

Demystifying Leadership Connectivity: Rediscovering the soul of leadership.

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Leadership connectivity is examined from one of the key tenets included in definitions of leadership namely; the influence leaders have on employees/stakeholders. The lecture explores how a leader's influence, through the exercise of specific connectivity related behaviours, can systematically create rapid, profound and sustainable changes in human behaviour (of followers/employees). Contextualised against a rapidly changing world characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity it is proffered leaders must connect and identify with those they lead to unleash the full power of passion, tenacity and perseverance. In addition, it is necessary for leaders to espouse a worldview that is cognizant of the complexities brought about by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The evolution of leadership philosophy is traced in relation to the role of employees' importance to organisations. A further tenet required in a complex ambiguous world of work. Classical leadership theories, focused on the role of people/employees, are examined to support the evolution in leadership philosophy.

Having framed the context of the topic, a personal journey based on research is outlined. The journey commenced by identifying drivers of employee engagement that highlighted the role of leaders/supervisors as a key factor in promoting engagement. This provided the impetus to identify specific leader behaviours that contributed to employee engagement and moreover enhanced the leader's influence. A study into African leadership revealed a hybrid approach, which combines Western pragmatism and African humanism, recognises the importance of fact, logic and the nature of reality, but also promotes the recognition of human focused and collectivist forms of leadership (humanism).

Valuable insights were gained from the study of ecological intelligence emphasising the interconnectivity of systems as well as human connectivity and tracing its origins in the psyche. Key takeouts include the following; a different worldview is required by leaders to navigate in today's world, leaders need to think systemically about relationships and behavioural spheres of influence, and the importance of the limbic brain function that controls emotions.

Examination of the neuroscience behind leadership confirmed that the brain is wired for social connectivity. Leaders who understand the brain's interpretation and response (by employee) to stimulus received can adapt their response to potentially modify the social domains that drive human behaviour. Understanding the interconnected processes of emotions, thinking, feeling and successful self regulation together with the electrochemical activity that initiates a safe or positive response represents the soul of leadership that is connectivity. Neurally-aware leaders; understand the importance of the limbic system and build their relationships by creating safety (brain response) for employees that elicit positive, move towards behaviours; practice mindfulness that involves reflective practice that switches the mind from analytical to quiet mode that assists with leadership of self and employees; counteract the innate negativity in the brain by deliberately deploying positive messaging in interpersonal communications.