



CUTTINGS...

Number 109 February 2014

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Welcome to Cuttings 109 and another year. I wish you well for 2014.

Since my last edition in December, Nelson Mandela - one of the great leaders of our time - has died. In this issue I summarise a number of the management press tributes to him.

Also I have come across a couple of articles that have significance - firstly, how to deal with a boss with zero Emotional Intelligence draws on the work of Judith Glaser and her new book which I reviewed in Cuttings 107. Secondly, an article in The Observer newspaper which attacks the math behind the 3:1 positivity ratio.

Geof Cox

In this edition

Leadership lessons from Nelson Mandela's life summarises some of the management press tributes to the South African leader.

How to deal with a boss with zero Emotional Intelligence contains some tips and ideas from Judith Glaser

The Frederickson/Losada 'Magic Ratio' under question highlights flaws in the math of the 3:1 positivity ratio.

Public Course programme courses in Europe, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur for 2014.

And a collection of **Snippets** to provoke your thinking and reflecting.

Leadership lessons from Nelson Mandela's life

Since my last edition of Cuttings, Nelson Mandela died. Predictably, as he was one of the iconic political leaders of recent history, a plethora of articles on his legacy have appeared. In this lead article I summarise some of the key points from these and other observations on his leadership. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu put it: he taught his country and its people to "walk tall"

Some lessons on leadership from Nelson Mandela's life:

Be firm. Walk tall: he was sentenced to life imprisonment, solitary confinement and hard labour, but he still preached reconciliation. One of his quotations: "Real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all."

Believe in yourself: Even when others criticised him and accused him of treason, he kept fighting for peace and equality, he kept his resolve. He said at Robben Island, Cape Town, on February 11, 1994: "I had no specific belief except that our cause was just, was very strong and it was winning more and more support."

Speak the truth: He always insisted on speaking the truth, even if

Snippets

A bumper collection of thought provokers and quotations...

"The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

Nelson Mandela

No one has ever become poor by giving."

Anne Frank

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."

Lao Tzu

"We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility."

Rabindranath Tagore

"The world only exists in your eyes - your conception of it. You can make it as big or as small as you want to."

F. Scott Fitzgerald

it angered his own supporters. During the bloody fights between ANC and the Inkatha movement, he refused to lay the blame on the opposition alone: "There are members of the ANC who are killing our people. We must face the truth. Our people are just as involved as other organisations that are committing violence... We cannot climb to freedom on the corpses of innocent people."

Lead by example: Mandela's sense of his own dignity was conspicuous. He walked the talk.

It takes more than a single heroic leader to change the trajectory of an institution. Even with one of the world's most courageous and charismatic leaders at the helm, it takes more than a single generation to move the majority of a population out of poverty. For all of his great successes, what Nelson Mandela failed to do was to develop leaders around him who were as big morally, or even bigger than he was.

Leadership is behavioural, not positional. Nelson Mandela is a classic case study of how one can lead without formal authority. He exerted as much influence - if not more - during the 27 years he was imprisoned and in the decade and a half following his retirement from politics, than he did in his five-year presidency. The capacity to integrate, motivate, and mobilise others to bring a common aspiration to life is what leadership is all about, not holding positions of formal authority.

Collaboration beats retaliation. In the face of conflict, many leaders develop an almost instinctive default response – they choose to either collaborate or retaliate. No doubt, retaliating against one's opponents can be a gratifying primal reaction, but in the long term it is a short-sighted, losing strategy. Alienating potential partners hampers collective progress. Retaliation deepens divides; collaboration heals them. Retaliation perpetuates ignorance; collaboration promotes learning and progress. The instinct to collaborate is a hallmark of effective 21st century leadership; it is an instinct with which Mandela operated.

Never give up. Mandela is widely quoted as saying that "it always seems impossible until it's done." His perseverance in the face of inhumane persecution shows us that the seemingly impossible will remain impossible if men and women of purpose fail to summon the courage to do what's right.

Make others feel more important than you. A lesson that emerged from many commentators and visitors he received over his life - he refused to be put on a pedestal. This is also a personal memory - I met him once on a flight from Brussels to Edinburgh after his release from prison but before he was elected president. He refused to be isolated by his security people and aides on the flight and insisted on speaking personally to everyone and anyone.

USEFUL LINKS

Read the full text of the original articles:

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."
Mark Twain

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving."
Oliver Wendell Holmes

"The greater the difficulty, the more the glory in surmounting it."
Epicurus

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."
Lao Tzu

"Once you choose hope, anything's possible."
Christopher Reeve

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."
Mahatma Gandhi

"The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitudes."
Viktor Frankl

"If you don't build your dream, someone else will hire you to help them build theirs."
Dhirubhai Ambani

"Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions."
HH Dalai Lama

"Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognise how good things really are."
Marianne Williamson

"Happiness is found in doing, not merely possessing."
Napoleon Hill

"To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom."
Bertrand Russell

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."
Mother Teresa

"The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps—we must step up the stairs."
Vance Havner

"A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."

Leadership Lessons of Nelson Mandela - Business Week [click here](#)
Nelson Mandela lessons in coach leadership - Businessday [click here](#)
5 Leadership Lessons from Nelson Mandela - Your Story [click here](#)
Leadership Lessons from Nelson Mandela - Oxford Leadership Academy [click here](#)

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Anonymous

"Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished."

Nelson Mandel

How to deal with a boss with zero Emotional Intelligence

This article by Fast Company contributor Drake Baer caught my eye - it is a common complaint of managers that I encounter in my workshops that their boss or senior colleagues don't exhibit anything close to emotional intelligence. According to Baer, the good news is, the situation is more hopeful than you might think. The bad news is, you might have to have a difficult conversation.

What is EI? Research suggests that someone solid in EI will have four basic skill sets:

- They can accurately read their own emotions: they can perceive the emotions with their and others experiences
- They can use emotion to facilitate thinking: if they need quiet to focus, they put themselves in a quiet place
- They understand how emotions progress: they know how irritation leads to frustration, frustration leads to rage
- They can regulate their emotions: they don't suppress their emotions, but neither do they become overwhelmed

What EI is not is being virtuous: it's more about being able to understand your and others' interior lives and how your actions and environments affect them. To work well with people with low EI, then, you need to accommodate that misapprehension. People who are low in EI are lacking the ability to take in, understand, or process a really critical part of the way that we communicate in the world. If they can't read your emotions, they won't be getting all the info you're naturally sending them. They don't have the skill set to recognise emotions, so you have to clarify for them.

What to do...

You can take advantage of behavioural mimicry, the phenomenon where the person you're talking with takes on your tone and body language. Just like handling an angry customer - don't tell them to calm down, just maintain a calm demeanour and they will start to calm down, too.

Sarcasm doesn't work: someone with low Ei won't pick up on the sarcasm, so you have to spell it out for them.

The toughest but most effective option is to give feedback, whether

The Frederickson/Losada 'Magic Ratio' under question

According to the formula applied to the psychology by Barbara Frederickson and Marcial Losada in her book *Positivity*, there is a specific ratio of 3 positive emotions to 1 negative emotions in order to flourish in life. If your ratio was less than that number you were languishing.

The mathematical model that came up with this outcome comes from a system of differential equations known as the Lorenz equations, after Edward Lorenz, a pioneer of chaos theory. The Lorenz equation Losada used was from fluid dynamics.

Now, further investigations and research by Nick Brown, a postgraduate student in applied positive psychology at the University of East London has shown that the numbers don't work. He went back over Losada's equations and he noticed that if you used the numbers Fredrickson and Losada had then you could arrive at the appropriate figures. But the equation doesn't contain any data. It's completely self-referential. The equation only works on its own terms.

With the support of two other academics, Brown, had his paper making the case against the maths accepted by American Psychologist (the original publishers of the Frederickson/Losada study) for publication last July.

in real time or as a follow-up. But to do this, you'll need to sharpen your conversation skills.

Judith Glaser, author of *Conversational Intelligence* (reviewed in Cuttings 107), says that low emotional intelligence isn't only seen in people blowing their tops off at work or making fun of their employees. It's also in not being able to handle conflict. "People with low EI are often dogmatic," Glaser says. "They don't get that (emotional) feedback, so a dynamic is created."

So what do you do? You need to give emotionally unintelligent people a fuller sense of the data they are missing. If you can't name the dynamic as it comes up, Glaser says, then immediately after the meeting, book an appointment and follow this framework for sensitive conversations:

1. Prime the conversation: When you make the appointment, say that you want to have a conversation that will be valuable to your working relationship
2. Share the story: Begin the meeting by retelling what happened for each of you
3. Listen in: Attune to the emotions underneath the story
4. Unpack the meaning: Tell the impact that the meeting had on you
5. Move forward: Help each other figure out what you could do differently
6. Reach agreements: Sort out what can be done by everybody to address the situation
7. Then end on a high note: share why it's such a good thing you two had a would-have-been awkward conversation

By taking on the vulnerability of these conversations, Glaser says, you can help people to see that information that's before them.

USEFUL LINKS

Click here to read the original article in Fast Company

Click here to go to Judith Glaser's website

New Directions and **Learning Consortium** provide training in dealing with these sort of difficult conversations through the **Getting Results Without Authority** and **Focus on Influence** programmes **Click here** for more information

Since that publication, Frederickson has effectively accepted that Losada's maths was wrong, and has removed the references from her book that relate to the statistically accurate ratio of 2.9013. But she holds that the empirical evidence in support of her case for a positivity ratio was and is strong.

The academic debate looks as though it will go on and on. For my own part, I tend to support Frederickson's position on the empirical data. the field of positive psychology has a body of academic and applied research that has been amassed around the world. The math in this particular case seems to have been clearly flawed, but this does not invalidate the whole of the field. I see much evidence of personal and organisational wellbeing being enhanced and increased when there is a stronger feeling of positivity present. When people get positive feedback, they grow and develop. When organisations focus on what they do well, they flourish.

So, don't give up on appreciation and positivity in the workplace. Just be careful about trying to apply complex chaos theory equations to human behaviour.

USEFUL LINKS

Click here to read the original article in The Observer Sunday 19 January 2014

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