BLOG 1

INSPIRATION

A poem to inspire hope & optimism in the face of challenging times: "What we could"

As the road turns a corner, we can't see what's ahead

But we trust in the future and onwards we tread

The sun may be setting on the structures we know

The systems are twisting & behaviours are low

But the new world is beaconing with the possible in the air

With many who can see and dream and who care

So much lies ahead when we let the old crumble

From the ashes will rise a phoenix with a rumble.

We've got this, we have, we can all rise up, up, up

But first we have to let go of the stale and corrupt

Good night old friend, you commercial old cap

We loved what you offered and the fun on tap

But now we need more, for our eyes are open

Our hearts have expanding and we're done with our moping

I no longer strive for a Witchery bag,

Or judge my self worth by the brand or price tag

I breathe in & hope for a world with more love

Less anger, more power, less excess, more 'enough'

So let's stay strong and together, not 'nice' and 'good'

But honest and fiery and focused on what we could...

BLOG 2
How to optimise performance & enable your people to reach their potential

CONFIDENCE

Are you in danger of letting the Fear of Fear hold you back? A guide to being courageous.

Yesterday I went swimming with a friend. Afterwards over a coffee, we talked about work.

She told me about how that morning the 'big boss' (her manager's manager) came to their work.

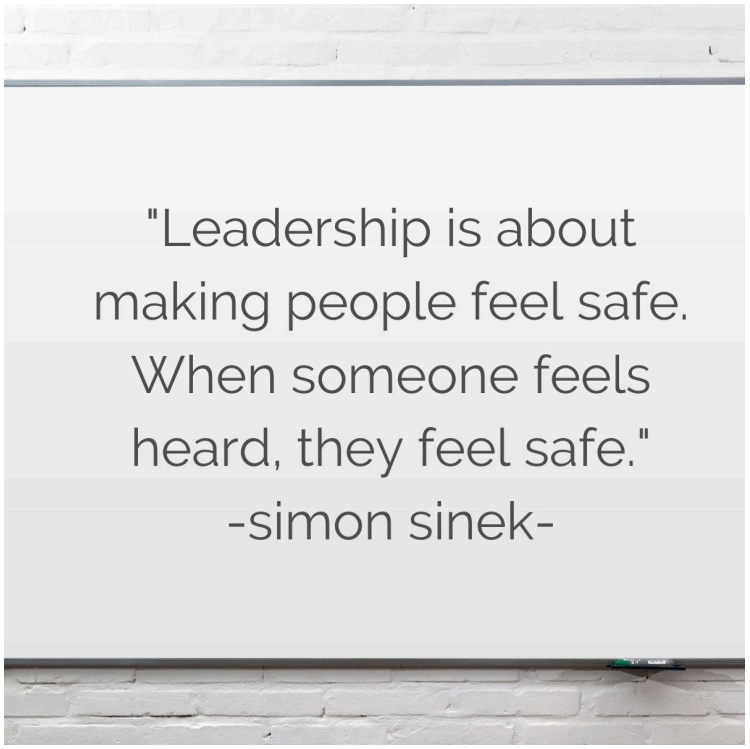
She felt ignored. He did not smile or acknowledge any of the people working there, no 'morning', no hi, no introductions or check ins.

Later that morning, her manager shouted down the hall so everyone could hear (including clients)...'oh for gods sake, don't do that. We don't do that anymore. Do you forget everything?'

It's heartbreaking that in certain workplaces this behaviour is still "normal".

And sadly, her manager thinks she needs training!

For optimum performance improvement, I would suggest an alternative approach.



1. She needs a safe workplace where her central nervous system is not on high alert impacting her ability to think clearly.

2. She needs leaders who create a strong sense of belonging & help her feel seen, acknowledged & valued.

3. She needs a system that reinforces the desired ways of working & is regularly updated with well written checklists that detail what TO DO, not what not to do!

4. She needs clear constructive, future focused feedback delivered calmly & kindly.

I feel shocked and sad when I hear these stories. There are clearly some places of work & people that need support.

I also feel hope as there is another way. And there are plenty of us out there who want to help!

#performanceconsulting
#continousimprovement
#reduceerrorrates
#businesscapability

Blog 3
LEADING POWERFULLY

How to optimise performance & enable your people to reach their potential

The Fear of Facing the Fear

In the last couple of weeks I have been focusing on facing my fear.

Head on, eye to eye, hot flush by hot flush…

I have been relearning how to 'Feel the fear and do it anyway' (thank you Susan Jeffers!)

Why, you may wonder?

Well my reason is very personal and meaningful to me.

My son has been really struggling to go to Vacation Care. He's excited to go in the morning. He talks about it happily in the car. But as we arrive at the venue, it happens! He becomes gripped by what can be described as a huge wave of freezing fear. His body tightens. He even gets a bit sweaty. And he clings to me like an octopus.

It has been rough. I have wanted to give up and just take him home, safe, with me, cocooned. But right now it is my priority to help him see that he can feel afraid & that's ok, AND he can move through it and feel fine after. That's courage. That's bravery. We are building both resilience & self-efficacy! (And the woman who runs vacation care is a highly experienced child counsellor who specialises in kids on the spectrum with anxiety, so he is in safe hands!)

But I realised last week that I can't expect him to do it alone.

I have to face some of my fears too.

So the first day I dropped him off, I was sitting recovering in the car and I decided to do something I was afraid to do. I found a local swimming spot I had never been to before and I went for a dip in the ocean pool on my own (well there were a few others around!). I know to most Aussies this sounds so silly, but I'm Scottish you see, swimming in the real-live sea with waves and stuff is not really my thing!

But what was important was I focused on feeling the fear. I noticed how I felt standing looking down at the pool. I felt the fear. The cold sweat down the back of my neck. The dry mouth. The hot flush in my cheeks. I changed my mind a few times, I felt heavy and frozen to the steps.

But I did it anyway, with a little help from some friends.

I shared my fear with a lovely lady at the top of the stairs that I was scared I wouldn't be able to get out and she told me to wear trainers as it can be slippery at the bottom. Then I messaged some of my mates for moral support, who cheered me on with some supportive gifs!

Afterwards, I felt good! Shaky & tired but ok!

I now had a story to share with my son about how I faced a fear today and how my body felt.

As I was driving home, I began reflecting on how this affects us at work.

How does fear hold us back from changing jobs, moving companies or applying for promotions? I wonder how much of what keeps us stuck is simply the fear of feeling the fear?

I believe it is not always a fear of the consequences that holds us back, for some of us it is the fear of the fear itself - the emotion, the sensation, the feeling.

The fear of feeling scared, afraid or nervous. These emotions, for most of us, are not pleasant. They are not comfortable. They are not enjoyable. We tend to want to avoid feeling them.

But the reality is that we need to make peace with these physical sensations for us to be able to do brave (& hard) things. We need to invite them in & accept the feelings, if we want to do change!

We have to feel the fear and do it anyway!

There is a great technique that I am actively working with. It's not about deregulating fear & anxiety by trying to 'calm down', suppressing the emotion, or removing the sensations, it's about shifting the way we perceive the experience of it, and by ultimately accepting it's presence.

Firstly, I am using mindfulness as a way to develop my sensory awareness. I'm slowly learning to be more aware of my body sensations, to feel them more fully, sit with them, experience them & accept them.

Then I'm learning to reframe them. One researcher Alison Wood Brooks, from Harvard Business School wrote about an approach in a paper called 'Get excited - Reappraising Anxiety as Excitement'.

The basis of it is if we can change the way we perceive the feeling of fear & anxiety, we can move through it & even work with it to help us perform better.

"The way we verbalize and think about our feelings helps to construct the way we actually feel".

It requires us to experience fear, the rush of adrenaline and cortisol in our body. Instead of perceiving this 'hit' as negative & trying to avoid or remove the feeling, we choose to see it in a positive and even opportunistic way - it can move us to action! The researcher proposed using the phrase ‘I am excited’ however I prefer ‘I am alive’.

I prefer to use 'I am alive'

I know many brave people who do physically daring things all the time. I have never been one of them. But I am committed to learning to feel & face the fear so I can learn to accept it’s presence.

And as I do so, I not only make braver choices in my work and career, I’m also helping my son learn to experience the discomfort of being afraid and not let it hold him back.

So as you transition into the next phase of your life, are you in danger of letting the Fear of Fear hold you back?



