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FIT-FOR-PURPOSE LEADERSHIP#3

15 inspiring business leaders
share their highest-value thinking
on best-practice leadership



Fit-For-Purpose Leadership #3

LeadershipGigs

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Dedication

Dedicated to business leaders everywhere
- and to you - someone who has decided to
positively change *your* world.

How to grow a Leader.

“When you grow a lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don’t blame the lettuce. You look at the reasons it is not doing well.” - Thich Nhat Hanh

Leadership is not a job - it is a way of being. Leadership is a mindset and a belief system, an outlook and approach to life. Leadership is not assigned and delivered through rank or position because there is a fundamental difference between being the leader and leadership. The world is in crisis because there are too few leaders that are practicing leadership.

Leadership is not a new trend or 21st century philosophy: it is the very basis of our life journey and always has been. As we are called upon to lead our own lives, we in turn inspire others to lead theirs.

The Myth of the Natural Born Leader

You may meet some people who are “natural born leaders”. Leading appears innate, instinctive and natural, yet there is no genetic coding for leadership. Natural born leaders simply mastered leadership in their early formative lives, being nurtured and grown in an environment where their values, beliefs and strengths were supported. Leadership is so ingrained into their psyche and sense of who they are that they know no other way to be, as natural

as breathing and thinking.

Yet leaders were *not* born this way, nor were they trained - they were grown. Their parents and carers created an environment where they developed into the leaders of their own lives, and so it follows that those leaders will in turn create environments to grow more leaders. The leadership ripple effect begins.

Leadership crisis

The Leadership Talent shortage is real. It was first identified over a decade ago and wave of leadership development consultants seized the opportunity to develop leaders. There are over 47 million pieces of content online to help you understand the skills and strengths of a leader vs a manager, so with all that knowledge you would think we would have a handle on leadership development. Yet in that decade we have seen very little traction and so the need for to develop leaders is becoming critical and we need to do it differently.

Doing it differently means developing and growing, rather than training and teaching. It means creating the right environment to grow talents and brilliance. It means you stepping into conscious leadership to develop unconscious "natural born" leaders of the future.

Where parenting and formal education has failed to develop a generation of leaders then it falls to organisations to grow their talent capability and there is no time to waste. The time is now.

The following guidance is equally applicable if you are a parent of one or responsible for a global organisation. The

principles for growing leaders remain the same.

Nurture risk and failure.

In the good old days our children played in the streets, came home when the sun set, climbed trees, and led idyllic Enid Blyton childhoods, or at least that's how we like to remember it. The truth may not be so picture perfect, but our parks *were* full of children playing, taking risks, falling and then picking themselves back up again and as they played without parental supervision they learned their own limitations and strengths. Parents set the boundaries and then set their children free, and when they fail, they forgive and show love and compassion.

Growing leaders means that you need to create an environment where it is safe to take risks and learn through failure, after all isn't that the only real way we learn life's valuable lessons. Your job is to set challenges and goals that allow your people to stretch and grow, learn and experiment, without fear of blame, shame or retribution. You set your people free with parameters wide enough to play but narrow enough to manage risk. It is your duty to keep yourself in check and let others fail safely, learn, apply and then celebrate their successes.

Quit being the hero

We know you have probably solved this problem before. We know you know how to fix it. We know you could probably do it quicker yourself, that's why you are in a senior position after all. Your credentials are not in doubt, so just

quit being the hero.

It feels good to rescue, fix or come up with the right answer doesn't it? That's just the rush dopamine rewarding you for your brilliance, but this is only feeding your ego and when you are developing leaders, your ego is the last thing you need to invite into the environment. When your people come to you with a problem or need to talk through an approach, help them to find the solutions and simply ask "What ideas have you got?"

They learn to find solutions before they come to see you and so before you jump in to giving your wisdom, hold back and try curiosity.

- Ask questions to understand their logic.
- Get curious about approaches they have mulled over.
- Ask them what they think they should do.
- Listen to understand rather than listening to respond.
- Try brainstorming solutions, staying open rather than seeking closure.
- Respond positively to ideas saying "Yes and" rather than "No but"
- Nurture best thinking in others

You may be surprised at just how capable your people are, and how quickly they build confidence in their own creativity and problem-solving capability.

Inclusion

How can you expect others to understand the consequences of their actions or buy into new ideas if they

are not included in the process? If you really want to grow leaders that can operate tactically and strategically then they need to be involved in the big picture discussions. You don't need to explain every aspect of the business to everyone and often some information is business sensitive, but you do need to give your people enough rationale to understand the context and to begin making informed decisions. If your people can't make informed decisions, then question what information you are holding back to prevent their best work.

Treat people small and they will remain small. Give people room to grow and they will expand.

A spoonful of honesty

The self-esteem and wellbeing industry has helped organisations to understand the impact that stress, pressure, criticism and blame can have on an individuals' performance. Most people now understand that positive reinforcement and praise engages and supports peoples' engagement and motivation but too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. A thank you sure does go along way but meaningless praise becomes, well, meaningless and the fear if criticism is leading to the holding back of critical feedback. As parents we want to build self-esteem in our children, but you also need to help them become resilient so be honest with your children about their strengths, weaknesses and approach. A spoonful of honesty is empowering and enables personal growth in responsibility.

Praise without critical feedback will not create self-aware, objective leaders who embrace continual growth and development and take personal responsibility for their

actions. Your role in growing leaders is to give praise when it is due and appropriate but to also give actionable real-time feedback that enables others do learn and grow.

Without the balance either way you will not grow future leaders.

Be vulnerable

Leader vulnerability is the ability to access real, authentic power that creates followership and is the opposite to autocratic, power over, control and command style leadership where people follow through fear. Unfortunately, few of us have seen the power of vulnerability-based leadership in action so it still feels a bit scary, but it is the most powerful form of leadership.

When leaders are transparent and at ease sharing their own weaknesses, mistakes, passions and purpose then people trust them. It doesn't mean they will be adored but it means that they are respected.

Transparency stops others wasting time and energy trying to second guess you or figure out how you want them to be or act. When you can say, "I got it wrong" or "I don't know the answer!", it empowers others to do the same. Transparency means being courageous, and don't we all want a leader with courage? No-more cover ups, blame, second guessing or pretending, to create a business based on openness, honesty and accountability you need to lead it.

Trust

The last but most important foundation to grow leaders is trust. When your people trust you and each other, beautiful

things happen. I bet you have been in a meeting where you can feel the tense under current. People are shuffling their papers or scrolling through their phones to break the tension and the fear is in the air and it is tangible. As the meeting gets underway you experience passive aggressive behaviours such as people giving others wry smiles or rolling eyes when someone speaks. You may see a colleague come under fire for some reason or another and sink into the chair or you may catch yourself shutting others down or interrupting them, so you can be heard. It is being played out in meeting rooms right now and is so normal we don't even question it.

Nobody is doing their best thinking or best work in that environment because they are in defend and protect mode – they are surviving.

Now imagine the opposite. You walk in the room and everyone is relaxed but eager. There is an expectation that everyone is on the same team and ready to solve the big issues. Each member of the team leans in to offer ideas, solutions and willingly puts their hand up to help or take a lead. The leader speaks last and acts as a facilitator rather than a director for they know that where there is trust there is no fear. You can witness people literally grow in front of you as they test their assumptions, solve big problems, ask for help and seek guidance and it feels good.

Just as a parent bursts with pride when their child takes their first step, masters riding a bike or stands on stage and overcomes their fear of public speaking, leaders feel that same joy as their people step into their brilliance. You wouldn't hold your children back, so why would you hold your people back?

True, authentic, honest, transparent and conscious

leadership - grounded in trust, is how you grow leaders. Now it is down to you to choose to be part of the leadership gap solution or be part of the problem.

About Lucy Barkas

Lucy Barkas is a Leadership and Team Development Consultant who specialises in working with Leaders of 100-250 employees who want to achieve high performance through their people and culture.



With over 20 years' experience with market leading businesses around the world, Lucy successfully helps leaders to understand the biggest blocks and barriers to success and together, execute a strategy to transform their businesses.

Lucy founded *Whatwhenwhyhow Ltd* - *3WH* for short - to start a positive leadership ripple effect that impacts their people work, lives, communities and ultimately the world.

www.3wh.uk.com

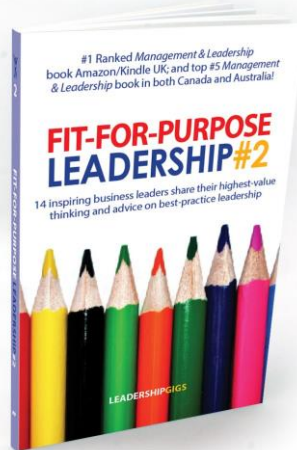
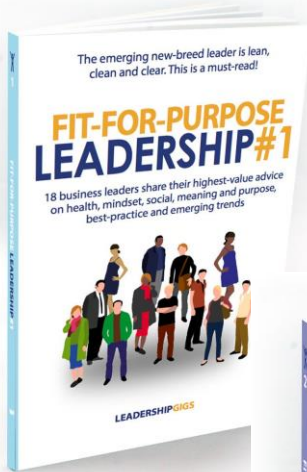
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Did you miss Fit-For-Purpose Leadership books #1 and #2?

Relax! Both our best-selling Fit-For-Purpose #1 and #2 are available on *Amazon* as both paperback and *Kindle*.

A collection of inspired leaders worldwide gives their highest-value, current best thinking on business leadership.



Join Leadership Gigs

Would you like to be a part of *Leadership Gigs*?
Leadership Gigs is a conversation for leaders worldwide.
Here's how it works.

Think of it like a private members club – you can dip in and dip out as you wish – there is no pressure to show up.

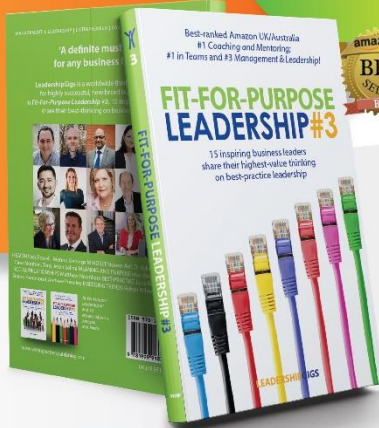
Currently it is free to join. A good way to start to get involved is by requesting to join our *Facebook* group:

<http://bit.ly/LeadershipGigsFB>

Leadership Gigs is a support network so if you need high-end help/support then ask the group (you'll be nicely surprised). Our aim for this is to build a thriving community of leaders who are helping each other's journey into the next decade.

Lastly, thank you for purchasing *Fit-For-Purpose Leadership #3*.
I would love your feedback.

Watch out for *Fit-For-Purpose Leadership #4*, coming soon!



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