**Shoulders Back - People and Organisational Development**

For the past few weeks your team members have had their eyes on you and you’ve been able to stand tall, and show off your leadership qualities. It’s time to take stock and see how your team members are doing, and how you are doing. Give yourself a little time to reflect - it’s been a hectic few weeks, so as we move into the Easter Break, award yourself with some thinking time and a chocolate egg. The following are some of the things that may be useful to keep in mind as we forge ahead.

Calm Leadership:

At your core, as always are the 4C’s, I mentioned in the article “Stand Tall” (care, courage, count and capable). Keeping these in mind as you move forward will help you through the next stage and will demonstrate to your team members that you are taking good care of them. By remaining calm, yet focused on the future, will help ground your team. It is a good time, right now, to paint a compelling and vivid picture for your team of its purpose, and how each person can contribute. Involve people, ask them what they can do to help achieve their team’s purpose. Keep positive, and look to the team for solutions. Find a message that helps you, such as, “all will be well” and it will. Being calm and optimistic will bring hope to your team members.

Massive Misfires:

Yep - it won’t all have gone swimmingly. It is not supposed to, in a crisis, so take heart in the fact that you have done your very best. Continue to acknowledge issues that arise, discuss openly with your team, and answer any questions they have. Throughout this time there will be lots of your leadership misfires. Revel in these and think “personal development”! Explain this to your team, more than once, and they will understand that we are all in a new situation, learning how to move through it. Because of this you will need to be responsive, amending, fine tuning, and reconfiguring what you do and how you do it. Lean in to your team and ask them to help you. A positive approach is to focus on the strengths that individuals show - who in your team is shining their light? Are there new leaders emerging? Leaders most certainly won’t only be in senior management roles, so make sure you have your eyes open. Support these courageous individuals or “local leaders”. They are all around us. They can help make our lives easier and deserve to be seen.

A Deluge of Information:

There is so much information flooding our brains, and this can create anxiety and overload, and it is coming in from a variety of sources. Try to keep it in one place, and perhaps divide it up into formal and informal. Check that the information you are sharing is reliable and trusted. Appraise how you give out information, who you give it to, and how often. Is it clear and simple to understand? There are many power and equality issues here too, that you certainly don’t need me to go on about, but just take care with information. Team members may like a regular briefing that brings a structure to their week, and that they know is reliable.

For you, as leader, keep gathering data, and analyse it to see how successful your interactions have been in helping your team, for example with the 4C’s. Ask your team for feedback (it’s a gift!), highlight areas, and tweak. (Not twerk - we can do that once the crisis is over!). Turn also to trusted colleagues and ask for their advice. At home, consider muting the news, minimizing it or turning it off all together. This may contribute to your wellbeing.

Yapping On:

It’s good to talk so keep doing it. Tell the truth and be transparent - you know you can’t fool your team. But take time to plan what you want to tell them, and consider the words that you want to use carefully. Address and respond to all questions. Involve your team members in developing ideas, exploring solutions, and making decisions.

The Fluffy Easter Bunny of Leadership:

You can never have enough of leadership - it brings challenges, joy and energy, and here is your chance to gamble in the daffodils with the sun shining, and enjoy this leadership venture. Keep it simple and you won’t go wrong: encourage kindness and be kind - we are all learning together. Be kind to yourself. Look after yourself, so you can be present for your team. Look after your team so well, and they will strive to do their very best. People remember how you made them feel. Remember what you stand for - your values and drivers and the 4C’s. Right now, “good enough” works really well. Don’t delay making decisions and doing - this time calls for pace, and action, followed by reflection and adjustments. Don’t worry about getting it wrong, we are all learning, and showing vulnerability is a true sign of an amazing leader. Be brave yourself and hand over the leadership to people in your team, share it and they will astound you with their own leadership gifts.

Stand Tall, Shoulders Back. You’re doing a great job.

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