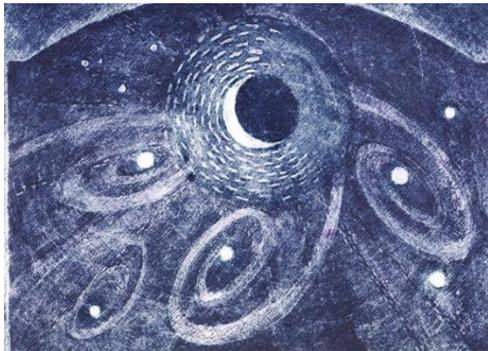


Deep Leadership



Things have a way of resolving themselves in the most unexpected ways. It probably should be a rule of life that this is how it will occur. Back in times of the banking crisis, we had really run out of options in terms of keeping our business flourishing. We'd done all the right things. We'd reduced costs. We'd innovated new approaches. We'd targeted new audiences. But the rescue that eventually arrived came from completely left field, from something that would not have been on our radar at all, and was something that would completely revolutionize our business.

The lesson I took from that was sometimes what's really, really important is awareness, responsibility and adaptability. In fact, probably most of all, awareness of possibility, the potential in us and the potential in the situation. It is a personal belief of mine that every situation has potential within it - no matter how dire that situation might be. It takes Deep Leadership to respond to this.

In my new book, *How to Survive and Thrive in an Impossible World*, I am somewhat scathing about the role of goals, scathing and wary. Goals can blinker you. Goals depend upon a much higher level of predictability than the situation might allow. Goal focus can kill you.

You might think such a view is somewhat anarchic. Without goals, don't you have chaos? But I'm not saying no goals, I'm not even saying goals are not very important, but I am saying that goals need to be set in the context of being quite disposable in situations of high uncertainty.

But first of all, what is it about uncertainty that is troubling in terms of goal-setting? Uncertainty is the reverse mirror of predictability. The greater the uncertainty, the less the predictability, the less you can establish a step-by-step path through the turbulence. Uncertainty means you are, first of all, unsure of what's going to happen, secondly, you're unsure of the impact that will have upon us, if any, and thirdly, you might be unsure of our capability to respond to it.

In fact, this third level or third aspect to uncertainty is the one in which leadership, leadership of self, leadership of others, really matters because this is the one you can impact. If you can make yourself more adaptable, more capable, more responsive, more aware, then you will be in a better position.

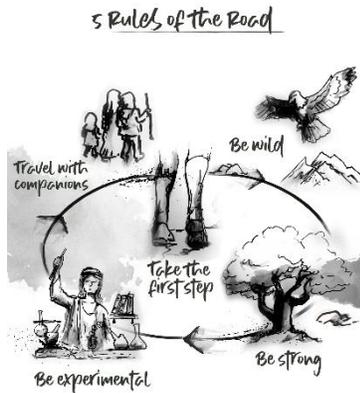
If you can enable others to be more adaptable, more capable, more responsive then you will thrive.

This impacts on how you see leadership itself. There are lots of people who see leadership is about providing the right answer, providing the clarity, providing the decision-making. But others, maybe more aligned to this current reality, see leadership as about **getting** the right answer, getting the right answer through encouraging collaboration, multi-disciplinary solution-seeking, a deeper understanding of the issues involved. This is what I call **deep leadership**. This is a leadership that seeks to mobilize the business and gain leadership **from others**. It is a leadership that would make sense of Napoleon, who saw that every soldier potentially had the field marshal's baton in his knapsack. (And that wasn't just a bit of posturing, more than half of his officers came from the ranks).

What deep leadership needs is powerfully shared clarity of purpose. Purpose is different to goals. Purpose is a desired state, which reflects our values, our results, our way of being in the world as an organization or as an individual. It is our reference point for our decision-making. It is the reference

point in which you realize that particular goals no longer suffice and new goals need creating and following.

So, deep leadership is about enabling others to contribute fully to emerging potential of the situation as it evolves. Which leads us to the idea of empowerment. Empowerment is often seen as something that is nice to have in the good times, but when the pressure is on, someone needs to take control, kick ass and get things done, which is like steering against a skid in a car, you will crash.



This is where the five rules really help, really guide you to think about what matters in both yourself and the people that you lead. Clear on purpose, you need people who have engaged all their strengths. The talents they have that are almost assuredly broader than the ones of which you might be aware

You need people who are wild, wild enough to see what is really going on! These are people connected to reality. They are not kept away from the challenge but exposed to it and to potential around them. There can be no hiding on the shadows for anyone.

You need to encourage people to be experimental, to try things out, to innovate. Leaders need to nurture a restlessness in others about questioning the conventional and the given.

You need people to work well together, to travel with companions.

Companions, as I wrote, are those that give you the tough love, tell you what is working and what is not working, willing to challenge you, to

sacrifice for you, to subsume their ego in a common purpose and challenge you when you don't do the same.

Last of all, you need to enable people to take the steps, the first step to deal with things, the thing they might feel anxious about. That means allowing for mistakes. It also means killing off unwanted projects, nice-to-have requests, pointless meetings.

If you apply these five rules as a test to a team or an individual, then you will have a sense of your capacity to respond to the challenges you face. You will know you will have a brave, decisive, resourceful, committed capacity to thrive.

10/12/20