

Finding That Business Clarity - Is Bali With My Mother.

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You know how it is, reaching the end of the day after the fourth meeting, twelfth call and second 'drill down' into all the moving parts of the current project, I was looking forward to going home to create a sensational pureed roast chicken with the main lady in my life. No not my partner or my mother, but stay tuned on that story, but my darling newly created daughter.

Single motherhood was not the plan, neither was being pregnant in my 40's but here we are. Realising that my life was not chaotic enough, I recently decided to start my own business after having time off to spend with my baby.

Well you know what they say, if you want a job done well give it to a busy person. Nothing serves up a large helping of clarity like having your world turned upside down. Having been there by circumstance, I now strongly encourage all business to go there with purpose.

Having the opportunity to rebrand, rethink and resurface with clarity should be something our organisations and our people plan for, rather than just fall into, usually by mishaps or misfortune. I draw energy from establishing clarity of purpose and subsequently grow as a person, and I believe this 'purposeful chaos' is the key to rapid business growth.

Single motherhood gave me the freedom to start my own successful business, but it also gave me clarity about decision-making. I took calculated risks and reviewed everything, putting it all to the sword. The importance of this 'play back' cannot be underestimated.



In this I found that having clarity meant finding common ground by celebrating differences and securing honest relationships, ultimately building trust. I didn't just do this at work but at home too.

I was always closer to my father and since he died, I felt I needed to reconnect with my mother in a more meaningful way. It was then that I decided that a trip away with her was the sort of headfirst caution to the wind engagement I needed to risk, and we now do this together annually.

So for our third trip it's off to Bali we go. Blood cannot be our only reason for a relationship in the same way having a business deal cannot be the only reason it will succeed. It's why my business Harbour Consulting was formed and why I believe that taking risks and creating purposeful chaos will positively reset your organisation.

Clarity in business is essential and I would like to share with you how it can be achieved in your company with these 8 important steps:

1. Test whether your organisation's purpose and vision motivate and aligns people.

What does success look like when living out this purpose? This shared understanding helps create an anchor of clarity in a sea of uncertainty that generates wave after wave of unprecedented challenges. It also frees up the organisation to think more openly about where it might play and innovate and how it might invent new ways to bring value to its stakeholders. These "meaning assets" must be tested, however. It entails demonstrating how everything from business strategies to operational decisions to leadership behaviours aligns to the purpose and vision. This creates legitimacy around purpose and vision and helps people to see how they work, from different angles.

2. Communicate authentically in order to engage.

The ability to communicate information accurately and clearly is vital, but not sufficient. Communicating authentically and transparently, from a place of purpose and values, enables leaders to move from message transmittal to meaning generation. In addition, it builds stronger relationships, fosters a collaborative culture of teamwork and creates an environment where people work hard to solve intractable problems because they know it's for the greater good. Recognizing this, leaders must be willing to invest in themselves and cultivate skills such as reflection, attentiveness and open-mindedness. Most importantly, they have to be willing to listen carefully and engage in deep inquiry, not just to hear others' concerns and points of view, but also to build empathy for their experiences and perspectives.

3. Connect talent to technology, be curious and act with compassion.

These three other seemingly separate themes come together to help leaders solve the clarity puzzle. All three are fundamentally about building a human centric approach to leadership. Ironically, we are finding that the onset of AI and exponentially accelerating technology is putting pressure on leaders to dial up their humanity, not down. Finally, it is critical to instil compassion for the human factor. It ensures that people feel connected to the meaning leaders create and encouraged to unleash their full potential.

4. Focus on the big picture.



When in the meeting or conversation, try to get initial understanding and agreement about the big picture. What are we trying to accomplish? What final outcome are we interested in? If we can get agreement on the “What”, all parties can refocus the conversation and effort back to that important “What” when the conversation begins to get contentious.

5. Look for agreement on why.

Beyond the importance of “What”, spend time talking about “Why”. When everyone understands the purpose or why something needs to be achieved, we have the foundation for finding common ground.

6. Be committed to results, rather than specific solutions.

If you can honestly make this statement: “I am committed to us finding results more than getting you to agree with my approach” and are willing in one way or another to share this with the other person or group, you have taken a big step towards common ground.

7. Ask more and assert less.

This behaviour can have a huge impact on your results. Ask more questions. Learn more about the other options and opinions, understand their perspective further. Not only does this begin to create a different environment for collaboration and common ground, when you do this, others are (far) more likely to do the same.

8. Look for common ground.

To find common ground, look for it. If you have lost something, you look for it; you don't expect to find it without looking. When you do all the other suggestions here, and are earnestly looking for common ground, you are much more likely to find it.

One fundamental reason so many have had unsatisfying conversations or arguments about political topics is the same reason for conflicts at work. That fundamental issue is emotion. Emotion is an important part of what makes us human. But emotions showing up as anger, frustration and even resentment get in the way of a conversation that can lead in a productive direction.

So very soon I'll be on my way to spend a couple of weeks in solitary confinement with my mother. Okay maybe that's a little dramatic but it will take patience, commitment and kindness to overcome many years of not being on the same page. But whatever happens I'm ready because I've already challenged myself by throwing other aspects of my life into the air with a belief in the power of the unknown partnered with a controlled and risk adverse plan.

This is how organisations should seek clarity and empower their people to live out the mission, and why organisations should have purposeful chaos built into that vision.