the tiredness and the loss of weight and then I became concerned and took him to the GP but not before he developed fruity breath, like pear drops. This, I now know, is a sign of diabetic keto-acidosis!! Pheww long word. So that's what DKA was in hospital!! This is the body started to break down fat for fuel and can be fatal.

But you can see how you can miss some of these signs. For goodness sake, I missed all of them for quite a while as they don't all come together so you don't do the maths.

If my contribution to Diabetes Awareness Month is to get just one person to read this post and remember even some of it then I am happy with my little self.

Please take some time if you can to have a look at the short slideshow that Charlie has put together, with a little bit of help of course, even if it's only for the great soundtrack.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/slideshow-master/sjbolger69@yahoo.com/20161115170328.mov>

Be aware, be very aware!



Source: Sarah Bolger

"Courage is nothing more than taking one step more than you think you can" Holly Lisle

FIND PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU BETTER (PART 2)

I am interviewing our second candidate with Meike Beckford, Dosh's Financial Advocacy Manager for a position with Dosh Ltd www.dosh.org a company I have had the honour of being the Managing Director for over the last 10 years. It is my turn to be asked a question by the interviewee and to be honest it is not one I was expecting. "So what do you find is the best part of working for Dosh?" My response comes to me immediately. I say "it is reading the stories that my colleagues send me about how they have made a difference to another person's life" Before each Board Meeting each team member sends me a story about their most recent work and their involvement in supporting a person to have more independence and control with their money. I always find their stories moving and inspirational.

The Dosh team come from a diverse background and they are totally committed and dedicated to people with a learning disability. I am truly surrounded by talent and I will be a better leader and manager for this experience. Working for Dosh has been the highlight of my second career.

How did that happen?

I started as a Community Support Team Leader (& Support Worker) supporting people with a learning disability, after retiring from the Army in 1996. I was inspired by my daughter Bettina (who copes with a learning disability) to enter this field of work. I wanted to make a difference and I decided the best way to do this was to seek out the best people to work with and for. If I was going to achieve success and be successful, I would need to surround myself with talent. I knew from experience that doing this would make me better a person and a better leader too.

I subsequently became a Registered Home Manager, Area Manager, Operations Manager, Regional Director, and a Director of Learning Disabilities, before achieving my dream job in 2009 as Managing Director of Dosh (Financial Advocacy) Ltd www.dosh.org a subsidiary company of Thera Trust www.thera.co.uk

If you have the ability to work with people smarter than you, always try to be the least smartest person in the room and surround yourself with talent, because iron sharpens iron. Jake M Johnson

The purpose of this post is to share with you how I have personally benefited from finding people who have made me better and why this is a good thing to do.

Why should you endeavour to find people who make you better?

My 5 top reasons for doing this are as follows:

1. You want to be the best person you could possibly be
2. They will fill gaps in both your knowledge and expertise. You can't possibly know it all.
3. They will teach you new things. In Dosh this has been a daily experience for me over the last 10 years. I often tell one of my colleagues that every time I read one of her emails I am educated.
4. They inspire you to do great things. (As a leader you don't always have to be the person inspiring).
5. They stop you from being complacent. Talented people have high expectations. They expect something special from you, so it is important you deliver (every day).

How do you go about finding people who make you better?

- ✓ Never stop talent spotting. Even when I don't have vacancies in a team I have been responsible for, I never stop looking for people who I would like to work with.
- ✓ One Mentor is never enough. Which areas of your life do you want to be better at? Once you have identified these areas, find a Mentor for each one.

"I've got the attitude which I still have today that if I find someone that I really admire, someone that I think, I want to be you. I want to do the things the way you do them. I've always sort of been stupid enough or brave enough to go up to them and say, will you mentor me?"

Rene Carayol – Businessman, Speaker, Author and Broadcaster

- ✓ 'Networking: it really is all about who you know' my life has been enriched by the people I know and I have come to the conclusion that the success I have achieved in both my careers has often been due to the people I know. My thoughts on networking:
<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/06/13/networking-it-really-is-all-about-who-you-know/>
- ✓ Take the time to find out peoples gifts, qualities and interests they have. I have found doing this, especially with Dosh Team members who have an abundance of talent and creativity, has made me a better person.
- ✓ Seek out those people who have a stake in your company, they could be your 'customers' and or the people you support. I talked about how Bettina has made me a better person in <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2019/10/04/being-bettinas-dad-find-people-who-make-you-better/> the people I support have also made me a better person. How they see the world and the hard work and determination to communicate their feelings is both humbling and inspiring.

"Great vision without great people is irrelevant." – Jim Collins, Good to Great

My 5 top tips on Talent Management

So you have found people who make you better. How do you keep them close to you and involved in your life so you keep getting better because of them:

1. Find out their aspirations and do your very best to help them achieve.
2. Always put them before you. (in my first career it was a sin if you went to the front of the queue for a meal – you eat last and sleep last)
3. Go for democracy – seek their advice, involve them in decision making, and then trust their judgements.
4. Create a 'culture' (the way we do things around here) that people will want to be part and proud of. <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/03/01/the-culture-within-you/>
5. Part of that culture needs to recognise that failure and making mistakes can be positive and are there lessons to be learned from these. You have a “no blame” culture and when you have that, it sets talented people free to be their most creative.

It happened

I found work that I was always meant to do: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/07/27/do-the-work-you-were-always-meant-to-do/> and I got to do this for 10 years with Dosh. From the 1st November (2019), I am moving to a new position within the Thera Group. I will be their Head of Workforce Strategy and Engagement. I feel fortunate to be given this opportunity as there is so much I want to achieve for people within my organisation.

As I handover to Meike our (excellent) new Lead Director and before I leave Dosh, I want to take the opportunity to thank the Dosh Board of Directors and each team member (past and present) for making me a better person. I couldn't do what I do without you!

Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org



This month's online presentation picks:

Each month I trawl through Ted.com and You Tube for inspiring, thought provoking and moving 'talks' so you don't have to.

Why diversity is crucial to success in any organisation

Matthew Syed has a new book about which covers diversity and inclusion. I heard him talking on this Radio 4 Podcast "don't tell me the score" "Why diversity is crucial to success in any organisation, with Matthew Syed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07np7xt> really interesting and thought-provoking (thanks for sending me the link and review Damian)

Want to be more creative? Go for a walk

https://www.ted.com/talks/marily_oppezzo_want_to_be_more_creative_go_for_a_walk?referrer=playlist-how_to_protect_your_passions_from_burnout

When trying to come up with a new idea, we all have times when we get stuck. But according to research by behavioural and learning scientist Marily Oppezzo, getting up and going for a walk might be all it takes to get your creative juices flowing. In this fun, fast talk, she explains how walking could help you get the most out of your next brainstorm.

How boredom can lead to your most brilliant ideas?

https://www.ted.com/talks/manoush_zomorodi_how_boredom_can_lead_to_your_most_brilliant_ideas?referrer=playlist-how_to_protect_your_passions_from_burnout&language=en

Do you sometimes have your most creative ideas while folding laundry, washing dishes or doing nothing in particular? It's because when your body goes on autopilot, your brain gets busy forming new neural connections that connect ideas and solve problems. Learn to love being bored as Manoush Zomorodi explains the connection between spacing out and creativity.

The Power of a Growth Mindset

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpN1yQap_is

Ms Surbhi Sachdev has combined her love for the stage with being committed to motivate and train today's generation to be achievers and leaders. She used her journey, passion and life as an example to ignite students and professional audiences to develop a growth mind set and conquer their dreams without a second thought.

Reflective Thinking play list sent to me by Meike Beckford:

[Reflective practice playlist on YouTube](#)

Includes three short presentations:

- Critical Thinking
- 5 Tips to improve your critical thinking
- The 3 minute KOLB

When life gives you Monday, dip it in glitter and sparkle all day Ella Woodward

Dear Steve

We like to be authentic and advocate authenticity with all our clients in Naked Leader. So, I was rather taken aback by a question I had at a recent event:

“What is the most devious way to find out what someone really wants?”

There was a pause while I went deep into my experience to sieve through all the possible how-tos, searching for an answer that always works, with everyone.

And after several seconds, I answered:

“Ask them”

Some of the audience groaned, others clapped – the guy who had asked me actually wrote it down!

If you really want to know what someone, anyone, really wants, then ask them.

And listen to what they say – listen to their words, their emotions and body language.

Because they will always tell you – if they believe you genuinely want to know.

With my love and best wishes

David (David Taylor author of the Naked Leader series which I highly recommend)

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power. -Lao Tzu

3 Ways to Face Your Fears With Courage

by Jim Rohn

Here are a few techniques to help you build your courage and face your fears.

1. Put all remote possibilities out of your mind.

Don't worry about things you have no control over. Don't spend your time thinking about all of the bad things that might happen to you. Don't spend your time plotting and planning ways to make sure these things will never happen.

Courageous people don't worry about things that are out of their control or things that are unlikely to happen. They concentrate on what they can control.

2. Face your fears before you start something.

Imagine difficult situations before they occur. Make a list of the worst that could happen, and you'll probably see that the situation is not so bad after all.

A friend of mine lost everything a few years back—her home, cars, possessions, antiques, art, jewellery and credit. She lost it all. Now, on her way back up, whenever she's faced with a tough decision, she asks herself, What's the worst that can happen? And guess what, she's already been through the worst and she survived. It's not an issue anymore.

You don't have to lose everything to lose that particular fear. But once you face your fear, you can move on. Once you've figured out the worst that could possibly happen, you'll see that you have the inner strength to deal with it if the worst scenario comes about. And here's the best part: If you've looked at the possibilities beforehand, you'll probably never be faced with the situation at all. Why? Because you've already been through it. By contemplating what might happen, you've charted your course to ensure that it doesn't.

3. Imagine the alternative.

Picture the result of giving into your fears. Really feel the cost of being ruled by fear; then really feel the benefits of courageously following your ambition. Carefully weigh the two and see the difference.

If you've been invited to address your national sales convention and are scared to death of public speaking, what should you do? You could decline the invitation, knowing full well that your fears are holding you back. Or you could take some classes, read some books, practice with a friend. See yourself stepping into a whole new league. You'll be accepting the opportunity to gain more notoriety in your field. And you'll be increasing your opportunities for future success.

Once again, it's your choice. Be fueled by your fears, or [face your fears](#). It all depends on [how badly you want something](#). It all depends on how you choose to live your life; do you always want to be afraid of taking the next step, or do you want to build your courage and open the doors of opportunity? I know what my answer would be.

*Excerpted from [Leading an Inspired Life](#)
[this post](#) originally appeared on [SUCCESS.com](#).*

"Emotions will either serve or master, depending on who is in charge." - Jim Rohn

"If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present" Lao Tzu

4 Steps to a Resilient, Success-Driven Mentality

By [Daniel Pigg](#)

Failing fast sounds simple enough, and it's become a common mantra in the entrepreneurial space. This mentality affects more than just entrepreneurs, though. Many people preach the power of failure—swift, forward or otherwise—as the key to future success. It's become a rite of passage these days, where you must flounder in order to prove yourself.

I don't dismiss the learning experiences and growth that comes from past failures, but I believe it's much more beneficial to highlight past successes. From a mentality perspective, I can't stress enough

how important it is to approach things with a resilient, success-driven mindset. Letting thoughts of failure creep into your goals and aspirations isn't productive.

Success Over Failure

When you embrace failure, you're saying that failing is an inevitable result in your endeavors. Going forward, this mentality then guides your actions—or inactions—which can increase the likelihood of failure. It has an almost cyclical effect.

Statistically speaking, a large majority of startups and business ideas will fail in some way. Whether it's because of issues related to funding, scaling or launching a viable product, failure is relatively commonplace. It's something every professional must accept, but putting failure on a pedestal isn't a constructive way to overcome it.

Back in 2014, I made one of the toughest decisions in my entrepreneurial career when I sold shares of the company I spent nine years building. I hated the thought of selling, and my intent always had been to scale up. After two potential acquisitions fell apart, several staff members left due to the resulting uncertainty.

I could easily have let this failure define me. Instead, it forced me to push through and look outside the traditional business sectors for my next venture: transitioning from financial services to become a winery and brewery owner.

The big difference between a failure mentality and one that focuses on resilience manifests in your attitude and actions. I reflected on the loss, but I quickly moved on to the next challenge. I began thinking about how I could be successful rather than how I could avoid failure. Being resilient made me more opportunistic and determined instead of more hesitant and risk averse—two traits of a failure mentality.

The Resilience Factor

Embracing a resilient, success-driven mentality means casting aside thoughts of failure and allowing your mind to concentrate on the strategic actions necessary to be successful. This is sometimes easier said than done, but the following steps can often help you approach your ventures with a resilience-based mentality:

1. [Challenge yourself daily.](#)

Taking on a task where success isn't likely will definitely test your mettle. Doing it every day, on the other hand, can help you develop and strengthen that resilience mentality. After all, repetition begets learning.

Start off easy by creating your own 10-day resilience challenge. Include a good mix of mental and physical activities. My first challenge, for example, consisted of a daily 5-mile run, homemade meals, [waking up an hour early](#) (no snooze, of course), asking for a store discount until I got three to agree, and introducing myself to 10 new people within my company every day (among other activities).

To improve your chances of success, consider enlisting a challenge partner. The two of you don't necessarily need to take on the same tasks, but the reality of having a cohort can help motivate you and keep you accountable throughout the challenge.

2. Monitor your mentality.

Just like you'd track workouts, you should do the same with your mental attitude. Pay attention to when you're at your highest and lowest, and make an effort to repeat the actions that led to the highs—cast out any actions tied to the lows.

Take 10 minutes every day to write down your daily activities, but don't bog yourself down with what you did. Dig deeper and detail how you felt as a result of your choices. For instance: "I started the day with a 30-minute run. The sun coming up over the bean field looked amazing." Or: "I think it's going to be an outside lecture day so we can all enjoy the fall colors. It's hard to believe I get paid to do this."

Noting your attitude in relation to an activity allows for easier reflection on what choices spawned [a positive mental state](#). You can then better arrange your day to maintain a more positive mentality. It also provides you an opportunity to harness any given emotion (even a negative one) to fuel your internal fire for success.

3. Create a positive internal monologue.

[Positive affirmations](#) work—let's get that out of the way. Going through the act of repeating what success looks like to you personally can provide encouragement to continue on your chosen path.

Walk yourself through a situation before it occurs. I do this multiple times for a number of occasions, such as a meeting with my banker. I picture myself wearing a pinstripe suit, a fresh shirt and a striped tie—something I feel powerful in. After shaking hands, I imagine walking my banker into my office and handing him a page that lists the amount of funding we're requesting as well as our current financials.

I think about how I will remind him of our solid business and upward growth trajectory—that, and how his prior funding helped create that success. I'll emphasize our appreciation and our excitement in his continued support. I picture him committing that he'll make it happen, and we end our meeting on positive terms.

You don't need to get into such detail, but you'll want to shift your inner monologue from thinking the worst to imagining the ideal outcome. Even if the outcome is questionable, you will increase your chances of success because your approach will be more confident.

4. Develop a short-term memory.

Failure is inevitable, and it doesn't have to be shameful. When it happens, acknowledge the failure and take the time to reflect on the situation to extract learning and encourage growth. Then, move on. [Dwelling on past failures](#) isn't productive.

There's a great piece of wisdom in [The Optimist Creed](#): "Forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future." Don't believe it? Watch a child for a few minutes. He or she can transition from a low to a high in a matter of seconds, never thinking twice about a setback.

Failure is an F-word. It's incredibly common, but that doesn't mean you should embrace a fail-fast mindset. Adopt a success-driven mindset that emphasizes positive thinking, problem-solving and determination, and you'll increase your odds of success.

Posted in [Success](#) and tagged [failure](#), [mindset](#)

The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience” Eleanor Roosevelt

The makings of a good to great boss

By [Steve](#) • January 29, 2016

This blog post is based on my experience of having 3 great bosses.

1. I was working in London some 10 years ago enjoying my new job as a Director of Learning Disabilities. I liked the organisation and the people I worked with and supported and I liked who I was working for, but as I waited for my train home I felt something was not quite right – what was it? True, I was missing my previous organisation, the buzz and the excitement, but most of all I was missing the person I had been working for over 6 years. She had employed me in a number of jobs, sending me into an area which was often in crisis and I missed the way she stretched my abilities.

As my train arrived I thought.....

- **A great Boss makes you do more and be more – often better than you could have imagined**
- 2. Standing on a windswept hill in the Brecon Beacons, I stood listening to my boss making a speech to over 1000 soldiers. They were part-time soldiers who had temporarily left their full time jobs to take part in an autumn deployment in Wales. He was setting the scene for the coming weeks. It was wet and it was cold, but I could see he had their attention and their enthusiasm. I felt inspired!

As we walked away I thought.....

- **A great Boss captures peoples’ imagination – they paint a picture of what can be**
- 3. He had been my boss twice during my army career both in the early 1980s and early 1990s, and now in my second career I had another opportunity to work with him. In 2009 I had the opportunity to work on a project which involved traffic light signaling for people with disabilities in London. I was discussing the project with one of his engineers, who told me how much he enjoyed working for him and said he was the first boss who had shown any interest in his life and family. This was not a surprise to me, as I knew him well, but I could understand why it may have been a surprise to him.

As I left the office building I thought.....

- **A great Boss cares not just about the work but you as a person.**

I entered the world of work as a 15 year old. Over the last 48 years I have had numerous bosses, especially as in the army they changed on average every 18 months due to postings and, with the

odd exception, they have all been great people to work for and with each one I have taken something from their leadership and management style which I like to think I have moulded into how I lead. For the purpose of this post, however, I have chosen my three favourite bosses to share what I think makes a “Good to Great Boss”.

So I do not lose you, I have included five lessons I took from each one, although it should be noted that I could have included many more!

Boss Number 1

1. **Loyalty.** She gives her loyalty first, which makes you want to do the very best for her and return that loyalty
2. **Entrepreneur.** It is exciting working for someone who is an entrepreneur, and who has one big idea after another. www.dosh.org is one of those big ideas
3. **Experience & Knowledge.** Great bosses know how it works. They have a depth of knowledge of every management function for their organisation, and articulate and demonstrate that knowledge through practice and example
4. **Passionate.** Spend time with her and you know how passionate she is about the people she supports. The best bosses are passionate and great role models for what they do and are very often infectious
5. **You feel excited by what is coming next.** You never quite know what to expect when you receive an email, or see her name come up on your phone, but whatever you are going to be asked to do you know it is going to be fun.

Boss number 2

1. **Inspires.** He was able to (and still does) excite you about projects he wants you to be involved in
2. **Courage.** It doesn't matter how difficult the objective is going to be, he will do it anyway and worry about the 'fear' later
3. **Added Value.** He was awarded the MBE for services to the Former Yugoslavia (which included building a school with his soldiers) and received the Wilkinson Sword of Peace during the peace process in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Infantry Battalion he commanded. It is not just about the day job for him.
4. **Gratitude.** He always shows his appreciation and gratitude to people who have helped and supported him no matter how small your contribution. At the end of an operation he would not go home until he had personally written to everyone who had supported him to thank them.
5. **Fitness.** He was supremely fit, which probably explained his incredible work capacity, and was always able to deliver at a very high standard no matter what time of the day or night it, irrespective of weather conditions

Boss Number 3

1. **Humour.** I spent a deployment in the Arctic Circle with him and, irrespective of the conditions, he never lost his sense of humour (which has not changed) and believed you can achieve anything if you can always see the humour in the situation.

2. **Calm.** When everyone else is panicking or having a 'strop', it is good to be working alongside someone who remains calm
3. **Sense of Perspective.** There have been a number of times when I have talked through a situation or a problem and having someone who is able to put your concern/worry into perspective helps you cope.
4. **Relentless Focus on Goals.** He always asks me what the goal of our organisation and team is, and then determines how I should keep this focus. I see how he applies this to his own work and responsibilities and then try to emulate his example.
5. **A Mentor and Coach.** A mentor is someone who will give you the answers and a coach gets you to come up with your own answers. He recently did this for me when I was struggling with my Business Plan objectives. No matter how busy he was he found the time to meet with me.

And what do these three bosses have in common?

1. **They are memorable.** You never forget them and if you move on you want to keep in touch and do whatever you can for them when they need you.
2. **They are consistent.** When you meet up with them it never crosses your mind that they would be any different from how they usually are – positive!
3. **They have a strong work ethic.** They work harder than you!
4. **Their Values and Beliefs** are there for everyone to see. Values and beliefs are not just words on a paper. They live them every day. You know what they believe in and what they stand for.
5. **They believe in you.** There is a reason why they stretch you or ask you to take on the most difficult task – it is because they believe in you.

This is my check list for a Good to Great Boss. I try to achieve them each and every day.

What is on your checklist?

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boss No1 | Karen Boyce Dawson Director of Operations and Exec Director for the Thera Group |
| Boss No2 | Farren Drury MBE http://www.gomakeityours.com |
| Boss No3 | Alan Bristow Director Road Space Management at Transport for London |

Gratefulness is the experience of the great fullness of life Brother David Steindl-Rast
