

LEADERSHIP and ENGAGEMENT

Covid19 editions

March 2020

(Established 2006)

Welcome to this month's edition.

As I write we are within the third week of lockdown in the UK with the expectation we still have weeks and possibly months ahead of these significant restrictions. So, for the foreseeable future our 'Leadership & Engagement' will be Covid19 themed to help and inspire you.

We lead this issue with two of my favourite thought leaders: Damian Piper 'Are our values serving us?' and Meike Beckford's 'Highlights from an MBA: Tame, wicked and critical problems – A Coronavirus Application'

"When I originally wrote my blog post: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2020/03/24/being-bettinas-dad-this-too-shall-pass/> 'Being Bettina's Dad – This too, shall pass' it was the weekend before the Prime Minister's broadcast. Before the lockdown, we could still go to the beach and Bettina was still working at her Garden Centre and with the animals etc, supported by Personal Assistant/Job Coach. Her week has changed significantly and will do so for the foreseeable future. I therefore thought it would be timely to share an update on my original post. I hope you find Bettina's resonates with you.

There are lots more articles, blog posts, tips, links to presentations and information in this month's edition and I put them together in one publication just for you.

I also live on these social media platforms: (if you would like to connect with me)

Instagram: @thera.leadership - See the latest pictures from 'What Bettina Saw on her daily walk in Colchester' near her home as part of her daily fitness

Twitter: @SteveRaw836 - at 7am 7 days a week I am posting positive and inspiring messages

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/steve-raw-72454721/> I am keeping up with Thera Trust's daily challenges posted on this platform. How are you getting on?

Blog: www.leadershipintheraw.org over 210 blog posts which include my series 'Being Bettina's Dad' and also a selection of guest blogs

Take care and Stay Well

Steve Raw FInstLM, FCMI, GCGI

Head of Employment Strategy & Engagement for the Thera Group www.thera.co.uk

It's not about how good you are,

It's how Good You want to be

Are our values serving us?

A month on from my last article and the Coronavirus has significantly increased its impact in the UK and globally. Government and the World Health Organisation advise we can expect this to continue for some time to come. These are challenging times both personally and professionally. I hope you and your loved ones are as good as you can be in the circumstances.

There's plenty being written and talked about how to manage through this period. So much of what is being talked about applies to our pre-coronavirus lives too. I'm hopeful that when we get through this challenging period we might emerge with some new and better habits. At the very least I really hope we continue to appreciate our own health and the people we are now currently call Key Workers. A group who pre-Coronavirus could be forgiven for thinking we didn't give them recognition they deserve.

Within the material that's been written and talked about I've been interested in the theme around our values. This got touched on one of my regular podcast listens, Feel Better, Live More, hosted by the excellent Dr Rangan Chatterjee. The Podcast talked about some research from Tim Kasser, Professor of Psychology at Knox University. The term Junk Values got used. This really resonated with me.

Junk Values rather like Junk Food, can give a real short-term hit and in many cases make us feel good. Just like the food however the feelings they generate don't last very long and we can find ourselves needing more to satisfy our needs. This can have short and more significantly long-term negative side effects as we get caught in an unhelpful loop.

Considering how our own values either serve or hinder us can take time to meaningfully reflect on. For many of us we have an opportunity during this lockdown period to do this exercise. Sometimes it is knowing how to start. Extending the food analogy, a little further... I started thinking about what could the equivalent of the main food groups (carbs, fats and proteins) be when it comes to considering our values? Here's what I came up with:

1. How we treat ourselves
2. How we treat others
3. How we treat the world.

How about using some time to consider how your values contribute to these three areas? Are they providing the 'personal nourishment' that you need? Or are there some adjustments that could be beneficial to navigate the current and future challenges?

As always, I'd be interested in your thoughts and views. Most importantly at this time, stay safe, stay well and be kind to yourself (and others).

PS. If you are finding you're spending time unhelpfully worrying about the Coronavirus you may find a recent episode of the Effective Challenge Podcast of use. [ECP 026 Getting in Your Own Way](#)

Damian

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Damian Piper

Change coach and consultant

‘With great power comes great responsibility’ Stan Lee

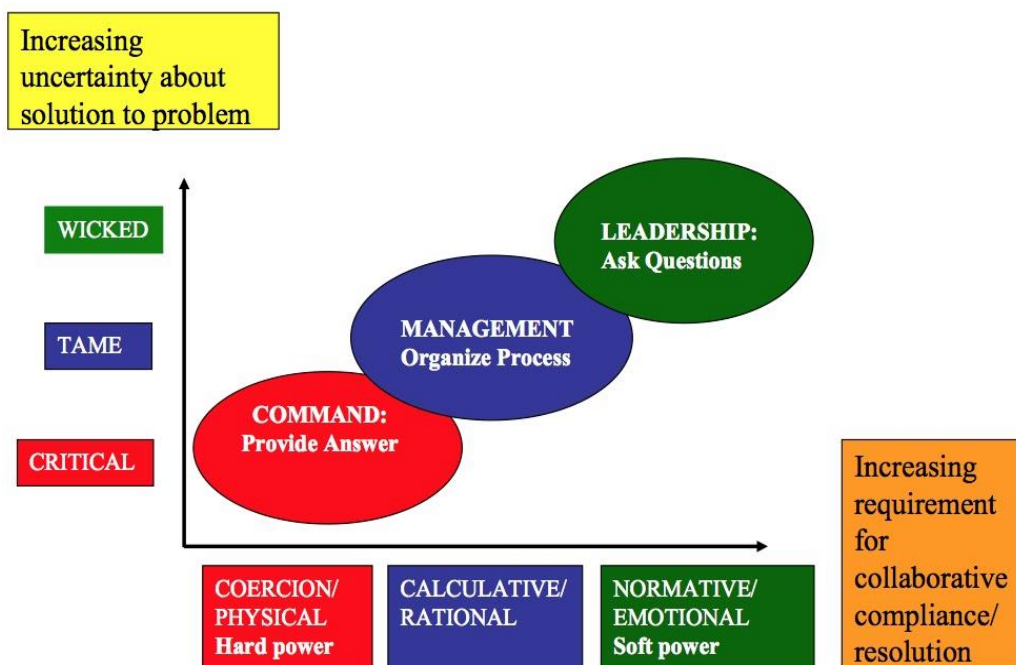
Highlights from an MBA: Tame, wicked and critical problems – A Coronavirus Application

In January I wrote a post about tame, wicked and critical problems. At the time, we had very little idea of what was about to hit us with Coronavirus, so the discussion was quite generic and the examples broad. Fast forward 3 months and the world around us has significantly changed with the global response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. So, rather than introduce a new topic this month, I thought I’d take some time to think about what we can learn from this theory for our current situation.

Tame, wicked¹ ... and critical – a recap

Last time, I introduced these 3 types of problems or situations:

- Tame problems are known and understood, even if they are complicated. They have known processes that require management.
- Wicked problems are hard to define, contested and interrelated with many other issues. They are complex and need a questioning approach through leadership.
- Critical problems are highly time-sensitive crises that need direct action and answers from a ‘commander’.



Source: Keith Grint ²

Tame, wicked and critical for Coronavirus

So where are we currently? The obvious answer is critical. Coronavirus presents a clear threat that needs quick action – new measures were brought in quickly to limit movement, redirect resources and provide the financial and legal backing for these changes. In comparison to the usual long debates from our politicians and extended change management processes in public services, things changed incredibly quickly*. We saw people adopt ‘command’ style leadership in giving instruction, providing answers and (trying to) convey certainty.

We’ve also seen some management style approaches, along the lines of ‘we know what we’re doing here, and we have plans in place which we are able to execute’. We are seeing benefit offices processing new applications, supermarkets managing their supply chains and health and social care professionals implementing infection control procedures. It may not quite be ‘business as usual’ but we are moving in some areas to a mindset of managing operations.

What we perhaps haven’t much engaged with yet is where wicked problems sit within this. Clearly the Coronavirus pandemic touches many wicked problems from global health inequalities to globalised travel; and in the UK from the future of the NHS to a fair taxation and welfare system.

What can we learn?

Firstly, that recognising something as a critical problem and responding in a ‘command’ style can be very useful. It allows us to override many usual barriers to progress, take action quickly and achieve results where needed. It can also provide reassurance that someone is getting a grip of it and knows what to do.

No amount of planning for these scenarios will allow you to always stay in a ‘management’ state. No matter how good your business continuity plan was, I bet you still needed additional meetings to plan a specific response, bring in new measures or put out new guidance. It is however still a useful ‘rehearsal’ and a goal to move towards as time goes on, to provide some consistency.

Most interesting is perhaps how a ‘critical’ problem can help with a ‘wicked’ problem. By forcing fast action in new directions to respond to the current crisis, we have created new approaches, funding streams and partnerships. What previously seemed like an immovable block may have been overcome and what was previously seen as too risky, or against procedure, has suddenly been tested. This will likely give us new knowledge and ideas that we can take back to our day-to-day practice when we do overcome the current crisis. There will likely also be some unforeseen and negative consequences of the actions we have taken, and some new ideas won’t have paid off, but it will have shaken up our thinking, so we won’t be back at square one when it’s all over.

What state are you in (now)?

This will be a very individual answer depending on the industry you are in and your personal circumstances. You may also be in a different mindset for home and work, particularly if you’re now trying to be in ‘command’ of a group of restless children stuck indoors! Can you use these ideas to become more conscious of how you’re approaching different situations and think about how you would like to respond?

Part of your team may be continuing broadly as they were and managing with existing problems, whereas others may feel they’ve had the rug pulled from under them and no longer know what

they're there to do. You may need to adapt your style to recognise not only what the situation needs, but also what different people and teams need from you.

Finally, is there anything you feel you can learn or use from this period that will help when we return to 'normality' (whatever that may be!)? Can you bring some new thinking, or a new connection, to your wicked problem that might point towards a different perspective or way forward? For now, you may just be focused on surviving and many of you will be facing difficult challenges which need all your energy, so you may well not be ready for anything else just yet, but perhaps in a few months you may be able find something valuable from all this upheaval.

Meike

My thanks again to [Lancaster University Management School](#), and the Executive MBA team.

Follow me on @MeikeB88 and @DoshTweets and visit www.dosh.org for more.

¹ Rittel, H. & Webber, M. (1972) 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning', *Policy Sciences*, 4, pp.: 155-169

² Grint K. (2008) 'Wicked Problems and Clumsy Solutions: The Role of Leadership', *Clinical Leader*, 1(2)

*No comment ventured here on the appropriateness of actions, but whatever you think of the response, it certainly wasn't business as usual.

Tips: Keep healthy in the crisis

- Washing your hands is more about the water than the soap. Warm water is best and do use soap, but most importantly, try to get a lot of water over your hands.
- Eat lots of different-coloured fruits and vegetables, ideally with the skins on, for nutrients and fibre. Eat sourdough bread, too, which full of gut-friendly fibre
- Sleep is the "bedrock" of the immune system, because melatonin stimulates new immune cells, so get plenty of it.
- Try to be active and build muscle where possible. Movement throughout the day is essential for the lymphatic system,
- Drink a lot of water, being dehydrated can change the mucus in your respiratory and digestive tracts, which holds antibodies.
- Some studies suggest vitamin D can zinc supplements can reduce the risk of respiratory infection. A cheek spray is great for fast absorption of vitamin D, and food sources of zinc include red meat, shellfish, legumes, seeds and dark chocolate.

Source: The Daily Telegraph/The Guardian read in my 'The Week' magazine

"There are days when solitude is a heady wine that intoxicates you with freedom, others when it is a bitter tonic, and still others when it is a poison that makes you beat your head against the wall." —Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette

BEING BETTINA'S DAD 'THIS TOO, SHALL PASS - THE LOCKDOWN'



Bettina on one of her daily walks near her home. Taking in Lexden Nature Reserve in Colchester

"So happy" Bettina quietly says this as she gives me eye contact from across our dinner table. Nobody can tell Bettina how she feels, she either feels it or she doesn't, so when she says she is so happy it means everything to her family.

"So happy" despite so many restrictions placed on her life now.

When I originally wrote my blog post: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2020/03/24/being-bettinas-dad-this-too-shall-pass/> 'Being Bettina's Dad – This too, shall pass' it was the weekend before the Prime Minister's broadcast. Before the lockdown, we could still go to the beach and Bettina was still working at her Garden Centre and with the animals etc, supported by Personal Assistant/Job Coach. Her week has changed significantly and will do so for the foreseeable future. I therefore thought it would be timely to share an update on my original post:

Last night, after wishing Bettina a good night, I whispered at her bedroom door "Go for a walk tomorrow" and Bettina whispered back "Oh yes, go for a walk good fun".

Our walk together will double as her daily fitness session and, if necessary, shop for 'essential items' for her family. During our walk we will take pictures together and post them on Instagram as part of her 'What Bettina saw on her daily walk' series. We have done this each day, usually early in the morning when there are not many people around. If you would like to see her pictures they are on: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-mH29Ap6dD/> We are both enjoying a heightened appreciation of nature with the reduction in traffic and pollution. I can see Bettina enjoying the bird song that could easily be missed pre-covid19.

Bettina is a 32-year-old woman who copes with a learning disability (autism and epilepsy) and is considered by the government to be in its vulnerable group. Bettina lives at home with her family.

Confidence, security and familiarity are especially important to Bettina during this difficult period. As a family we need to continue to find ways to communicate with Bettina to help

her understand what is happening around her now. Bettina has complex communication issues and is limited with her verbal communication, finding it difficult to decipher what we are saying to her. Bettina does however have a heightened sense of awareness to sounds, noise and body language - gifts she uses to survive and understand her world.

I would like to share with you how we will continue to support Bettina through this difficult period. Some of these tips, I imagine, will resonate with you.

Five things we are doing to maintain a semblance of normality for Bettina:

1. **We limit how much we tune into the news** when Bettina is in our sitting room. I observe Bettina looking at her family when the news reader is talking in a serious and authoritative tone. So, we will quickly switch over to either one of Bettina's programmes or a comedy as 'Friends' or the 'Big Bang Theory'. When we do this, we can see Bettina visibly relax.
2. **Careful with our conversations.** We are never 100% sure how much Bettina understands, and we often notice her "knowing" looks (getting her 'side eye' at the dinner table) and she will hone in to key words and repeat them. Bettina's anxiety levels rise when she detects a different tone in our conversation. This can happen if we discuss Covid19 news, so we must save this for another time when Bettina is doing stuff elsewhere in the home.
3. **Laugh a lot.** Ok, so we do this with or without an emergency! We are blessed that Joyce (the leader of our gang) was a stand-up comedian in her last life. We look for things to laugh at (I am great value for money!). So, in the Raw household there will be much merriment over the coming months – we have already started!
4. **Routine.** I am sure you are aware of the importance of routine for people who cope with autism. With routine, Bettina can predict what is coming next (so there are no surprises). We will keep to our timetable and Bettina's, especially in the mornings and evenings e.g. Bettina and I will sit down and watch YouTube at 6pm every day (work permitting) to check out the latest Disney releases. With routine comes calmness.
5. **Show Gratitude:** We will demonstrate our gratitude (and love) towards each other every day. If as a family, we get through Covid19 healthy and safe there will be many things we will show gratitude for in years to come:
 - That we were together as a family – we feel incredibly grateful that both our daughters still live at home.
 - We had more time to talk and enjoy each other's company
 - Bettina has had so much input from each of us we can visibly see her progress with her communication and contribution to the way our family runs
 - We found new and innovative ways to fill our days and evenings
 - We appreciated our back garden more than ever before.

"We were together. I forget the rest." —Walt Whitman

Five things we will do for Bettina to maintain her Wellness and her Mental Health

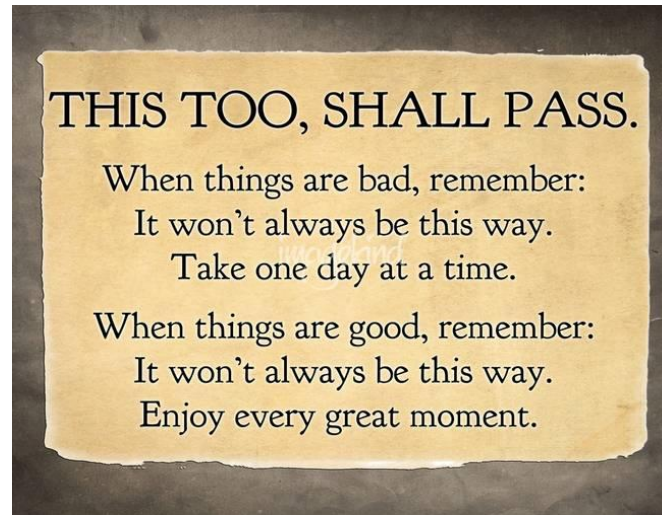
1. **Eat Heathy:** freshly cooked food and eating lots of fruit. Joyce is our 'star baker' I recommend her Instagram account to you, for lots of baking ideas: 'Mamarawskitchen' <https://www.instagram.com/mamarawskitchen/> Even though I run most days I am grateful for 'Blue Harbour' trousers from M&S more than ever!
2. **Work and Education :** As Bettina is unable to access or participate in her usual weekly schedule, B's family will need to rally around her to keep her occupied and fulfilled until the restrictions are lifted. So, her new timetable consists of helping with light chores, completing puzzles, board games, jigsaws, reading, and her 'wordsearch' books which she is passionate about.
3. **Mindfulness:** Spring is here so there are lots of opportunities for Bettina to go out into the back garden and blow 'bubbles' which she loves (our nearest neighbours also find it soothing, hearing Bettina giggle and seeing the bubbles blow into their gardens). Bettina loves being in the moment so we will help her to do that. We also give Bettina space to be on her own. Her privacy and time to think is important to her and which we all respect.
4. **Treats:** Bettina loves chocolate (we all do!). On the return journey of our walk, Bettina and I split a bar of chocolate (which she has chosen).
5. **Get Plenty of Sleep.** Lights out at 10pm – we start early in the Raw household, as we embrace each day together. Our family are all up and busy from 7am and this hasn't changed with the lockdown. We all have stuff to do.

And as a Family here are Five things, we will do to maintain our Discipline. As a small family unit 100s of miles from our wider families, especially during our time with the Army, discipline is something that has also been important to each of us and as a family never more so than now. Discipline sets you free!

This is what we will do:

1. **Keep Fit.** Although swimming is out for us, we can walk and run, and we will do this as often as possible. Finding special places where we can socially distance so we can get our doses of Vitamin D. So far each of us have managed to complete a daily fitness session of some kind. Joyce is a keen gardener which is good for all round fitness. Bettina and I like to watch Joyce gardening, which is good for our mindfulness!
2. **Plan.** We plan our week ahead especially for Bettina – it is her anchor and safety net. (Bettina has a calendar and a programme on her bedroom notice board). Since the new restrictions Joyce has posted two new notices: her new programme and what facilities are still open to her (and what has closed). It is important to Bettina she knows what is coming next so there are no surprises.
3. **Be Organised.** Don't leave things to the last minute. We all work to Joyce's 5-minute call. Joyce calls 5 minutes and we all jump up and do our tasks before we leave our house.

4. **Take Pride.** Just because we are living through a national emergency this will not mean we will drop our standards in both in our appearance and our behaviours. 'Look Smart – Feel Smart' are watch words.
5. **We will keep a Sense of Perspective.** We will not lose sight that this too shall pass:



As a parent and a husband, I truly believe I will be judged both by my family and by myself on how I responded to this event and how I supported my family every day. So, for Bettina and our family I will ensure I am in my growth zone:



Because what is Courage without Fear? From:

<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2018/12/10/being-bettinas-dad-what-is-courage-without-fear/>

“Bettina teaches her family and friends so much about life and what is courage without fear is a good example for me. I personally do not worry about feeling fear but what worries me is how I will perform and respond to fear on each occasion (will I let people down?). Bettina can often be frightened, but this does not stop her from living her courageous life.”

Go Bettina!



Bettina and her Dad arriving home from their daily walk

Source: Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org

“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.” —Maya Angelou

How to work from home.

- Keep your schedule as similar to how it is in the office as possible. Take the same amount of time to get ready, keep your start time, and check in with your colleagues
- Get dressed – don’t stay in your pyjamas, as appealing as it might seem.
- Start your day by going for a walk – or even a run – to replicate the experience of a commute
- If you can, identify a regular spot in your home in which you can work.
- Put meals, breaks and exercise breaks into your schedule as you would a meeting
- Do as much as you can to make contact with people both from work and elsewhere, so you feel less isolated. Don’t just rely on mail: use chat tools and make phone and video calls. There’s a range of software out there to make communication easier
- Try to have a “Transition” to make the end of the working day. Clock out with your colleagues and find a place you can put your work materials and laptop away.

Source: The New York Times (read in my ‘The Week’)

7 Tips for Dealing with Your Coronavirus Anxiety

By [Elizabeth Lombardo](#) | March 20, 2020

Are you feeling anxious? Stressed about the current events? I want to empower you to take steps to control your fears, because having anxiety about the coronavirus isn't going to help you.

Stress can boost your immune system in small bursts. However, when stress is prolonged, like what our world is currently facing, the immune system's increased effectiveness slows down and eventually drops in the opposite direction. Like you, your immune system gets exhausted and cannot optimally function when it is exposed to long-term stress. And, given that your immune system is responsible for fighting off pathogens and keeping your body healthy, a stressed-out immune system can result in greater susceptibility to illness.

That is the bad news.

The good news, though, (and there is good news) is that regardless of what is happening in the world, you can control your stress and anxiety. It may not be easy or automatic, but it is possible.

As a clinical psychologist and coach who has worked with clients for over two decades to optimize their mindset (even during difficult times), I have created a system that I call Neuro-Regenerative Training. In essence, it is a way to rewire your brain, so it works for, and not against, you.

The majority of stress and anxiety we experience is not caused by external factors, but rather by our interpretation of external factors. The world has not run out of toilet paper at the time of writing this article, for example, and yet people are panicking that the shelves are empty. And despite the current statistics about coronavirus, anxiety about contracting a severe case is rampant.

This is NOT to say we should just go about our lives as we used to. Things are changing rapidly, and we need to adapt. It is so important to be safe and follow the health guidelines for protecting yourself and others.

Being overwhelmed with anxiety, however, can interfere with not only your health but also your ability to function. An anxious brain, for example, has a decreased ability to concentrate, focus, problem solve and be resilient, which can lead to more issues in your personal and professional life.

So, what can you do? Here are seven tips to help you optimally cope with coronavirus anxiety:

1. Be proactive on lowering your stress levels.

Stress increases anxiety. Think of stress as being on a continuum from 0 (no stress at all) to 10 (the most stressed you've ever been). It is a subjective scale, but for me, I call anything at a seven or higher "the Red Zone." And when we are in the Red Zone, we tend to think in more negative ways. That perpetuates anxiety, which increases negative thoughts, and it becomes a downward spiral.

The key is not to wait until you are in the Red Zone, but rather to address your stress before you get there. People tend to show signs of higher levels of stress that are unique to them. Maybe you feel a headache coming on, or you start grinding your teeth, or bouncing your leg up and down.

Whatever it is, become aware of your "tells." Then, whenever you notice your stress level rise, do something healthy and helpful to reduce that stress. Jump on your bed, go for a walk, put on a favourite tune and dance around, watch a funny video to make you laugh—whatever makes you feel lighter.

2. Remember, you are not helpless.

Have you ever moved and had to wait for the cable guy to show up to set up services? They may say they will be there between 8:00 and noon, but when you still haven't heard from them and it's 2:00? That makes you feel, well, stressed out.

This is a type of learned helplessness, a term in psychology that basically translates to, "There is nothing I can do and that feels horrible." Learned helplessness can cause anxiety and even lead to depression.

You may feel like there is nothing you can do during this unprecedented time. And yet, it is vital to remember that there are always two strategies to dealing with any problem. One is problem-focused, where you change the problematic nature of what is going on. While you might not be able to personally cure COVID-19, you can do your part by engaging in social distancing and hand washing.

The other is a strategy called emotion-focused coping. That entails changing your emotional reaction to the event. Staying out of the Red Zone, focusing on ways to help others, practicing gratitude... all of these are ways to feel better emotionally. While you might not be able to change everything that is going on, you can change your reaction to it. And that can help reduce your anxiety.

3. Act from a place of logic rather than emotion.

Worry can perpetuate anxiety. The thought of "what if" something bad happens, like, "What if I run out of toilet paper?" or "What if this lasts for months and months?" can perpetuate and augment anxiety. When we think in "what if" terms, we tend to emotionally react as if what we fear might happen is inevitable.

I equate this to putting your winter coat on in the summer. Imagine that it's summertime and 100 degrees outside. Now, let's say you see someone in a long winter coat with a scarf and hat. Wouldn't you think something was a little strange with that person? Probably. And what if that person then told you that they were just getting ready for winter, which would arrive in four months? That still makes no sense, right? Sweating for four months until it's cold enough to have to wear that coat causes unnecessary discomfort. And yet that's what we do when we suffer from "what if" syndrome. We emotionally react as if something is already happening, even if it isn't.

That is different, though, than having that winter coat in the closet for when you need it. By that, I mean it is important to consider worst-case scenarios and take steps to either prevent them or establish systems to implement if they take place. But emotionally reacting as if those fears are imminent is like wearing that winter coat when it's hot out.

4. Change your negative "what if" to a positive "what if."

Try posing a different line of questioning to yourself. You can change your "what if" from catastrophic thinking to more exciting prospects in a simple flip of the script. For example, "What if something positive comes from this?" or "What if my family becomes closer in quarantine?" Those are questions for which you actually want the answers to be true.

5. Unfollow the panic!

Unfollow those negative Nells and Nelsons on social media. Turn off the news. Stay away from websites or outlets that leave you feeling more anxious. Mute toxic texts. Hit "delete" on comments or "friends" who bring you down. You are allowed to prioritize your mental health!

6. Differentiate between possibility and probability.

There is a difference between possibility and probability, but the spread of information and misinformation can cloud that. While the statistics are changing by the hour, it is not likely that you will get the virus and develop serious complications. Yes, continue to take precautions to stop the likelihood of getting or spreading the virus (stay home, especially if you're sick; wash your hands; cover your mouth when you cough; clean frequently touched surfaces daily). Just don't confuse the potential to be ill with the likelihood that it will happen.

7. Take advantage of this time.

How many times have you thought, I wish I had more time to... spend with my family, exercise, meditate, clean...? Guess what? Your wish has been granted! Try to embrace this change of pace and do those things you've been wanting to do. When you execute tasks, you have been putting off or enjoy some time focused on yourself, that will help reduce your anxiety.

While you cannot control everything that is going on in the world, you can take control of your anxiety. Implement these tips to reduce your distress so you can feel and function better.

And remember, life has its ups and downs. That is just the way life is. When you are in a "down" and feeling anxious about it, keep in mind that things will get better. This is a tough time. Give yourself grace, take care of your mental health and realize an "up" will come.

I wish it need not have happened in my time' said Frodo. 'So, do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with time that is given us. 'The Fellowship of The Ring J.R.R. Tolkien #Covid_19

3 Free Gifts to Help Your Emotional Well Being

Time to read: 25 seconds

Dear Steve

This is an unprecedented time for us all, with much focus quite rightly on our physical wellbeing and especially helping our most at-risk family, friends and neighbours.

Lockdown is also a huge drain on our mental, emotional and spiritual well-being – at a time when we must stay strong for ourselves and for each other.

To help, we are giving away free MP3 Downloads of 3 of our most tried and tested products, to:

- [Boost your Self-Esteem](#)
- [Help you relax](#)

- [Ensure you sleep better](#)

These can only be downloaded from a PC and will then be in an MP3 Format to save and copy and distribute as you wish – please do **not** listen to these when driving or doing anything that needs your full attention.

Note – Sleep is the same as Relaxation without the waking up bit – you will wake up after you have had a good sleep though!

If you have difficulty downloading please email hello@nakedleader.com

There is no charge, no catch and please do forward and send these to anyone and everyone you want.

With love and best wishes from everyone at Naked Leader

David

5 tips for maintaining your workplace culture remotely

By Thea Watson, Marketing Director of Hays UK & I and UK Board member

What is workplace culture?

“You don’t need everyone physically together to create a strong culture. The best cultures derive from actions people actually take.”

Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, founders of Basecamp and authors of New York Times bestseller ‘ReWork’.

“Culture” is hard to define, as it means something slightly different for every company. However, it is widely accepted that culture in a team isn’t about individual performances, personalities or attitudes, it is about how a team works together as a cohesive unit. Cultivating a positive company culture is challenging, even without the added complication of having remote workers. But with the current climate accelerating the use of remote working, it is now important that companies ensure a positive culture thrives outside of the office environment.

Maintaining a sense of unity

Managing from afar and working with virtual teams requires a tailored approach, focusing on delivering an understanding of the aligned objectives between the employer and employee and how they can be achieved, as well as how connected teams feel.

Remote working can sometimes create obstacles to communication, collaboration, relationship building and accessibility within your team, however, with the right strategy and communication techniques you can still maintain a unified and remote workforce.

It might help, when working out how to maintain your workplace culture remotely, to consider discussing the following:

The communication channels you plan to use (i.e. Skype, Slack, Microsoft Teams)

The collaborative tools you think work best (i.e. Google Docs)

How you and your team communicate your working hours and availability to each other

Ways of communicating and deciding who should be in the loop on which discussions (for example ensuring key team members i.e. designers, copy writers, web developers etc aren't left out of processes)

So, what are the key elements to nail if you want to maintain your workplace culture remotely?

1. Clear and transparent communication

When managing remote workers, effective and open communication is crucial. It is important that you establish frequent communication via the right digital tools, taking advantage of all channels at your disposal to arm employees with the resources needed to continue to perform effectively and encourage new mediums for collaboration.

When the team cannot be together in person, therefore, the next best thing is to connect via video. It could simply entail a weekly call, where the first five minutes is allotted to management to update team members about how the company is doing, any changes and then allow time for questions. You can then use the rest of the conference call as an opportunity to align priorities, keep everyone informed and share news. By scheduling regular conferences, you can effectively lead a real-time conversation with a clear, unified objective. Send an agenda prior to the call and encourage everyone to add to it.

As these calls are now your equivalent to team meetings you need to stress the importance of attending, making sure that everyone receives the update and in turn everyone can be heard. This will ensure that every remote worker is being kept in the loop and part of their team.

2. Building a rapport

Remote working removes the opportunity for those impromptu interactions that can often build a personal rapport and foster working relationships between employees. This could be sharing ideas about work or simply catching up about their weekend, generally just spending quality time together, which is essential for team bonding. This is particularly important if you have new team members who may not have yet had the opportunity to fully integrate into your organisation yet.

Therefore, as well as maintaining transparency, it is important to build in 'team time' on conference calls to provide the opportunity to encourage small talk and build relationships. This time could be used to recognise accomplishments and have 'unofficial' chatter, creating a consistent positive part of each week. On the occasion when conference calls aren't possible or necessary, technology now provides alternatives to sustain regular communication between employees, and you could look at setting up a group chat – for example using Yammer or Slack.

3. Knowledge sharing

Many of your team members possess specialist knowledge that it's easy to share in the office, but more difficult to do remotely. Perhaps get one of your employees to create a PDF, webinar or podcast on their specialist subject? This could be a unique opportunity to encourage your team to

appreciate one another's value and really understand the strength of their contribution. Ensure that this is followed up with recognition and public praise of team members.

4. Engaging with colleagues

It may be easy in person to read people's body language and play off their reactions, but on the phone, this is more difficult. Where possible, arrange video calls so at least team members are able to see each other, making it easier to collaborate and resolve issues.

Whilst reading each other's body language can still be tricky on camera, this can be mitigated by paying closer attention to tone of voice and identifying changes in pace or pitch. Unifying teams at this point is crucial, and it's important to make employees understand that despite the distance they are still part of a unified team working towards the same company goals. Encourage inclusive language such as 'we' and 'our' when referencing counterparts, a subtle technique that fosters cohesion and unity and also help new team members feel welcomed and included.

5. Recognising an opportunity

Whilst remote work can add an additional layer of complexity, when done well it has been argued that having flexibility around remote working is a strengthening force. Where people are trusted and empowered to work in the interests of the organisation, then it's possible to get to a place where culture influences mindset. When this happens, where people are located shouldn't matter, and it's this that can still create a sense of collaboration in-tune with the organisational culture.

"If you see someone without a smile, give 'em yours." Dolly Parton
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This month's Ted.com picks:

A couple of inspiring and thought-provoking presentations I found for you to this month and which I personally recommend

How to be your best self in times of crisis – Susan David

https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_how_to_be_your_best_self_in_times_of_crisis

"Life's beauty is inseparable from its fragility," says psychologist Susan David. In a special virtual conversation, she shares wisdom on how to build resilience, courage and joy in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Responding to listeners' questions from across the globe, she offers ways to talk to your children about their emotions, keep focus during the crisis and help those working on the front lines. (This virtual conversation is part of the TED Connects series, hosted by head of TED Chris Anderson and current affairs curator Whitney Pennington Rodgers. Recorded March 23, 2020)

The gift and power of emotional courage – Susan David

https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_the_gift_and_power_of_emotional_courage

Psychologist Susan David shares how the way we deal with our emotions shapes everything that matters: our actions, careers, relationships, health and happiness. In this deeply moving, humorous and potentially life-changing talk, she challenges a culture that prizes positivity over emotional truth and discusses the powerful strategies of emotional agility. A talk to share.

“We’re all under the same sky and walk the same earth; we’re alive together during the same moment.” —Maxine Hong Kingston