

GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

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August 2021

AT THE PEAK OF REALTY

Meet Dounia Fadi, The
Real Estate Guru

ALSO INSIDE

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Lessons Football
Can Teach Us
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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to bring you the August Issue of Global Leaders Today. In this edition, we have grouped some inspiring personalities that have overcome challenges with sheer perseverance, hard work and raw talent to rise to the top. They have had their stories shared on the global stage to help inspire and motivate others to keep working towards their goals and striving to be the best leader they can be while empowering others.

The Cover Story talks about a leading Real Estate Mogul who, despite all odds, has emerged to dominate the realty market in UAE. She is known to empower others and promote women across the broader real estate community and beyond with other inspiring personalities, including Tara Twinkler, who set up a charitable trust for the welfare of orphans and Agnelorajesh Athaide, whose story is truly an inspiration.

We have dug deep to source and find content that can truly inspire you to be the best you can be with various thought-provoking articles and trending news to give you an edge over the others.

We hope we can continue adding value to your lives.

Warm Regards,

Sherlyn Gomes

Editor at Global Leaders Today

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Global Leaders Today

GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

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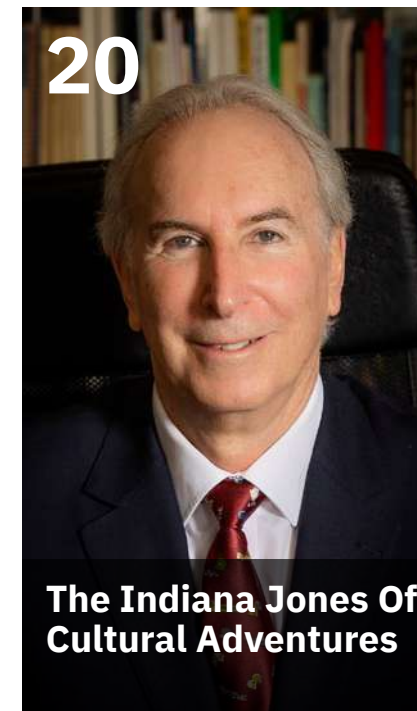


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COVER STORY

At The Peak Of Realty In The Middle East

Dounia Fadi is one of the top Real Estate Leaders in the UAE. Respected by her colleagues for her problem-solving and leadership skills, Fadi possesses the singular ability to empower agents and create a collaborative and cooperative team. After 16 years in the Dubai real estate marketplace and as the Chief Operating Officer of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Gulf Properties, she leads a diverse team of hand-picked real estate professionals representing buyers and sellers locally and internationally. Fadi differentiates herself from the competition by thinking outside of the box, building a dedicated and loyal team and most importantly, putting the needs of her clients first. Featured by Forbes as a business leader and recently awarded Property Finder Woman Entrepreneur Of The Year 2020, Fadi is known for her ability to empower people and to promote women not just within her organization, but rather across the wider real estate community and beyond. She is also very passionate about sharing her knowledge and experience on both local and global platforms.

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

Growing up in humble surroundings in Casablanca, Morocco and hailing from a highly educated and a hard working family, Fadi realized the importance of education, perseverance, and determination at a young age. Being inspired by the woman she dreamt of becoming, Fadi knew that she would find new horizons for herself and rise to the top.

In school, she was highly ambitious and focused on her studies with a keen determination to succeed in life. She recalled fondly, "I was very competitive when I was younger. I always wanted to do better. From standing first in class to becoming the President of the school, I was always seeking leadership positions even in my childhood."

Fadi often visited Dubai during her vacations and was always captivated by the location. Upon completing her high school education, she decided to relocate to Dubai; her decision was supported by the boom in the real estate sector that was increasing the country's economic value at the time. Fadi pursued her education alongside her career by attending her regular classes and working as a Property Consultant in 2005.

Fadi pleasantly recollected the first property she sold; she says, "During my first month, I sold a property in the Springs. We had a walk-in client, whilst everyone in my office had gone out for

"I would give everyone a hundred percent and I'll be the last one to look after myself. It brings me great pleasure to see my career growing, in addition to seeing that my family; my husband and my kids are happy and doing well."





lunch. Having a basic understanding of the Dubai real estate market, I recalled hearing my colleagues discussing a property that we had listed in the Springs for sale. I went on to service the client and conduct a visit of the villa at Emirates Living along with the client. Shortly after that, I was notified that the client liked the property and thus, I had made my first sale.”

Her first win motivated her to do better; she started growing and learning more every day. In just a short period, Fadi made great strides in her career and sold a considerable number of properties. She says, “I have had many people approach me for potential jobs, however I was very focused. My primary goal was to learn and gather as much experience as I could and so, I kept learning, advancing, closing more deals and getting better at what I do.”

Fadi was soon approached by a colleague in the industry to start a real estate company in Dubai. With the significant rise of people shifting to Dubai, buying properties and growing their wealth through investments; the opportunity seemed like an exciting proposition to Fadi, and in 2006, she co-founded and head the real estate company for over a decade making it one of the top homegrown business in the real estate industry, crowned by multiple awards.

Around the time the financial crisis took place, Fadi took time off to have her children. She prides herself on being a good mother and businesswoman and always strives to give equal attention to both aspects of her life. Fadi, who is currently expecting her third child, added, “I would give everyone a hundred percent and I’ll be the last one to look after myself. It brings me great pleasure to see my career growing, in addition to seeing that my family; my husband and my kids are happy and doing well.”

Fadi went on to start her own real estate company in August 2016, MD Properties. After contributing to the positive business growth and utilizing her experience of the market, she had successfully positioned the company to become a well respected GCC based brokerage house with local and global reach.. Fadi said, “2016 was a very challenging year for the industry. Everyone thought I was

silly, but I chose that route, and it paid off three years later.” Those three years were demanding, especially since the Dubai market is cyclic and constantly evolving. Changes occur every other day, which makes it a very competitive market. Fadi worked round the clock to provide value to all her customers and succeeded. She continued three years later, “We were approached by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Gulf Properties and we merged our companies,” that’s when she knew all her efforts had paid off.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Gulf Properties contacted Fadi in June 2019, when they first opened in Dubai. She said, “I was very happy to learn that Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices had decided to start operations in Dubai. Shortly after the announcement, to my surprise, I realized that I had been contacted by the CEO of their Dubai office to explore merging both companies.” The company went on to perform exceedingly well in UAE and the network kept expanding globally.

By 2020, coronavirus took over the world, with lockdowns in almost every country. Fadi soon rose to action to protect the interests of her clients and employees; she said, “The first thing we did at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Gulf properties was to ensure the safety of our employees and our clients. Being a woman, devoted mother and wife, it was my first instinct to protect the interests of all our stakeholders. We also helped our employees maintain a positive mindset, as many people in Dubai choose to relocate and often leave their families back home. It was imperative for us to take care of the mental health of our employees in addition to our clients.”

In March 2020, Dounia led the ‘Demystifying Dubai’ seminar in Atlanta showcasing the investment opportunities in Dubai, “There are things that people believe about the Middle East that are not true, and I wanted to break those stereotypes,” she explained. At the end of the seminar, Fadi was recognized and honored with a resolution by The Georgia House of Representatives Matt Dubnik and Matt Dollar, Republicans from Gainesville and Marietta, respectively for facilitating the bilateral trade efforts between Dubai and Georgia.

Further talking about the real estate



Fadi at The Georgia House of Representatives, March 2020

sector in Dubai, she added, “the real estate sector wasn’t very badly hit due to the brilliant efforts of the Dubai Government who immediately swung into action and introduced various economic stimuli and visa reforms that welcomed everyone from around the world to work remotely from Dubai and led to the eventual opening of the market.”

She praised the efforts of the US team from Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, who was constantly in touch with them from the beginning, making sure that they were okay and had the essential virtual tools they needed.

Talking about business, Fadi said, “As soon as the lockdown was lifted, we have seen an increase in demand for bigger spaces as customer behaviors have been drastically impacted by the pandemic. Customers earlier looking for apartments

in the city, have now shifted to focus towards having bigger spaces as home is now also your office, your gym and your personal study as well.” This shift has proven to be a good start for the real estate sector, with Dubai becoming an ideal location for expats to relocate and live in the safest environment there is during these testing times.

In conclusion, Fadi says, “I am very grateful for all my achievements during the past 16 years, especially because of my humble beginnings. I now look forward to adding more value to society and helping others. For me, it goes beyond that, as a mother, I also must be a good role model for my kids. They are watching me grow my career and become someone in society and add value. And that’s really the message I want to pass to them. So that they too can grow up to add value and benefit the society as a whole.”



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The Digital Transformation Expert

Fausto Turco is a Master in Digital Transformation and the CEO of Si-Net. He also organizes Masterclasses on Personal Leadership & Organizational Culture at WOBI. Turco has 33 years of experience as a System Integrator dedicated to Professional Studies and has led about 500 projects. Today he devotes himself almost entirely to the Digital transformation of companies, working both with the owners and above all with the collaborators: constantly arguing that the transformation must start from bringing the 'resource' to the centre of innovation.

Written by Kyle Goldberg

Turco was born in the countryside, in a small town in the province of Milan. As a child, he learnt a great deal from his father, Turco recalled, "he used to say: respect the work of others, and work will bring you respect." These words were ingrained in his mind, and ever since, he has always respected every profession and strived to provide value to them.

After completing his education with a post-diploma in computer science in 1986, Turco landed his first job as a programmer intern in COBOL and gw-basic. A year after starting the internship, Turco knew that the IT industry was capable of much more and wanted to create something of his own that would revolutionize the sector.

He asked his father for a loan to buy a personal computer, an Olivetti M24 (which in 1986 cost about \$ 9,000). His father sacrificed his savings and, with utmost trust, handed him the money; since that moment, Turco spent his days writing programs for friends and doing minor customizations of the invoice modules determined to succeed.

In 1990, he founded his Company, Consoft, with a programmer: it provided management software assistance for SMEs and accountants. With his prior

experience, in 1992, Turco met an accountant, his now-wife, with whom he founded Si-Net in 1990. They mainly catered to accountants at that time and helped them accelerate their digital transformation by keeping up with current trends.

He added, "Over the years we have understood that professional firms and accountants wanted a single system integrator, both as an application partner and as the technological partner of infrastructure. We began to grow a business unit linked to the Microsoft world and in 2003 we became Microsoft Gold Partner (and we still are today)."

The Company's vision has now evolved to serve companies beyond just accountants and enables their digital transformation to create thriving virtual ecosystems. In order to achieve this, they assist people by simplifying their mundane tasks with technological solutions that create value for their work and that of their customers.

One of their success stories recently includes organizing the first Digital Wine Tasting in the world, which changed the world of tastings. The first digital tasting took place in the presence of journalists, industry experts and board of Microsoft Italia thanks to a connection between the headquarters of Ciacci Piccolomini

D'Aragona, a customer based in Montalcino (in Tuscany), and the beautiful Microsoft House in Milan. This incredible first has been reported by numerous prestigious Italian and international press. The event also established Si-net as a technological partner in the Italian Agrifood sector, followed by wine and food tastings of Italian excellence such as the Alba White Truffle Fair and Grana Padano.

Turco's inherent ability to continuously improve his skills and upskill all his employees has allowed him to secure the award as the best third partner in the modern workplace and digital world. He was also awarded the Bronze Award in the Digital Transformation Champ Award category for Collaboration & Smart Working at the Microsoft Italia Partner Awards 2020. Si-Net was also given the title of 'Model of Digital Transformation of Business Models in Europe' during a worldwide digital showcase at the #MicrosoftInspire 2021 Global Event to add to their long list of victories.

In conclusion, Fausto shares his secret to success; he says, "Appreciate every little improvement. And most importantly, be curious, be driven by passion, be flexible and change course when need be," this will lead you on the path of success coupled with hard work and persistence.

NEWS

LEGO Unveils Their First Brick Prototype Created Using Recycled Plastic



LEGO recently announced they now have a prototype brick made from recycled plastic that lives up to company standards for the iconic building toy. The new prototype uses PET plastic from discarded bottles, yet it meets all the company's strict quality and safety requirements.

A team of more than 150 scientists and engineers are working to find sustainable solutions for LEGO products. Over the past three years, they've tested over 250 variations of PET materials and hundreds of other formulations. The result is a brick that meets several play requirements—including clutch power.

"We are super excited about this breakthrough," says the Vice President of Environmental Responsibility at LEGO, Tim Brooks. "The biggest challenge on our sustainability journey is rethinking and innovating new materials that are as durable, strong and high quality as our existing bricks—and fit with LEGO elements made over the past 60 years."

Seoul Is Building A System Using AI To Prevent Suicide Attempts On Bridge

Programmers at the Seoul Institute of Technology are creating a system using artificial intelligence to recognize body movements and other cues that can help identify whether someone is thinking of ending their own life. If the system believes that the person is at risk, it will immediately alert local rescue teams in the area.

Suicide is a major problem in South Korea, and the rates in the country are higher than in other well-developed countries. Furthermore, it can be challenging for even trained surveillance teams to determine whether a person is simply pensive or enjoying the view from one of Seoul's 27 bridges.



"We believe the new CCTV will enable our crews to detect the cases a bit faster and help us head to a call more promptly," Kim Hyeong-gil, who is in charge of the Yeouido Water Rescue Brigade.

World's First Underwater Vegetable Garden Reopens

The Ocean Reef Group launched the project called Nemo's Garden to experiment with food supply diversity as a plan to combat the adverse effects of climate change. The six air-filled greenhouses suffered significant storm damage in October 2019 and had been on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the restoration of the greenhouses, the garden was fully operational on June 6th, including their livestream where one can watch the plants grow. The biospheres, which sit eight meters under the surface off the coast of Noli in Liguria, use solar energy for their electrical needs and evaporate seawater condenses on the glass of the ceiling, which in turn waters the plants. A diver swims under and up into the air pocket of the pod to harvest the ripe produce.

The conditions create an intense flavour in the vegetables and also allow the



plants' environment to be completely controlled. For now, Nemo's Garden is essentially a research lab, but if the idea were expanded, it's expected to be able to reinforce food security for the peninsula and the world.

Virgin Galactic Makes Plans To Sell \$500m Of Shares After Space Success



Virgin Galactic has said that it may sell up to \$500m of shares after completing a successful space trip on Sunday, July 11th. The company said it plans to use the cash raised to develop its spaceship fleet and infrastructure in a filing. On Sunday, July 11th, Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Galactic's Founder, reached the edge of space on one of the planes it has been developing for the past 17 years.

He called the trip the 'experience of a lifetime' after returning to Earth just over an hour after leaving the ground. The trip also made the entrepreneur the first of the new space tourism pioneers to try out their shuttles, beating Amazon's Jeff Bezos and SpaceX's Elon Musk.

Virgin Galactic shares rose 8% before markets opened in the US on Monday, July 12th. But they had decreased 17% by the end of the day after the sale of its shares was announced. Sir Richard and his Virgin Group currently hold a 24% stake in the company. According to the Wall Street Journal Reports, some 600 individuals have already paid deposits for tickets that will cost them up to \$250,000 - including Elon Musk, Founder of SpaceX and Tesla.

Ramon Ang's San Miguel Drops Coal-Based Power Projects And Ramps Up Solar Investments

Billionaire Ramon Ang controls San Miguel and is ramping up its investments in solar farms and other renewable energy options as it drops coal projects from its expansion plans to help the Philippines reduce its carbon footprint.

The Philippines heavily rely on fossil fuels, with almost 58.2 gigawatts hours of electricity produced in 2020 coming from coal power plants, government data revealed. That's more than half of the total electricity production last year in the country. The data also showed that just 21% of the country's electricity came from renewable energy sources.

"Our sustainability journey has reached a significant milestone," Ang, president of San Miguel, said in a Facebook post



on Saturday, July 10th. "Recently, we took the big step of dropping new coal projects from our expansion plans. Instead, we are ramping up our renewable power capacities. This has not been easy as our country still depends much on reliable and affordable traditional power sources."

The Biggest Food Company In The World Is Set To Launch Cultured Meats



Nestle SA is currently planning to enter the cultured-meat market in a move that could see the world's most enormous food company help deliver the nascent technology faster to the mass market.

According to anonymous resources, the Swiss giant has been working on alternative meat products that would blend cultivated meat with plant-based ingredients. Israeli cell-based startup Future Meat Technologies Ltd. will develop the meat, the resource said.

Mark Schneider, Nestle's Chief Executive Officer is pressing ahead with an alternative protein strategy as environmental and health concerns drive more consumers to opt-out of conventional animal products. After a relatively late decision to enter the market for plant-based products, the early move would help Nestle gain a foothold in an industry that may reach 35% of the \$1.8-trillion meat market by 2040, according to analysts at Kearney, a consultancy.

Italy Fast-Tracked Its Decision To Ban Large Cruise Ships In The Centre Of Venice



Italy announced on Tuesday, July 13, that large cruise ships would be banned from sailing into the centre of Venice from August 1; after years of warnings, they risk causing irreparable damage to the lagoon city. The decision was confirmed at a meeting of Prime Minister Mario Draghi's cabinet. It came just days before UN's cultural organisation UNESCO meeting, which proposed adding Venice to its list of endangered heritage sites.

The move will see big ships diverted to the city's industrial port of Marghera. However, this is only a temporary solution, with ministers calling for ideas on a new permanent terminal. Campaigners have been calling for cruise ships to be banned from sailing past the iconic St Mark's Square for years. They say the giant floating hotels cause large waves that undermine the city's foundations and harm the fragile ecosystem of its lagoon. The debate was fueled by the return of cruises last month after the coronavirus pandemic when the throngs of tourists that generally fill the streets of Venice stayed away.

"The decree adopted today represents an important step for the protection of the Venetian lagoon system," Draghi said in a statement. He added that there would be money to mitigate the impact on employment.

Philippines' First-Ever Gold Medalist Wins A House And \$660,000

Olympian weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz won the first-ever gold medal for the Philippines at the Tokyo Games on Monday, breaking the country's 97-year drought. Diaz, a four-time Olympian, emerged victorious in the women's 55-kilogram weightlifting competition after an overall lift of 224 kilograms – an Olympic record.

Diaz will take 33 million pesos (\$660,000) in cash prizes from the government and several businessmen and a house with the win. The Philippine Sports Commission guarantees a ten million-peso incentive for every Olympic gold. "The entire Filipino nation is proud of you," President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Harry Roque said.

Diaz spent seven months away from her family after being stuck due to COVID-19 restrictions while training



in Malaysia. "I miss my mom and her food," she said in an interview ahead of the Olympics. "But this is what I want; this is what I love to do."

World's Richest Man, Jeff Bezos, Completes Voyage To Space On His Blue Origin Rocket

Founder of Amazon.com Inc., Jeff Bezos and three others landed safely in Blue Origin's first flight to space with passengers aboard, an important milestone in the company's effort to make space tourism viable.

The company's capsule touched down in West Texas at about 8:22 a.m. local time Tuesday, July 20th, almost 10 minutes after it launched on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket. The crew experienced a few moments of weightlessness as the spaceship soared past the Karman line at an altitude of about 62 miles (100 km) above the Earth. The capsule then parachuted back.

The mission caps a landmark month for space-tourism ventures, followed by U.K. billionaire Richard Branson who plans to make a trip to space on a particular plane made by Virgin Galactic Holdings Inc., a rival to Blue Origin. Both companies are



set to expand operations to entice super-wealthy customers to pay big money for a unique travel experience.

First Hijab-Wearing Basketball Referee Makes Olympic History



Sara Gamal is set to make history in Olympics by becoming the first hijab-wearing Muslim woman to referee basketball. Even the form of basketball she's refereeing is itself making a debut in Tokyo this July.

3x3 basketball is considered the world's most-played urban team sport, which has grown out of the game played worldwide in parks and recreation areas, known as Playground Ball, Streetball or Blacktop. It is estimated that more than 430,000 players worldwide and 182 countries play 3x3.

Sara will also be the first African and Arab woman to officiate 3x3 basketball at the Olympics. She says young women referees in her home country often write to her, saying that they thought "they had no chance of being in big tournaments or to travel all over the world. I tell them you can do better than me. You can achieve all your goals anywhere you want. You have the power to do it." Sara said, "It's a big honour that they can think about their future as referees and see that if they work hard they will achieve their dreams."

That is what she wants the young Muslim girls watching her worldwide to take from her success, as they see her courtside in Tokyo.

Ben & Jerry's To Stop Sales In Occupied Palestinian Territories

Ben & Jerry's ice cream has announced that it will no longer sell its ice cream in the occupied Palestinian territories, saying the sales are 'inconsistent with our values.' Announced on Monday, July 19th, it was one of the highest-profile rebukes by a well-known brand of Israel's settlements regarded as illegal under international law. In a statement posted on Ben & Jerry's website, the Vermont-based ice-cream maker said it recognises "the concerns shared with us by our fans and trusted partners."



"We have a longstanding partnership with our licensee, who manufactures Ben & Jerry's ice-cream in Israel and distributes it in the region," the statement said. "We have been working to change this, and so we have informed our licensee that we will not renew the licence agreement when it expires at the end of next year."

Aida Touma-Sliman, an Israeli lawmaker with the Joint List of Arab parties, shared on Twitter that Ben & Jerry's decision was 'appropriate and moral'. She added that the "occupied territories are not part of Israel" and that the move is a crucial step to help pressure the Israeli government to end the occupation.

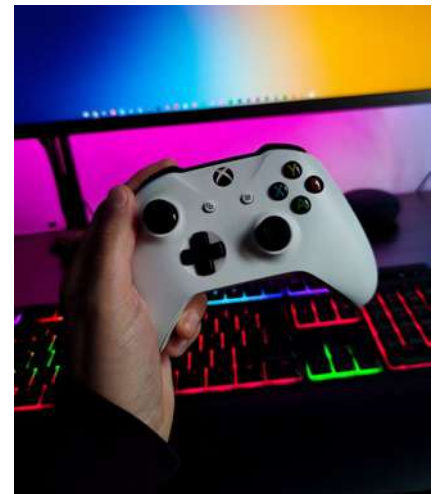
Netflix Plans To Stream Video Games In Push Beyond Films, TV

Netflix Inc. is marking its first big move beyond films and TV shows. The company plans to expand into video games and has hired a former Electronic Arts Inc. and Facebook Inc. executive to lead the effort.

Netflix shares gained as much as 3.3% to \$566 in late trading after Bloomberg reported the news. The stock had been up 1.3% this year.

Mike Verdu will join Netflix as Vice President of game development, reporting to Chief Operating Officer Greg Peters, the company said on Wednesday July 14th. Verdu was previously Facebook's Vice President in developing games and other content for Oculus virtual-reality headsets.

According to a familiar person, the idea is to offer video games on Netflix's streaming platform within the following year. The games will appear alongside current fare as a new programming



genre — similar to what Netflix did with documentaries or stand-up specials. The company doesn't currently plan to charge extra for the content, said the person who asked not to be identified because the deliberations are private.

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities



Agnelorajesh Athaide is an Author, Social Entrepreneur, Educationist and Business Mentor who believes in learning, earning, and returning. He is the Chairman of St. Angelos Global Group of Companies. He is a First-Generation Entrepreneur and works globally in the sectors of technology and education, concept-based real estate development, hospitality, food and restaurants, architectural solutions and e-commerce.

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

“The quantum of your success depends on the quantum of people who believe in you and support you. It’s all about people and I am grateful to have a supportive family.”

Agnelorajesh Athaide was born in an economically challenged household; he says, “I am grateful for my childhood. It transformed me into the person I am today because I decided to change the situation and use it to my advantage.” His father was a Maharashtrian Roman Catholic, while his mother was from Tamil Nadu. They had an intercaste marriage and were both on their own since they got married. They lived on rentals while his father worked for a multinational company as an accounts clerk, and his mother gave tuitions to make ends meet.

An incident in his childhood significantly shaped the person he is today. His mother had a 180sqft house allotted to them by the Housing Board in 1971. However, they shifted to that house only in 1982. The rent of the house was INR 9 per month, and since they had recently moved in, it had not been paid from 1971 to 1982. To pay the outstanding rent, his mother had to sell her two gold bangles and mangalsutra, an auspicious chain that the groom puts around the bride’s neck on the wedding day.

This incident took place before young Athaide and brought tears to his eyes. The situation compelled the young boy to mature in a day. His mother saw his pain and said, “Rajesh in life, either a situation will control you or you will control the situation. Always opt to control the situation.”

Athaide added, “That was a game-changer in my life. After that, there was no looking back. I cultivated a habit of controlling every situation and converting every adversity into an opportunity.”

He recalled, “My parents are my biggest blessings. They supported me with an unlimited belief that I would rise to great heights. My mother has always been my driving force. She was a fearless lady who instilled confidence in all of us. I look up to her for the way she led her life, for us. Her confidence and her control over fear of loss were commendable. I’m grateful that all of this rubbed off onto me.”

After the incident, Athaide developed a growth mindset that he says is an essential tool to success. He started working towards his goal of attaining

financial freedom. He did an array of jobs, starting from working at a bindi factory at the young age of thirteen to working as an office assistant in a pharmaceutical company while simultaneously attending college.

During his final year of college, he bought a computer and started doing data processing jobs at home. He began teaching computer classes with a clear vision, ultimately transforming it into a profitable company, St. Angelos Computer Education, that has now successfully trained more than 4.5 lakh students over the course of 25 years.

Athaide says, “I am extremely proud of the work St. Angelos Computer Education has done for lakhs of students. We brought computer education within the reach of the common man and empowered him to grow financially and leverage global opportunities. It gave wings to the middle class and the lower middle class segments and brought tremendous growth potential to the future of the students.”

With an impeccable knack for business, after his first victory, he ventured into Real Estate in 2005, followed by restaurants in 2009 and hospitality in 2012. A year later, Athaide expanded his Real Estate Development Project across multiple cities of India, with their sales team set up in Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia, the USA, amongst others.

Talking about his passion, he says, “While developing Real Estate Projects, I ensured that all the basic amenities were provided. In my childhood home, the road outside was higher than the flooring in my house, which caused great difficulty during the monsoons with water gushing into our house. To avoid such hassles, I made it a point to make my projects the tallest villas in India. I engaged the services of Susanne Khan, a renowned Indian Interior Designer, to design my villas, and use the best materials available to make sure that each buyer received incredible value for their money.”

In 2017, Athaide started the Global Indian Realty Summit in association with Network 18, a Mukesh Ambani enterprise. This soon became a valuable resource for the real estate industry

in India as many stalwarts of the country participated in contributing their knowledge and experiences to the advantage of the Indian audience.

He kept growing his business empire till the lockdown hit India, and there was a lull in business. Athaide recollected, “It became a period of introspection, I started reprocessing every decision I had taken. The greatest fear was the impact the past decisions could have on the current scenario.”

With his decades of experience and expertise, he turned the situation around; he continued, “I tweaked all my past choices to adapt to the new conditions. I also realised that remote working, use of technology, technology-supported businesses would take a giant leap. I immediately ventured into multiple new industries, all supported by technology.” Since then, he has ventured into several industries such as E-Commerce, Online Educational Platforms and Architecture.

Athaide has a unique skill of turning obstacles into opportunities; talking about his secret to success, he says, “I have been working since the age of 13. That has given me a lot of experience, exposure and thousands of meaningful relationships. And this is my main capital. Human connectivity is what I love. So all my businesses are connected to the direct gratification of my consumer.”

In conclusion, he says, “The quantum of your success depends on the quantum of people who believe in you and support you. It’s all about people and I am grateful to have a supportive family.”



NEWSMAKERS



Brené Brown

Research Professor

Dr Brené Brown is a renowned research professor at the University of Houston, where she currently holds the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair at The Graduate College of Social Work. She is also a visiting professor at The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business in management.

“Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we will ever do.”

Brown has spent the past two decades studying vulnerability, shame, courage and empathy, and is the author of five #1 New York Times bestsellers. She is also the host of the weekly Spotify Original podcasts *Unlocking Us* and *Dare to Lead*.

Brown's books have been translated into more than 30 languages, and titles include: *Dare to Lead*, *Braving the Wilderness*, *Rising Strong*, *Daring Greatly*, and *The Gifts of Imperfection*. Her TED talk – *The Power of Vulnerability* – is one of the top five most viewed TED talks globally, with over 50 million views. She is also the first researcher to have a filmed lecture on Netflix. The *Call to Courage* special debuted on the streaming service in April 2019.

Marc Cirera

Founder & CEO of Companies for Good

Marc's journey began as a child in a small town outside Barcelona. His grandfather was an entrepreneur, and Marc spent hours with him learning about business. He wanted to follow in his grandfather's footsteps – so he founded his first business at just 19 while studying and simultaneously working a 9-5 job.

The company took off, but something was missing. He didn't feel the satisfaction he expected to. So he quit his job, sold his business and moved to Australia to do a Master's in Business Ethics that changed everything. He moved to London to work in employee engagement and sustainability. Then relocated to Dubai and set up Companies for Good.

Initially offering team activities that help businesses make a positive social and environmental impact, today, the



company has expanded to include online activations and consulting services. They've worked with 250+ businesses, including multiple household names (Amazon, Airbnb and L'Oréal, amongst others). They have helped companies make a considerable difference – planting 7500+ trees, removing 27,000kg+ of trash from nature and supporting 32,000+ vulnerable people.



Niloy Nag

Founder & Managing Partner of Flying Squirrel Holidays

As a new age-travel management brand, Nag has continuously innovated to give new experiences to his consumers. Flying Squirrel Holidays offers tailor-made travel experiences to destinations worldwide and offers interest-based holidays such as sports holidays, wellness retreats, tea tourism and wine holidays.

“The company is one of the few travel start-ups to use digital platforms

extensively. While the travel industry witnessed a 60-80% drop in online traffic during the pandemic, our traffic grew over 20 times, thanks to the relevant, engaging, valuable content we produced across our digital platforms.”

In the early days of the pandemic, when international borders were shut, Nag adapted and embraced the joy of local travel – he offered staycations, driving holidays and pet-friendly vacations. They even introduced the idea of 'Work from a New Home.' It was an opportunity for people to drive in the safety of their cars and spend a few days working from a new setting that instantly became a hit and was turned into a trend. Flying Squirrel Holidays has been recognized as 'India's ten most promising travel agencies in 2019.'

NEWSMAKERS



Laurie O'Hara

Founder & CEO Of OLITA

As an eco-warrior, Laurie founded OLITA, a clean and organic sun care product line to cater to beautiful skin and sustainability. OLITA makes organic, mineral and reef-safe sunscreens; soothing after sun body serums; protective lip balms; and their very own Beach Be Gone body powder that wicks away sand and moisture from the skin.

OLITA's core values are fun, family, protection and trust. They incorporate those values into everything they do, from their products to their bio-sourced and ocean rescued packaging. Laurie believes in giving back and donates 10% to ocean conservation on every sale of the brand. She says, "We want to be both clean on the inside and the outside. Our employees and customers know the importance of environmentally safe products; that's why we keep innovating to curate the purest natural ingredients that work hard to protect your skin and the planet."

OLITA works with their partners in the Climate Collaborative, EWG and NSF for organic certification to provide the best to their customers. OLITA is also NSF Certified Organic, EWG Verified, #1 Rated products in Skin Deep, Mom's Choice Gold Award.

Sherif Elibrashy

Director Of Sales & Marketing At Tamani Marina Hotel And Hotel Apartment

Sherif Elibrashy has worked with TAMANI Marina Hotel over the past decade, sharing his 22 years of valued work experience to add value to the company. Working at TAMANI has opened many avenues for Elibrashy and helped him build meaningful relations within the industry. He has done it all, from creating concepts to building strategies. Elibrashy has also efficiently rebranded to connect at a deeper level with their guests and target audience.

The team at TAMANI Marina Hotel has received several prestigious awards in the last decade for their excellent service and constant innovation. TAMANI Marina Hotel was awarded the Silver Award Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award in 2016 and the Dubai Quality Award in 2018. Additionally, they have received



accolades like World Luxury Awards and The Best Environmental Hotel at the MENA Travel Awards.

Speaking about COVID-19, he says, "The hotel industry found themselves to be in a tough situation due to the pandemic – however, we have powered through as one team to innovate, maintain our standards and continue to provide the best possible service for guests."

Mary Roach

Writer



Mary Roach is a brilliant writer specializing in popular science and humour. Her article on earthquake-proof bamboo houses, 'The Bamboo Solution', took the American Engineering Societies Engineering Journalism Award in the general

interest magazine category in 1995. She is the author of six New York Times bestsellers, including *STIFF: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, *GULP: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*, and *PACKING FOR MARS: The Curious Science of Life in the Void*. Her new book *FUZZ: When Nature Breaks the Law* debuts in September 2021.

Mary's books have been published in 21 languages, and her second book, *SPOOK*, was a New York Times Notable Book. Mary has written for *National Geographic*, *Wired*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and the *Journal of Clinical Anatomy*, among others. She was a guest editor of the *Best American Science and Nature Writing* series and an Osher Fellow with the San Francisco Exploratorium, and an advisor for *Orion* and *Undark* magazines.

She was the recipient of the Harvard Secular Society's *Rushdie Award* for her outstanding lifetime achievement in cultural humanism. The same year, she received a Special Citation in scientific inquiry from *Maximum Fun*.

Five Lessons Football Can Teach Us About Business

- Sherlyn Gomes



With the close of the UEFA Euro Cup 2021 in July, sentiments among football fans are at an all-time high. For its fans, the sport goes beyond just a game; it's an emotion, a family, and most importantly, a team!

Leading football clubs have a well-defined vision of their strategy, goals and understand the skills needed in each position. The game is paved with business lessons that the corporate world can incorporate to attain high functioning teams with soaring productivity rates.

1. Trusting Your Team Members

As a member of a football team, understanding and trusting your team members is of utmost importance. Many times, footballers come across the predicament to pass the ball to their team members for the winning shot or try shooting it themselves with the risk of losing the goal. More often than not, footballers always pass it to their team members and assist them rather than dwelling in the glory of attaining the winning shot. Similarly, in business, the one with the

groundbreaking idea isn't always the one making the presentation to the clients but winning the contract is a team effort with all hands in.

2. Nurturing A Positive Environment

It is imperative to nurture a positive environment with one goal in mind: winning. The intense match against Switzerland and France in the UEFA league is a classic example of that. With France leading the game with 3-1, Switzerland did not bow out and give up. They held their heads up high and continued with an unmatched zeal that ultimately led them to victory with a penalty shoot-out score of 5-4. Similarly, especially with the pandemic, businesses might have hit a dead end. In those times, it is imperative to keep pushing with the intention to survive and eventually win.

3. Defining Clear Positions For Every Team Member

Many teams have different strategies ranging from FC Barcelona's probing passing game to Liverpool's aggressive, free-form attack, yet both

teams have excelled beyond bounds. This is mainly because they utilized every player's strength, with Bonucci from Juventus, an excellent defender, to Messi, one of the greatest strikers in history. Similarly, in the corporate world, teams need to find the best strategy that works for them by utilizing the best team members and using their strengths to promote and grow the company to newer heights.

4. Filling Gaps When Required

When Juventus realized it lacked a good striker with superior skills to score record-breaking goals for the club, team management scouted Cristiano Ronaldo and ultimately poached him from Real Madrid. There on, he became a vital pillar of the team's success. Companies must also look externally in the business world if it becomes evident that a fundamental talent gap cannot be filled internally. If talent needs to evolve, reskilling and upskilling must become the target.

5. Leading Teams The Right Way

In Football, coaches cannot get into the field and play the game; they can only stand on the sidelines and guide their team to victory. However, in business, it is not uncommon to see managers and leaders jump into a micro-managing mode especially when some errors are made by the team. Allowing the team to execute a strategy and even firefight when necessary is a crucial part of helping them essential skills like communication, teamwork and problem solving.

In Conclusion:

The right strategy with the right team coupled with persistence and practice will always succeed. As Tom Landry, American Football Player says, "Leadership is a matter of having people look at you and gain confidence. If you're in control, they're in control."

How To Spot A Toxic Work Culture

- Siya Mehta

A toxic workplace is a workplace with a dysfunctional and unhealthy environment. This environment generally consists of significant hostility, chaos, petty fights and low productivity. Toxic work environments often cause personal problems in the lives of employees. These problems include health complications and can stem from extreme stress. A study from Stanford and Harvard confirmed that toxic work cultures also increase the risk of hypertension, cardiovascular disease and can cause a decline in mental health and can create fatal conditions.

With risks this high, it is important to steer away from toxic workplaces as soon as possible. However, employees often don't realise they are a part of a toxic work environment until it has already affected them severely. Therefore, it is important to stay alert and rapidly take action if the workplace seems to be toxic.

Signs Of A Toxic Work Environment

1. High Employee Turnover

Rapid employee turnover is one of the easiest signs to spot toxicity in the workplace. Leaving or changing a job is one of the most difficult decisions an individual makes in their life. Seeing various employees make this decision can show the hostility in the environment and the strong need to escape and leave ensues. High turnover can stem from various factors, including organisational culture, unsatisfactory leadership and even bullying. A Society For Human Research study found that 1 out of 5 employees choose to leave an organization because of the culture. The study further observed that companies with a strong and positive culture had an employee turnover of 14%. In contrast, organizations that ignore company culture had a turnover of 48%.

2. Cliquish Behavior And Gossip

If there are petty fights and no genuine friendships in the workplace, it can be a clear insight into the hostility and dysfunctional atmosphere. While teamwork is a



great motivator in an organisation and has unlimited benefits, that positivity is not passed on when cliques are formed as part of teamwork. Cliques often alienate and isolate other employees, not allowing them to satisfy their social needs and instead causing them to feel bullied. Cliques are extremely counterproductive and lead to an overall toxic environment. All workplaces have a tendency to indulge in harmless gossiping, as confirmed by SAGE Publications reporting that 96% of survey respondents admitted to participating in office gossip. However, gossiping to the extent of workers only communicating through passive-aggressive statements and dramatic outburst is extremely unhealthy. This unhealthy behaviour and workplace bullying have proved to correlate with psychological burnout, depression, anxiety and aggression as well.

3. Fear And Tension

Palpable fear in the environment, loud silence, whispers and hush can all indicate a deleterious and controlled environment. If all the employees constantly suppress or hide their opinions, this can highlight psychological insecurity. Bosses that observe this behaviour and choose to ignore it, or worse, relish in it are clear signs of the environment not allowing any growth. Further,

if employees are scared to make mistakes and are constantly worrying about their position in the workplace, the constant anxiety can lead to inefficiency and despair.

4. Overworking And Pressure

Employees and other co-workers are frequently forced to meet impossible deadlines, especially without any support. This unethical pressure is extremely demeaning and highlights that the workplace does not value its employees health and well-being. This pressure can be further concerning if coworkers never speak up against it and later devastatingly complain. Succumbing to this pressure can be extremely fatal and can cause a variety of personal problems. Investment bankers, famous for participating in high tension and high earning jobs, experience more heart attacks, early deaths and are known to have negligible work-life balance.

In Conclusion:

While it sometimes seems 'worth it' to work in a toxic environment, especially if it is accompanied by perks and pay, the numerous silent killers and mental and physical complications need to be avoided at all costs. A toxic workplace is just like a toxic relationship, slowly draining and destroying individuals in all areas of life.

The Indiana Jones Of Cultural Adventures

Ken Pasternak is a Best-Selling Author, Consultant, and Speaker making great strides in performance and leadership. He has focused on building high-performance organizations through visionary leadership, team effectiveness, establishing a winning culture and improving cross-cultural understanding. He is the co-author of 'Performance at the Limit, Business Lessons from Formula 1 Racing' (3rd edition 2016 and translated into Japanese, Turkish and Mandarin Chinese), 'Managing Your Strengths' (2002 also available in Portuguese) and 'Exploding Turkeys and Spare Trousers, Adventures in Global Business' (2021).

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

Pasternak was born and raised in a tight-knit family in a suburb north of New York City. As a young boy, his father always encouraged him in everything he did, that significantly improved his dexterity in sports and scored him an invite to play with the older kids. During the game, he always observed how they behaved, handled teammates, and dealt with victory and defeat, unaware that this would translate into his occupation. He recalled, "Today I would say they were role modelling, leadership and teamworking skills which were a foundation for how I learned to interact with people."

After completing his high school education, he was accepted into Horace Mann, a private school in New York City. He then attended Yale University and graduated with a degree in Engineering and Applied Science. The following year he studied in Paris, which was a turning point for Pasternak in several ways. While abroad, he says, "I realized three things: I did not want to pursue a career in the sciences, it was time I started working, and I had a strong desire to return to Europe one day."

With these intentions in mind, he returned to New York. Pasternak did not have a clear career path defined for him, so he systematically reviewed his skills and career wishes using Richard Nelson Bolles' 'What Color is Your Parachute.' He went one step ahead and met his friend's parents to discuss what they did for a living and how fulfilling it was. Eventually, he applied for jobs in Corporate Banking and was accepted into Citibank's Corporate Banking Management Development Program.

He worked at Citibank's headquarters in Manhattan for six years, travelling along the eastern seaboard visiting customers in the retail and fast-food industries. In 1980, Pasternak got his wish to travel to Europe. He was transferred overseas, and he shifted to Citibank's European Training Centre in London, England, to teach risk management, selling, and negotiating skills.

Pasternak recalled that this was the first step to finding his passion in consulting, "I first understood how one could assist others to learn and improve when I was teaching at the Citibank Training Centre in London. I saw the 'aha' moment in the eyes and body language of seminar participants when a concept made sense, and they understood how a concept could be usefully applied in their own lives and work."

Two years later, he moved to Helsinki, Finland, when Citibank was granted a license as the first foreign bank in the country.

Four years later, he moved to Istanbul with his Finnish wife and their two children. He worked at the country's central bank and successfully renovated a dilapidated hotel on the Marmara Sea, turning it into a world-class residential training centre for bankers. After that, he travelled around the world and moved to Brussels, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Greece and even China absorbing different cultures that have greatly helped him as a Coach and Consultant. Reminiscing, he says, "the most transformative challenges have been learning to live and work in different cultures. One learns quickly that the visible differences like language,

"I first understood how one could assist others to learn and improve when I was teaching at the Citibank Training Centre in London. I saw the 'aha' moment in the eyes and body language of seminar participants when a concept made sense, and they understood how a concept could be usefully applied in their own lives and work."

clothing, food and music are only the surface of getting to know how someone from a different culture thinks and behaves. I had to learn to be open-minded, accepting and understanding without compromising my standards, values, and beliefs."

In 1996, Pasternak took the plunge and decided to follow his passion and start his consulting firm. During this time, he had the pleasure of working with executives, speaking to audiences worldwide about leadership, teamwork, corporate culture, and communication skills.

During this time, he also chanced upon the connection between Formula 1 and Performance. It was during the time he was hired by a large international law firm based in London. He recalls the incident, "Two colleagues and I designed a 2-day workshop to build the business acumen of their lawyers. In our role play, I was the Vice President of Strategy at Volkswagen, deciding whether we should enter Formula 1 racing under the Audi brand. The lawyers became my business consultants. The role-play was so successful that we ran the program fifty times over three years."

The role-play made Pasternak and his colleagues realize how much one could learn from Formula 1 teams relevant to all businesses about leadership, teamwork, innovation, organization culture and more that led to the genesis of his book.

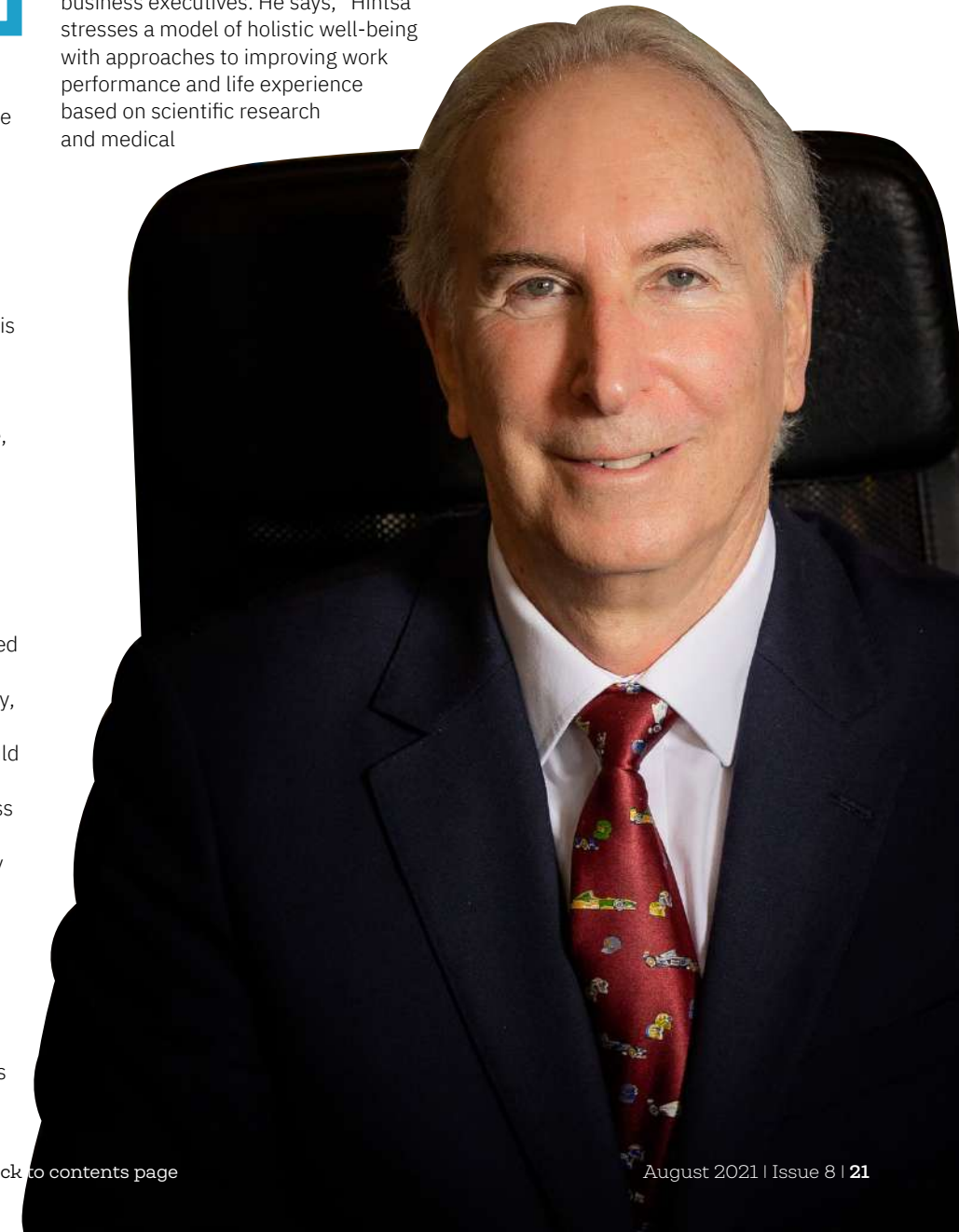
They got together and started interviewing people at all levels of the sport and business of F1. The Cambridge University Press published the first edition of PATL (Performance at the Limit, Business Lessons from Formula 1 Racing) in 2005. Since then, they have completed two revised editions, the latest in 2016. PATL has been translated into Japanese, Turkish and Mandarin Chinese. In 2007, it also inspired an 8-part television series, 'Formula for Success', made by the BBC.

This also opened up other avenues in Pasternak's career that led him to become the Brand Ambassador for Hints Performance, a leader in coaching top-level athletes and business executives. He says, "Hints stresses a model of holistic well-being with approaches to improving work performance and life experience based on scientific research and medical

knowledge" and he is proud to be affiliated with such an organisation.

During the pandemic, Pasternak has strategically used his time to recall all his learning experiences in his new book, 'Exploding Turkeys and Spare Trousers, Adventures in Global Business' (2021), which is a collection of short stories from his business travels, each offering a business or life lesson for his vast experience travelling around the globe.

As a well-established coach and author, his advice to budding entrepreneurs is - "Open new doors even if you do not feel ready to walk through them. In doing so, be prepared to learn from both success and failures."



Four Easy Brain Exercises To Try To Increase Your Productivity

- Siya Mehta



While there is a deliberate awareness on the importance of physical wellbeing, the brain as a muscle is often overlooked by most professionals. Considering that most of our jobs demand more cerebral input than physical one, it is of utmost importance to exercise the brain to keep it at its fittest!

Here are 4 simple techniques anyone can follow to flex their brain muscles and boost the treasured productivity:

1. Playing Puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles are not just for children. Putting the mind to work and refreshing it by doing jigsaw puzzles can provide numerous benefits. Research has proved that jigsaw puzzles help develop cognitive skills, improve short-term memory and are a stress reliever. When solving a jigsaw puzzle, individuals make use of the left and the right side of the brain, enabling a thorough workout for the brain. Jigsaw puzzles are available in all sizes and can easily be kept in workplaces as well.

A portable mini jigsaw puzzle with the theme of iconic paintings such as The Starry Night is available on Amazon.

2. Using The Non-Dominant Hand

One of the simplest suggestions that deliver guaranteed results is using

the non-dominant hand for workplace activities such as drinking beverages or taking down simple notes to strengthen neural connections in the brain. This means that overall brain function increases and multitasking abilities grow as well. It further exercises opposite sides of the brain and helps develop the cortex, which is the outermost layer of the brain and is responsible for processing and controlling critical information. When asked about working out the brain using the non-dominant hand, Dr P. Murali Doraiswamy from Duke University said, "It is like having more cell towers in your brain to send messages along. The more cell towers you have, the fewer missed calls." The increase in brain connections brings more ideas and innovations. Using your non-dominant hand also increases creativity since the brain is exposed to unusual movements and decisions. This creativity can drive innovation and can create an overall sense of being motivated.

3. Playing Chess

Playing chess is one of the most famous and enjoyable activities to instantly pump the brain. It has been proved that chess increases intelligence and comes in two forms: fluid intelligence (ability to consider new problems and solve them) and processing speed (ability to rapidly

understand tasks and respond efficiently). Both these areas of intelligence are especially active in the workplace. Employees can therefore benefit from better and faster problem-solving abilities and an overall reduction in wastage of time. Moreover, chess also improves planning skills as well. These skills translate strongly in the workplace since multitasking and multiple plans have to be made to accommodate all areas of life and succeed at them. By preplanning and avoiding last minute chaos, employees can relax more and experience an increase in productivity. Facilities to play are available everywhere, from portable mini chess boards on Amazon to virtual chess platforms such as chess.com.

4. Playing Word Games

Playing any word games have numerous benefits for the brain. English games often have a wide range of variety, from cracking clues and brainteasers to scrabble. These games are often challenging and stimulating, requiring a high amount of concentration from players. Therefore playing word games can increase attention span, help concentrate better and increase speed even during simple tasks such as reading emails. Moreover, the games improve cognitive skills as well. This can help in identifying and solving problems faster and better. Word games such as scrabble can be played online or can be bought on Amazon. Other virtual problems such as MindGames.com provide games such as hangman, word search and vocabulary tests.

In Conclusion:

Exercising your brain is a fool-proof way to increase productivity in the workplace. Not only does it give short term benefits, by keeping the brain active and fit, the probability of getting clinical anxiety, alzheimers and burnout reduces as well.

How To Acquire The Skill Of Giving Constructive Feedback

- Justin Roberts

A company's success is often the result of its employee's growth and productivity levels. Feedback is an essential tool that aids in employee productivity and agility; as the saying goes, "Praise in public, correct in private," has a significant impact on employee performance.

A study published by Harvard Business Review found that more people prefer corrective feedback (57%) to praise or recognition (43%). While managers seem to dole out positive feedback that employees always appreciate, they believe that negative feedback does more to improve their performance and help them on their journey to success. Here are a few tips that can help you navigate through this challenging conversation.

1. Use The Rosenberg Nonviolent Communication Method

Dr Rosenberg developed the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) approach during the 1960s. The approach has gained significant popularity and has been scientifically proven to be effective.

The method has a 4 step approach:

- Mention specific actions of the employee.
- Describe feelings and effects provoked by the person's actions or the impact those actions have had on the project, team, company.
- Define needs by saying what you want or need to be changed.
- Make a request at the end of your feedback.

In 2012, Dr Connor and Dr Wentworth examined the impact of six months of NVC training and coaching on 23 executives at the Fortune 100 companies and concluded that "conversations and meetings were notably more efficient, with issues being resolved in 50-80 percent less time."



2. Use Questions To Have An Open Discussion

A Management Professor at the University of Queensland shared his story with Psychology Today story of overcoming a difficult feedback session—firing an employee using questions: He began by asking his employee how she thought she was doing at her job. That lead-in gave the recipient 'joint ownership' of the conversation, Ashkanasy says. He also pointed to other jobs that would better match the skills of his soon-to-be-ex employee. That promise of belonging helped relieve her anxiety about being cast out of the group she already knew.

3. Regular Check-Ins

Try to have regular check-ins at least once a week; this can help correct an employee before the situation blows out of proportion. Researchers found that participants who were given prompt feedback showed a more significant increase in performance than those who had received delayed feedback.

Giving feedback regularly also helps employers avoid sugar coating and address the issue while getting straight to the point. This way, when you have to deliver emotionally charged feedback, you have already established a good rapport and trust with your colleague, indicating that you only want what's best for them to help them succeed at work.

4. Correct Your Biases

Constructive feedback goes beyond just telling people how to do their job

and how you think a particular task should be performed. While there may be a general right way of doing it, be open to the idea that the other ways to achieve the goal are just as valid as your way.

While giving feedback, keep an open mind to discuss why there is a shortfall and have an honest conversation with the employee and ask them to share their feedback of the company and their position. This will allow both parties to find a middle ground and arrive at the solution together while dealing with grievances.

5. Provide Training And Follow-Up

As a result of the feedback given, if the receiver feels they need additional training, try to provide them with the benefit of workshops, mentoring or coaching. It will also add to the employee's skill set, making them an asset to the company.

It is essential to follow up on the progress of the employee after the feedback was delivered. Improvement on the given feedback should be validated and rewarded, which will boost the morale of the staff, making them more open to constructive feedback in the future.

In Conclusion:

Constructive feedback is an effective tool in every manager's guidebook. Always remember to focus on improvements and not dwell on mistakes, or it could cause more harm than good to your business.

Empowering Communities In Cambodia

Tara Winkler is the Co-Founder of the Cambodian Children's Trust (CCT). Over the last 14 years, she has led CCT through several significant organizational milestones, including the transition from an orphanage to a family empowerment model called the Village Hive. Today, CCT is a grassroots, community-led organization focused on shifting power to local communities to achieve sustainable, systemic change. Her TED Talk 'Why we need to end the era of orphanages' has received over a million views. Winkler's book 'How (NOT) to Start an Orphanage' was published by Allen & Unwin in 2006.

Written by Sherlyn Gomes



Winkler had a comfortable childhood growing up in the eastern suburbs of Sydney with her tight-knit family constantly supporting her. She says her family is a strong pillar of support for her and has significantly influenced the person she is today, especially her parents and grandparents, who have always fought against social injustice.

Both her grandmothers played an important role in her life. Her maternal grandmother, Joan, was an ardent social activist who helped her with funds and constant support to set up CCT. Winkler was also close to her paternal grandmother, Nagy who survived the Holocaust as a young woman and was interviewed by Steven Spielberg's 'Survivors of the Shoah' project. Winkler fondly reminisces, "Nagy was never bitter or angry. She would always end her stories by reminding me of how grateful we should be for our blessed life —

living in a beautiful country surrounded by family. It's no coincidence that the children I've chosen to dedicate my life to are also grandchildren of genocide survivors."

Her journey began at the tender age of 17 when she received a heartbreaking call from her father informing her that her beloved Nagy had passed away. Upon receiving the news, Winkler fell into a state of despair and hopelessness. To boost her spirit, on her 18th birthday, Winkler's parents gave her a choice; she could either host a party or get a ticket to explore the world. She says, "I didn't hesitate for a moment. In 2005, I set off to go backpacking through Southeast Asia."

The first part of her trip began with an Intrepid Travel tour through the well-trodden loop of Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. When they reached Cambodia, one of the first activities listed on the itinerary was visiting

an orphanage. Winkler recalled her experience at the orphanage, "We played with the children and watched them perform a traditional apsara dance."

After the tour ended, she extended her holiday in Cambodia for another month. Winkler recalled, "I was feeling uncomfortable enjoying my vacation, sipping cocktails by the pool, while surrounded by poverty and wanted to do something to give back. Inspired by my initial visit to a Cambodian orphanage, I decided to buy some clothes, books and toys to donate to a few orphanages in Battambang, the second largest city in northwest Cambodia."

One of the orphanages she visited was desperately poor. She said, "I had never encountered poverty like that in my life. They didn't have funds for enough food, clean water or medical treatment and so I was compelled to do something more to help."

Winkler returned to Australia and set up a fundraiser for the orphanage; she returned to Cambodia the following year to volunteer at the orphanage for a few months. Winkler said, "I taught English, donated water filters and food, hired a nurse and took all of the kids to get vaccinated and to the dentist for the first time in their lives."

Once she returned to Australia, she continued supporting the orphanage and visiting Cambodia from time to time. But on her third visit in 2007, Winkler discovered that the orphanage was corrupt. She recalled the horrifying incident, "The Director had been embezzling every cent donated to the orphanage and, in my absence, the children were suffering gross neglect that they were forced to catch mice to feed themselves. I also found out later that the director had been physically and sexually abusing the kids."

Winkler connected with a local, Pon Jedtha, who was previously raising funds for the orphanage but resigned due to the corruption in the organization. He was deeply concerned about the welfare of the children and asked Winkler to partner with him to set up a new organization to rescue the kids.

Winkler said, "I was hesitant at first. I was only 21 years old and felt terribly out

of my depth. But after the kids begged us to help get them out, I realized I couldn't bring myself to turn my back on children who I had come to know and care about. So Jedtha and I worked together to get approval from the local authorities to set up a new orphanage."

On August 17 2007, they visited the corrupt orphanage with a bus. The authorities stormed in and announced that the children had a one-time chance to leave the orphanage if they wanted to. The children gathered their meagre belongings and ran for the bus. That day, Winkler and Jedtha gave fourteen children a safe, new home and officially became CCT's Founders and Directors.

CCT, in its initial phase, was a well-resourced orphanage, operating therapeutic programs with a very high standard of care. But despite their best efforts, the care plans they put in place for the children had limited benefit. The behavioural issues they witnessed stemmed from attachment issues due to the trauma of being separated from their families and being raised in an institutional environment. The constant rotation of staff and volunteers coming in and out of their lives exacerbated the attachment issues. In almost every case, they also found that young adults who had grown up in the orphanage failed to transition into independence, thereby remaining dependent on the orphanage well into adulthood.

Winkler opined, "I realized our orphanage was a part of the problem, and knowing better comes with a moral imperative to do better." After a lot of trial and error, they ultimately created a new upstream model of child protection called the Village Hive. In this model, they reunited the children with their families and worked with these families to help them thrive and succeed. The model is successfully mobilizing entire communities to protect children and empower families.

Winkler says, "The real magic began when we realized that the best outcomes were achieved when we put families in the driving seat, and we supported them alongside as allies and advocates. When families and communities are in control, co-designing solutions that make sense to

them, transformations are profound and long-lasting."

One success story of the Village Hive in action is the story of a single mother, Trop. She worked multiple jobs, had considerable debt, and all her four children were underweight and struggling at school. When Village Hive social workers met with Trop, she had been unwell, impacting her ability to work, and she couldn't afford to go to the hospital. The Village Hive nurses examined Trop and helped her access speciality health services at the local hospital. They also coached Trop in financial literacy and supported her to pay off her debt in a sustainable way. They then helped Trop set up her own business, growing vegetables and raising chickens.

Today, Trop is earning enough to support her family and send her children to school. All four children are healthy and have gained weight. Trop says, "My family life is so much better now. I see a good future for my children because I can provide for them as they grow."

In conclusion, Winkler says, "My entire focus now is on changing the system from within, by recognizing the capabilities of local communities and promoting true empowerment and equality. I believe the results will be liberating for us all."



Trop With Her Children

"My entire focus now is on changing the system from within, by recognizing the capabilities of local communities and promoting true empowerment and equality. I believe the results will be liberating for us all."

The Radical Designer

Elise Roy is a deaf human-centred designer, former lawyer, and motivational speaker who works in the vanguard of the disruptive innovation movement. She is the Founder of an Inclusive Design Firm whose clients include the National Science Foundation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Her TEDx talk, ‘When we Design for Disability, We All Benefit,’ had over 1 million views in less than three months after headlining TED.com.

Written by Kyle Goldberg

“You don’t have to be a design thinker to insert the ideas. You are creative. You are a designer -- everyone is. Let people like me help you. Let people with disabilities help you look sideways, and in the process, solve some of the greatest problems.”



Image Credit: Elise Roy

Elise Roy started losing her hearing abilities at an early age and has been deaf from the age of ten. In school, she learned how to teach herself from books with grave difficulty. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Brown University, where she first found her passion for advocating against social injustice.

While in university, she began to see herself as an advocate for differently-abled people. During her freshman year, the university tried to eliminate real-time captioning, which can be best explained as a cross between a courtroom stenographer and closed captions that you see on television that enabled her to hear and participate in classroom discussions for the first time. To combat this grave injustice, Elise organized a group with other deaf students and held meetings with several deans; she ultimately secured the real-time captioning for the remainder of her time at Brown.

After university, Elise went to law school at Northeastern University. While there, Elise became actively involved in lesbian and gay rights. She also acted as a fellow in Washington, D.C., for the Human Rights Campaign. Elise was in Law School when she began working on the International Disability Rights Treaty at the United Nations. It became the first human rights treaty to be passed at the United Nations in the 21st century and was ratified in 2007 with over 155 countries becoming signatories. After the treaty was signed in 2007, she was given the task to travel the world to see it put into action. Her work took her to Africa, Southeast Asia and the Gulf region.

It was during these travels that she faced tremendous challenges. It wasn’t related to her hearing loss or the causes she needed to fight for; it was about her direction in life. “I was in Zambia, and I learned that the life expectancy there was only 32,” she explained. “That put things in perspective for me. I realized that life was too short not to do something you love so I started the transition to becoming an artist.”

So once Elise got back in 2008, she began pursuing creative work and

assisted with advertising for the democratic election campaigns. She worked her way up and eventually became the Marketing Manager for a small company in Baltimore, focusing on graphic design. However, her love for advocating for social injustice did not dissipate. In 2011, Elise merged both her passions, her love of art and advocacy and became part of the inaugural class of MICA’s M.A. in Social Design program.

“It was definitely difficult transitioning to the art realm. There were a lot of people who discouraged me from doing it, saying why not just make it a hobby? I knew it was a big leap, but I wanted it to be my real job.”

Elise found her passion in fabrication design through the use of repurposed objects—a fondness she discovered when she was renovating her family’s bathroom on an old tobacco farm. Elise said, “I never realized many power tools alert the right or wrong use by emitting different pitches, which made for a learning curve as someone who has a profound hearing loss.” She continued, “When you are welding, you have to wear a helmet that essentially blackens out everything but the flame so it’s impossible for me to follow along if the instructor talks. Also, a sound indicates the weld has started. I’ve had more than my share of getting my torch stuck to the metal because I didn’t hear this and react quickly enough!”

This experience gave her a new direction, and she focused her thesis on researching the barriers for individuals with hearing loss in the design realm and fabrication technology. She spent an entire semester working closely with Ryan Hoover, the Director of a fabrication studio, researching various tools to identify what auditory information was emitted and brainstorming possible adaptations for the deaf user.

In 2016, Elise founded her company, Elise Roy & Associates, a social enterprise that helps organizations analyze problems from the vantage point of people with disabilities. The organization is based on the notion that we develop better solutions when we design for extremes than when we

design for the norm.

“A couple years ago I was telling people about human centered design, they had no idea what I was talking about,” Elise says. “But now they’re starting to recognize the value it provides businesses and starting to see how they can create more targeted responsive solutions.”

Big Data plays a vital role in creating more customer-centric solutions. It allows organizations to understand better how to react to the human experience and build more personalized and customized experiences and identify patterns that otherwise might have been difficult to see.

Elise opines, “One of the biggest struggles with integrating the perspective of people with disabilities is that there are such a wide variety of disabilities— it can be challenging to design with each one in mind. Big Data can help overcome those challenges. There are already products in the market that benefit individuals with disabilities that use the power of Big Data and the Internet of Things.”

Elise continues, “For instance, there are companies developing doorbell home security solutions that alert users to motion and allow them to monitor the door remotely— an ideal solution for individuals with mobility problems. Innovations like this and others including the Roomba or self-driving cars not only make it easier for people with disabilities to live independently but are also products that the general population enjoy as well.”

In order to continue to bring innovations like these to the market, it will be essential that Big Data be paired with human-centred design methods.

Moving forward, Elise believes there needs to be a symbiosis between Big Data and the human aspect of design.

In conclusion, she says, “You don’t have to be a design thinker to insert the ideas. You are creative. You are a designer -- everyone is. Let people like me help you. Let people with disabilities help you look sideways, and in the process, solve some of the greatest problems.”

How Emotional Intelligence Affects the Growth Of A Business

- Brianna Da Cruz



Over the last decades, the definition of leadership has evolved, highlighting the ever-increasing importance of Emotional Intelligence. This skill has become essential for its correlation to personal life and success at work.

A study conducted by McClelland in 1999 revealed that once the supervisors working in manufacturing plant were given training in areas of Emotional Intelligence such as how to listen better or show empathy, grievances went down from 15 per and lost-time accidents decreased by 50%. The plant itself exceeded productivity goals by \$250,000.

This valuable skill of EQ can be used to grow firms by inculcating it in the workforce. Use these four ways to improve the Emotional Intelligence of your employees.

1. Check The EQ Of Every Team Member

Start by getting every employee tested for their EQ; for this, you can try the ESCI, or a competency-based test that measures a

respondent's expected EI, which may differ according to a role. For instance, a CEO will be expected to rate higher (be more competent) than a manager. Another good alternative for groups is the Work Group Emotional Intelligence Profile (WEIP) that offers a measure of Emotional Intelligence in team members. It is a self-report measure containing 30 items rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

After the results, you can start working on building the skill individually in each employee, depending on their score.

2. Hold Training Sessions

Training sessions play an important role in taking the first step to helping your employees work on their emotional Intelligence. Several training courses and programs are available for improving Emotional Intelligence in the workplace, some of which have impressive outcomes. Here are some resources that can help.

The Emotional Intelligence Matters Workshop is designed by Careerstone Group to help organizations improve their emotion recognition, emotion management, and social skills. Using Emotional Intelligence On The Job is a course offered by Udemy that comes highly recommended by professionals.

3. Focus On Mental Health And Wellbeing

With mental health issues reaching an all-time high due to the pandemic, leaders need to create an environment where talking about these issues is normalized. Sharing their own experiences and strategies for promoting mental health and wellbeing allows staff to open up about their own experiences and ask for help.

For example, Johnson & Johnson offer their employees and their family members resources and programs to ensure positive mental health in every employee's home. They also have a custom mindfulness and resilience app for employees that uses behavioural science to reduce stress and offer six covered therapy visits per year and on-site counsellors in some offices. This creates a psychologically safe workplace and a positive culture for all team members.

4. Leaders Should Take Charge

When leaders demonstrate high Emotional Intelligence, it creates a positive work culture that allows employees to follow suit. Leaders with high EQ can also assess their employees' emotional and psychological state faster and therefore provide them with resources to improve their mental health.

For example, Microsoft's Sonja Kellen said in an interview, "We didn't ask, but it has happened that many of our leaders stepped up and started telling their stories, their personal struggles or ones they've witnessed." This greatly helped strengthen the EQ of the organization that led to more growth, productivity and mainly trust in the organization.

In Conclusion:

As we live in this increasingly diverse world, Emotional Intelligence has transformed into a critical tool for providing social and economical solutions to grow companies worldwide. As John Hancock, American Merchant Stateman, said, "The greatest ability in business is to get along with others and influence their actions."

A Tool That Can Help Employers Combat The Great Resignation

- Justin Roberts

- Justin Roberts

With the era of the post-pandemic resignation dubbed as the 'Great Resignation,' employers are scrambling to gain perspective to add to their employees' wellbeing and retain them for extended durations. Research conducted by Prudential Financial's Pulse of the American Worker revealed that over 26% of workers are planning to leave their employers after the pandemic, 80% are doing so because they're concerned about their career advancement. This is a massive cause for concern for employers globally.

"The U.S. economy has deficient unemployment and a shortage of workers with the skills needed for in-demand positions," said Kelly Aiken, Vice President of CareerSTAT. "Employers who offer valuable training opportunities build their reputations as employers of choice. Generation X and Millennial employees rank 'lack of career progress' among their top reasons for leaving a job," Aiken adds. Upskilling the workforce is also known to reduce turnover rates.

Here are three practical and simple ways to help upskill the remote workforce.

1. Use Micro-Learning To Inculcate Continuous Learning

One great way to embed a culture of continuous learning is by adopting micro-learning techniques. A great approach adopted by Google is giving employees small nuggets of data every week to guide them along the right path.

The company named their micro-learning course, Whisper. It is a series of emails with suggestions, or 'whispers,' in different areas such as leadership, resilience or their specific niche for a manager to try in their one-on-ones or team meetings that can be implemented over zoom calls. Over ten weeks, managers built better psychological safety on their team by trying these whisper suggestions.

The course was rated favourably by all the managers, with every employee who had previously taken the course referring it to other googlers. Sharing small snippets of information every week is a great way to teach a learning culture in the organization and discuss the topics to enhance further and retain their knowledge.

2. Gamification To Learn Products And Gather Feedback

This has emerged as one of the top ways to upskill employees and keep them interested. Microsoft innovatively used this technique to help their employees learn new skills and receive feedback about their products. Ross Smith, the Engineering Manager of - Modern Workplace Sustainability at Microsoft, created Communicate Hope to gather feedback on Microsoft Lync in 2010. "Thousands of employees got on board and 'gamers' contributed at 16 times the rate of non-gamers." – this was part of Smith's ethos that you need to get people excited about participation.

A few years later, they devised the Language Quality Game to tap into 4,500 users who assessed the quality of translations. They deliberately included some poor translations. Although these did not look like training exercises, these exercises immensely helped employees become more familiar with the products, learn their faults and also gave them a platform to share their feedback, making them more engaged.

The above approaches can be adapted for remote workers to help them enjoy their work while improving their skills and knowledge of various products.

3. Partner With Online Learning Platforms

Online learning platforms have emerged as the ultimate tool for upskilling the workforce, and it is one that can significantly benefit



companies at a lower cost. Booking.com is one brilliant example of this.

To address its global Millennial and Gen Z learning needs, Booking.com partnered with Udemy Business. After they launched Udemy Business, Booking.com's Digital Learning Team empowered their employees to own their personal development. They encouraged them to take courses on management and leadership development, web development, data science and public speaking.

"In particular, our younger workforce likes the breadth of courses within Udemy and the flexibility of the mobile app," said Ajay Jacob, Digital Learning Specialist at Booking.com. An employee stated within the company's internal social channel, "It's amazing how technology and learning can transform you within minutes! Using Udemy's iPhone app, I managed to download an amazing course just moments before boarding the London Underground and ended my 45 minute train journey (quite boring usually) feeling so empowered."

In Conclusion:

With MNCs such as Amazon investing substantially in upskilling with their program Upskilling 2025, it's a promising start for other companies to follow suit and cater to their employees' needs. As Warren Bennis, American Author, says, "Success in management requires learning as fast as the world is changing."

The Brilliant Underwater Sculptor Raising Awareness



Image Credit: underwatersculpture.com

Jason deCaires Taylor is an Environmentalist, Sculptor and Professional Underwater Photographer. He was the first of a new generation of artists to alter the concept of land art to a different medium: Marine Environment. His evolving sculptures support the lifecycle of the aquatic organisms as they are made from pH neutral cement, which shows Taylor's concern goes beyond just the aesthetics of his artworks. He has opened the first underwater sculpture Museum globally and continues to share his art with the people.

Written by *Brianna Da Cruz*

“It’s all about having a different outlook on our own lives. I think that incorporating modern concepts into this sort of dynamic underwater environment can enable us to briefly step back from our own lives and to look at ourselves in a different context.”

Taylor is the only son of a British father and a Guyanese mother. As a kid, he travelled a lot and grew up between Europe and Asia. From childhood he was drawn to the ocean that led to his artistic masterpieces showcasing its beauty. He says, “My parents would often rent a boat during the weekend and we would explore pristine islands in Thailand and Malaysia. I was very fortunate to have had such amazing experiences at the early age of seven, or eight. It left an everlasting impression on my mind, and made me want to explore both artistic boundaries and the vast sea.”

According to Taylor, the ocean is an incredible space where he can disconnect, a silent world where one can experience complete solitude with one's thoughts. He added, “It's like crossing a line into another world that is completely detached from our own. It's a very special place indeed.” To connect with the ocean deeper, he took up scuba diving at 18 and became a fully qualified scuba instructor in 2002.

Simultaneously, Taylor decided to pursue his passion for Fine Arts and graduated from Camberwell College of Arts Institute of London in 1998 with an Honours degree in Sculpture and Ceramics. After college, he explored several different jobs, including working as a diving instructor. Over the years, he fused his love for art and the ocean together that led him to think about how the sea could be a unique medium to showcase art and how artworks can be set up underwater to create artificial reefs.

With that vision in mind, he decided to build an underwater sculpture park in the Caribbean. Taylor explained, “I started off small in an area that had been decimated by a hurricane. By building the park, I wanted to rejuvenate the area and draw people's attention to natural fragile areas. I've made around 800 underwater sculptures since then.”

He continued, “my projects are not just about their artistic aspect, but also about conserving the marine environment. So my works have several different goals. On a practical level, they create artificial reefs, providing an alternative surface area for corals and different creatures to live on, as well as habitat spaces where creatures can take refuge.”

The main aim is to draw people away from fragile marine habitats and draw them deeper into the sea. He added, “It's a hidden world, often forgotten. Through my work, I want to draw attention to the many issues affecting our oceans, whilst highlighting its incredible fragility and wonder.”

Taylor brought his dream to life by creating the world's first underwater sculpture park in 2006. According to National Geographic, it opened in the West Indies and now represents one of the Top 25 Wonders of the World.

Talking about its completion, he says, “I enjoyed seeing more and more divers visit and appreciate the Museum. But what I loved most was seeing the site being colonised by the area's wildlife, integrating naturally with the marine environment.”

Emboldened by his victories, he continued to work on more projects,

and in 2009, he co-founded MUSA, a monumental Museum of underwater sculptures containing 500 of his pieces. These are mainly individual installations with live corals taken from the areas with the damaged reef. Taylor's most significant artwork is called The Silent Evolution. It was installed in MUSA in 2010, and it features 450 statues of people in various positions, expressing a wide range of emotions.

He then ventured into new territory with the installation of Museo Atlántico, which is around 400 metres from the shoreline of Las Coloradas, Mexico and approximately 12-14 metres deep. Speaking about the project, he says, “This island is quite special, because it has a long history of environment-related art, with many land installations that work closely with the environment. So Lanzarote was an ideal spot to realise this project.”

The Museum consists of 12 different installations, with around 300 works interspersed within the Museum's other zones. Visitors come into the Museum with a trained guide and are taken for a tour viewing each exhibit. At the end of their tour, they are taken to the exit point back to the safety of their boat.

Taylor's fascinating sculptures display the relationship between humans and nature surrounding them. The dull concrete is brought to life by his pieces with the colourful hues of the reefs. His art is meant to become one with nature to showcase its true beauty. Taylor works closely with marine scientists and ensures that his materials are eco-friendly and naturally responsive. They also promote the health of local ecosystems since they are positioned in carefully planned locations, according to the tidal patterns and coral geography. It will necessarily go through various transformations, but its immortality lies precisely in this magical flexibility.

In conclusion, Taylor says, “It's all about having a different outlook on our own lives. I think that incorporating modern concepts into this sort of dynamic underwater environment can enable us to briefly step back from our own lives and to look at ourselves in a different context.”

Changing The Norms Of Society

Shani Dhanda is a world-renowned disability specialist, diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta with a height of 3'10. She is listed as one of the UK's most influential disabled people. As a practitioner and keynote speaker for inclusion across business, government, non-profit and broader society, Dhanda helps organisations break barriers and integrate inclusion into their business frameworks.

Written by Alexis Miller



Image Credit: Shani Dhanda

Dhanda was born to Indian origin parents in the central city of Birmingham in England. When she was born, her parents knew something was wrong with their baby girl. However, her mother found a way of cradling her so she wouldn't cry, but the baby would scream in pain when others held her. "No one knew what my condition was," said Dhanda. Finally, when she was two years old, she was diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease. Individuals diagnosed with this rare genetic disorder have fragile bones and have the possibility to develop breathing problems.

Due to her condition, Dhanda frequently suffered injuries with no external triggers. She had broken her bones six times by the age of fourteen. However, her mother always supported her in her journey and never treated her differently from her other siblings.

She said, "I remember being at home, and my leg would be in plaster, but she would give me a pile of laundry to fold because why should I get away with not having to do the chores? I'm really glad that she instilled that value in me from a really young age, because otherwise I would have grown up and expected everyone to treat me differently." Her mother's values of independence shaped the foundation upon which Dhanda built her life.

However, due to her medical condition, she was treated differently by society growing up. Dhanda recalled, "As a teenager, people (at the temple) would ask my mom how I was when I was standing right next to her. And I'd (say), 'I'm here, you can ask me.'" These instances made Dhanda develop mental resilience at a very young age.

At 15, she applied for about 100 job offers in her local area but unfortunately did not receive a single reply. After the incident, some people in her Indian community advised her to stay home and claim benefits, but Dhanda persevered.

Dhanda recollected the unfortunate incident, "I soon realised that this is because I declared my disability on my covering letters. So I decided to remove any information about my disability from the covering letter and was then invited for an interview in which I was successful in getting my first job in telesales. I didn't want to be seen as just a person with a disability. I wanted to be treated as an individual with ambition and skill."

While studying for her degree in Events Management, she simultaneously worked for three years, which she says was one of her most significant achievements in life. She continued, "Ironically, I was one of the first people in my class that graduated and got a job."

After her graduation, Dhanda had a full-time job for six years until she asked for flexible working hours. She recalled, "My request was declined. I didn't need to be in an office every day, I'm 3'10 and use a wheelchair some of the time. I didn't want to feel undervalued, so I decided to leave. Only one person in HR contacted me asking me to stay, but it was too late."

This incident sparked a flame in Dhanda, and she began her journey as an Inclusion Rights Advocate. Inspired by her father's zeal to fight for human rights and the Sikh principle of Seva, that is, 'selfless service,' Dhanda started advocating for inclusivity rights for differently-abled individuals, who account for about 15 per cent of its overall population.

She used her Event Management degree to fundraise and developed a support platform called the Asian Disability

Network and organised the first-ever Asian Woman Festival. The event is an annual celebration of her multicultural cohorts through programming, content, merchandise, and contact directory. "Until I created the festival, I didn't feel like there was a place for me to go and take my whole identity with me," Dhanda explained. "I would always have to dissect myself into either being a woman, Asian, or disabled."

To add to her victories, in 2020, Dhanda launched the Diversability Card, an initiative that provides differently-abled consumers with exclusive discounts across popular services, brands, entertainment providers and travel. Disabled people incur unavoidable extra costs of up to £583 per month for things such as higher energy bills, expensive equipment, and the card offers a way of alleviating some of that financial burden. The concept acts as a two-edged sword, functioning as a market research tool for companies that have traditionally overlooked this type of consumer and helps to gauge the demand for their products better to suit a broader customer base.

"I think digital inclusion can be the gateway to people accessing things that they can't in a physical way, but there are so many barriers that exist," says Dhanda. "When you do design for the needs and preferences of disabled people, you will meet the needs and preferences of a large majority of people."

While such initiatives effectively promote awareness and empower those they serve, this cause has to be taken ahead by leaders, CEOs, and activists to ensure that ethnic minorities are heard, seen, and valued.

The Disability Charity Scope states that almost two-thirds of Britains admit that they have actively avoided a conversation with a disabled person, primarily out of fear of offending them. "Just imagine if one of those people is a line manager and all of a sudden they have to manage a disabled person. They're just not going to have the confidence to talk openly and honestly and say, 'How can I support you?'"

This support in the workplace is critical

for favourable outcomes for members of the disabled community, especially since only 53 per cent of that community is employed.

Dhanda was named one of the BBC 100 Women List and made the top 10 of The Shaw Trust Power 100 List of the UK's most influential disabled people. She was also featured in LinkedIn's most extensive UK advertising campaign; her first television advert gained her the title of LinkedIn Changemaker. Her inspiring views have also earned her appearance on shows including BBC Two - Nadiya's Time to Eat, BBC One - The Truth About Looking Good and Channel 4's Divided Britain: The Lockdown Debate.

In conclusion, she says, "The way in which I view disability is that my condition doesn't disable me, I'm only disabled when I experience barriers or bias," Dhanda explained. "I don't think everything will suddenly change overnight to be built at my height — we need to keep perspective here. But what I do expect is universal design in everything. That is reasonable to ask, and demand."

"The way in which I view disability is that my condition doesn't disable me, I'm only disabled when I experience barriers or bias," Dhanda explained. "I don't think everything will suddenly change overnight to be built at my height — we need to keep perspective here. But what I do expect is universal design in everything. That is reasonable to ask, and demand."

Work Alliances: The Essential Support System

- Kyle Goldberg



Winston Churchill once said, “There is at least one thing worse than fighting with allies – And that is to fight without them.” This quote is even more true in the workplace. Bonds formed within workplaces help employees overcome daily challenges, overcome fears, exchange ideas and offer tremendous support. Not only do these allies help each other manage general work crises, but they also go the extra mile to help resolve a problem in personal life if needed. However, many employees find it difficult to form these support systems.

Importance Of Allies

Building alliances and friendships within an organization is critical. Allies can help each other feel comfortable, confident and strengthened. It can further help reduce stress as well. An alliance is also a great way to show employers that an employee is not only capable of performing successfully, but also connecting and communicating effectively. An alliance allows an employee to distinguish themselves and allows them to display characteristics of a strong leader.

Ways To Build Alliances

1. Offer Compliments

Explicitly supporting colleagues is an easy way to develop a high-quality connection. Giving credit and praise after an accomplishment publicly expresses respect and enables genuine connection. Especially during online work, verbal support is truly appreciated and is a confirmed conversation starter. It is important to not exaggerate or dramatize, otherwise, a completely adverse effect can be observed. Being genuine is key.

2. Battle Imposter Syndrome

Everyone has had days when they doubt their abilities and think they aren't good enough. Seize this opportunity by battling their imposter syndrome, list down their accomplishments and tell them why they are the best at what they do. This experience will help put you in a positive light.

3. Offer The Olive Branch To Rivals

Holding onto petty fights and arguments is more often seen as immaturity and arrogance than resilience. Not only is this an opportunity to be noticed as the ‘bigger person,’ it is a chance to foster

a friendly environment and make new workplace friends. A conflict also evokes raw emotions and resolving those with maturity can help connect better since employees already know each other, even if in a formerly negative way.

4. Meet People From Other Departments

With online work continuing, many employees have found themselves connecting with colleagues from other departments. Connecting with different employees allows innovative and unconventional thinking and the same goes for the bonds formed. This also increases collaboration and creativity in the organisation. While employees might work in different departments, the personalities can match and an alliance can be formed with a holistic spread as well. Understanding work and culture across departments also makes it easier to connect with colleagues and the organization as a whole.

5. Bond Over Office Politics

Since bonding at the water cooler is no longer an option, you can try bonding with someone over particular people or subjects they should avoid. This small piece of information can greatly help them build their career and in no time you will find yourself with a new office best friend.

In Conclusion:

While it can be easy to build an alliance, it is important to nurture and maintain it. Engaging, connecting and staying in touch is vital for an alliance to sustain. Spending time within the alliance (Without being cliquey and uninviting to others) is extremely important to develop strong relationships that can eventually supportively help guide one through workplace problems and navigate one's career path. A healthy alliance needs to be strong and maintained for it to be invaluable.

Entrepreneur Guide 101: How To Sail Through Rough Days With A Smile

- Brianna Da Cruz

With the pandemic raging on and the virus mutating into different variants, the past year has been challenging.

Yet, everyone has tried to cope with it differently, from going on a journey to finding happiness to barely staying afloat. There are days when getting out of bed can be equivalent to climbing a steep hill. However, as an entrepreneur or small business owner, not everyone has the liberty to take the day off.

On these days, when it feels like an uphill battle, business does not cease to exist. On the contrary, it becomes essential that you treat your customers well and do not purge your negative emotions onto them. A bad review on Yelp can make or break your business, and a smile is a quick solution to attaining a five-star review. So how can you make yourself feel better during these days?

Here are a few tips that will help:

1. Get Excited To Wake Up

A tip that usually helps when you're feeling low is to make your morning as exciting as possible. Cultivating healthy habits to get out of the rut is essential. It can be a feel-good morning routine or doing one thing you love every day like Writer Gretchen Rubin with her Happiness Project. This will help put you in a positive mind space and increase your overall happiness quotient.

A mindful walking session in the morning is another great way to start your day. In a study, a group of individuals who reported high levels of psychological distress were given eight mindful walking sessions over four weeks; the effect was striking. Symptoms of physical stress significantly reduced, and their quality of life increased twofold. (Teut et al., 2013) This will help put you in a good mood to tackle the day ahead.

2. Express Gratitude

Gratitude is a secret weapon used by coaches globally to uplift mood. Try to be as grateful as you can when a customer enters the shop and purchases an item. Use the power of gratitude and do not stop at a simple thank you but explain why their purchase means so much to your brand.

A research paper posted on Emerald revealed that customer gratitude increases loyalty and helps build stronger relationships. While it helps your business flourish, it also aids in increasing personal happiness. Research has shown that gratitude reduces envy, facilitates positive emotions, and makes us more resilient. (Amin, 2014)

3. Find Your Magic Potion

This can be anything ranging from listening to a song that makes you happy or going for a long drive and enjoying the moment. It is imperative to find the one thing that makes you happy that can instantly change your mood. Dancing every day for 10 minutes, even during a quick break, is a great way to uplift your mood.

Swedish researchers studied more than 100 teenage girls who were struggling with issues like depression and anxiety. The results showed the girls who took the dance classes improved their mental health and reported a boost in their mood. The researchers concluded dance could result in a very positive experience for participants and could potentially contribute to sustained new healthy habits.

4. Reach Out To Friends And Families

A clinical professor and Entrepreneur, Dr Michael Freeman, surveyed 242 entrepreneurs about their mental

health. Of the 242 entrepreneurs he studied, 49% reported having a mental health condition. Depression was the highest-reported reported condition, being present in 30% of all entrepreneurs. ADHD (29%) and anxiety problems (27%) followed suit.

With dwindling mental health rates primarily caused by the pandemic, it's always a good idea to acknowledge your low mental health and work on it rather than suppress it. Let your family and friends help and support you on this journey while you own up to it and learn to embrace your situation.



In Conclusion:

Brad Feld, MD of the Foundry Group, says, “Depression is not a topic the start-up community understands well. My own experience has made me realize that this imbalance is detrimental to this kind of work. The only way I survive the dark periods is by constantly renewing myself and my perspective. Starting over is part of the process of starting up.”

Driving The AgriTech Revolution



Image Credit: alescalife.com

Stuart Oda is the Founder of Alesca Life, an AgriTech company specializing in farm management software to make localized food production more data-driven and facilitate building of indoor vertical farms. Alesca Life was named a World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer as a leader in hyper-local farming and controlled environment agriculture and has been selected for prestigious global startup programs, including Stanford StartX, Unreasonable Impact, Dubai Future Accelerators and Thrive Agtech.

Written by Justin Roberts

Stuart Oda is a second-generation Japanese-American; he was born in Colorado and moved to Southern California when he was pretty young. At 12, he moved to Singapore for his high school and middle-school education. Oda later returned to the U.S. to study Political Science at UCLA, with the intent to become a lawyer and a goal to work at the State Department. Upon graduation, he applied to several places and only received a call back from

Merrill Lynch Tokyo. Oda accepted the investment banking position and shifted base to Japan.

His five-year stint at Merrill Lynch taught Oda how finance could be used as a weapon for good in the world's emerging urban markets. He said, "I did a fundraising project for a BioTechnology Company called Amgen and what was exciting was that I found out you could indirectly impact the lives of individuals that you would never meet by helping a company like Amgen raise money to develop drugs that would impact the lives of cancer patients or people with diabetes. So it was really exciting for me to be in an industry that could indirectly impact the lives of so many." This opportunity to create an impact greatly captivated Oda. His new perspective later guided him on his journey when he launched his project.

He was then offered the position of Corporate Development Senior Advisor in Dell in China in 2011. While he was in China, he noticed a shift from rural to urban economies. The projections revealed that China's demographics have up to 250 million people gradually shifting from rural farms to urban city dwellers for a better quality of life. However, this change would later cause upheaval for future global food production. This bleak prediction greatly distressed Oda and inspired him to start his own company to avert this inevitable food crisis.

The emphasis on solving the problem of food deserts has caused scientists to have experimented with varied options in urban areas. One of the most efficient methods used includes vertical farming that uses indoor aeroponic and hydroponic methods to grow sustainable food in compact spaces. Hundreds of plants are vertically stacked on racks to maximize space usage. This concept caught Oda's attention, and he settled on this approach with the intention to perfect the process.

With Oda's IT background, he began studying agritech with the assistance of technology. In his TedTalk, he says, "LEDs provide the light, and mineral nutrients are added to water instead of soil. Internet-linked devices monitor humidity, acidity levels and the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water, allowing such variables to be adjusted to increase yields."

With his plan in order, Oda founded his company, Alesca Life, in Beijing, China, in 2013. Oda and his team began working on the unsolved problems in the field of Agritech. The cost of production was too high, and vertical farming is labour and energy-intensive.

To combat these woes, Oda and his team studied solutions adopted around the world like smart water usage in Israel, fertilizer efficiency in the Netherlands and tech developments in South Korea. They combined all these solutions and developed proprietary technology in-house; they succeeded in developing their core product: a container farm housing thousands of plants that anyone can tend.

The Alesca Life container farm houses around 3,000 plants while using less water than most people probably consume in their showers. Oda's advanced LED lighting has also been created to reduce energy usage significantly, and the indoor environment cancels out any need for pesticides. The final is a high-nutrient food that can sustain thousands of people living in urban food deserts.

"It's no longer impossible to grow food where people work and live", says Stuart Oda, referring to the amount of unused urban infrastructure available, including things such as old shipping containers. "Our system allows us to automate all of the major points of human error that could lead to a loss of crop," Oda added.

Talking about urban farms, he says, "this is really exciting for me personally, indoor vertical farming can actually be integrated seamlessly into the cityscape to help repurpose idle, underutilized and unused urban infrastructure. In fact, this is already happening today. Ride-sharing services have taken hundreds of thousands of cars off the road and they have significantly reduced the need for parking."

Alesca Life's new product soon went viral and was also supported by many investors. Oda received an invitation to become a TED Speaker and a fellow at Unreasonable Companies, a group that offers mentorship to upcoming entrepreneurs tackling the seemingly unsolvable problems of the future.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, accessing masks and ventilators was a

challenge. As coronavirus continues to spread, accessing some of the most basic food items may become a challenge," Oda said. "Governments are beginning to realize that investing in technology to enable local food production and building up resilience and capacity now is becoming more important as the frequency of disasters continues to increase."

Alesca Life has launched projects in partnership with clients in Singapore, China, Saudi Arabia and UAE, with the majority of its customers in China being high-end hotels. The company's next step is to expand its production volume and variety and start working with larger supermarkets and restaurants with the ultimate goal of making fresh vegetables affordable to everyone.

In conclusion, he says, "I still have trouble fully articulating how and why I decided to work, and continue to work, in the agricultural industry. But a couple of years ago, I found a rather unique answer hiding in plain sight. You see, I read an article about how your name, particularly your last name, can have a strong influence on everything from your personality to your professional career. This is my Japanese last name: Oda. And the characters translate literally into 'small farm.'"

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Harnessing The Power Of Introverts



Image Credit: quietrevolution

Susan Horowitz Cain is the world's most famous introvert. She is the author of *Quiet*, *Quiet Power*, *Quiet Journal* and the forthcoming book *Bittersweet*. She is widely recognized for her book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, which disputes that modern Western culture misunderstands and undervalues the traits and capabilities of introverted people.

Written by Brianna Da Cruz

Susan Cain is the youngest of three children and was raised in Lawrence, Nassau County, New York. She was an introvert born to introverted parents. Every weekend, their evening plans included her parents and her older siblings sitting around in the living room engrossed in their respective books. "I was probably the most extroverted of any of them," she added.

She fell in love with the process of writing at a young age; she recalled, "When I was a kid, I spent countless sunny afternoons writing stories. I called the space under the family card table my workshop and curled up there producing 'magazines' — loose leaf paper stapled together — subscriptions to which I sold to indulgent family members. My friend Michelle and I sat side by side at her bedroom table, writing plays and reading them aloud to each other."

Continuing her love affair with writing, she graduated with an A.B. in English from Princeton University in 1989. However, she later changed her career path. She says in her TedTalk, "I became a Wall Street lawyer, of all things, instead of the writer that I had always longed to be — partly because I needed to prove to myself that I could be bold and assertive too." She graduated with a J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1993.

Cain started her career as an attorney at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton and worked there for seven years.

"I still kept seeing how extroverts are held up as the ideal. In my law career, looking at leadership and negotiation skills, there was a belief that you had to be a certain person — a 'take charge, get what you want' sort of person," says Cain.

However, this did not align with her introverted personality and she decided to reroute to her original plan to become a writer. When Cain first left her legal career, she took a leave of absence so she would have a safety net and could go back if necessary. She says this choice gave her 'psychological freedom.' She enrolled herself for an NYU class on creative nonfiction writing, which Cain immensely enjoyed: she felt like she was destined for this and pushed herself to achieve more.

Although she loved her class, she started thinking of a plan to earn a living. She soon began teaching negotiation skills (given her legal background) at a consultancy firm in the evenings while she spent her mornings pursuing her passion for writing. She started by writing short plays and short stories as a fun exercise: "It was important to me

to start that way, with no financial or professional pressure around it".

Talking about her book *Quiet*, she adds, "When I first started working on [Quiet], I thought that it was an odd and idiosyncratic project, so I hoped to make a book out of it, but at the beginning I had no idea it was going to become this gigantic thing. It felt much more like an idiosyncratic personal project."

However, soon after its release, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* became an instant hit and has been translated into 40 languages since its inception.

Her next book, *Quiet Power*, was aimed at teenagers. "When *Quiet* came out, I got so many letters from introverted people aged 40, 50, 60, who were still carrying the wounds of childhood, of growing up as an introverted child in an extroverted culture," said Cain. "They kept saying, 'If only I'd known all this when I was a kid.'"

This book was specially written for quiet children and their parents, clearly setting out the differences between introverts, drawn to the inner world of thoughts and feelings, and extroverts, thriving on people and activity.

In 2015, Cain launched *Quiet Revolution*, a groundbreaking new company that unleashed a new-age movement to empower introverts in every facet of their life — from education to a unique set of services and products. Cain says, "After *QUIET* was published, I started to hear from thousands and thousands of readers. They said they felt that for the first time in their lives they had permission to be themselves, and they were eager for the tools to encourage other introverts in their companies, their schools, and their personal lives to feel the same way." This led her on a journey to empower her soul tribe of introverts.

Motivated by the success of *Quiet Revolution*, she soon launched the Quiet Leadership Institute (QLI), which delivers online and in-person learning programs to help companies better utilize the talents of their introverted employees and improve team communication by fixing the introvert-

extrovert dialogue, leading to greater productivity and improved morale.

"Introverts make up an astounding one third to one half of the population," said Paul Scibetta, CEO & Co-Founder of *Quiet Revolution*. "Our goal is to become a community of ideas and best practices to inspire introverts and the people who interact with them." QLI has worked with global organizations such as NASA and Procter & Gamble (P&G).

In conclusion, Cain says, "Introverted leaders are more likely to share power and give others space to express ideas. Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Rosa Parks exemplify such introverted leadership, and a quieter, more balanced and thoughtful culture would produce more leaders like them. Maybe this is a proposition anyone can endorse, whether they prefer Friday nights with hot tea and a novel or in the crush and bustle of the crowds."

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