THE MODERN MANAGER

PEOPLE-FIRST LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEW WORLD OF WORK



STEPHEN ASBURY

SECOND EDITION

“Managing is the pinnacle of human achievement”.

TOM PETERS

“Managing is the pinnacle of human achievement”.

TOM PETERS

Why would Tom Peters say this?

I want you to think about this for a moment.

Why would Tom Peters, one of the world’s top business thinkers, say such a thing?

Is it mere hyperbole? Or does he mean it? And what does he mean by it?

Is he saying that managing is a greater achievement than, say, Einstein's General Theory of Relativity?

No, probably not.

The clue to his meaning is in how he sees himself. Tom Peters is a passionate humanist. He believes in our potential as humans to build a more compassionate, just, and sustainable world.

If you look at this quote from a humanist perspective, then, I think Tom is saying that managing requires all that it is to be human.

Managing is the job for which we are perfectly evolved, and, thus, perfectly equipped.

To lead, inspire and grow a handful of other human beings will draw on all your best human qualities, starting with your capacity to care.

THE MODERN MANAGER

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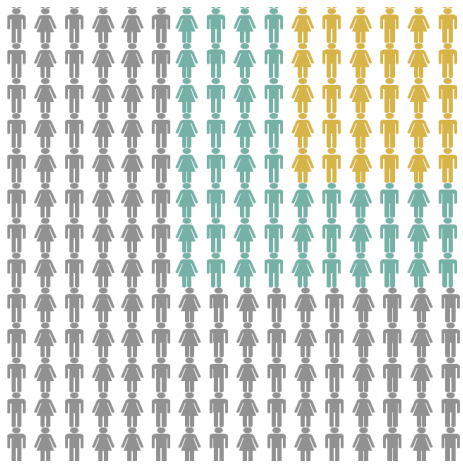
STEPHEN ASBURY

SECOND EDITION

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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION



Why this little book? And why now?

The new world of work is, rightly, topical at the moment. There's plenty to read and watch on the changes it brings, and the kind of leadership employees are looking for.

The brush strokes are rather broad, however. So I wanted to put something together that helps visualise this new role, this person and the skills they need in more detail. I'm sure you'll tell me if I have succeeded in that.

In fact, the role isn't new. Thankfully, there are many enlightened managers out there who fit the 'new' profile perfectly. They aren't yet nearly enough, though, to relieve the misery inflicted on workers everywhere by old-school authoritarian leadership.

Is this book for you?

If you are a manager looking after a handful or two of human souls, then perhaps you'll find some pointers here for the future you.

If you're a business leader wondering what kind of frontline managers you should hire or develop for this new world, I hope you will also pick up some clues here.

Note to the second edition

Although the ink on the first edition is hardly dry, I wanted to make more explicit the humanitarian crisis that is global employee disengagement (page 20) and add a conclusion (Chapter 5). Aside from a couple of minor typographical edits, the rest is the same.

Be kind. Be true.

STEPHEN ASBURY

Johannesburg
31 January 2023

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, do more, learn more and become more, you are a leader.”

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

TWO STAKES IN THE GROUND

What do we mean by leadership?

When you read the word leadership in this little book, may it not call to mind awkward G7 group photos or celebrity CEOs in the Davos slush.

Instead, picture our unsung hero, Dave, regional logistics manager for a national chain.

Dave has ten direct reports - a couple too many, he's told, but that's how the depots worked out. His is a mixed bunch but solid types. Well-hired with perhaps one or two on whom the jury is still drinking coffee in the canteen.

Dave has been in the job for nine months. He's doing OK, he feels. He is making his numbers. He's connecting with his team - mostly. He'd like to do more, though - have more impact, make more of an impression.

He's read about the new world of work. He likes the sound of it, doing more for his people and helping them get ahead. Practically though, he doesn't have a clue where he would start.

What would we wish for Dave a year down the line? What if he fulfilled John Quincy Adams' surprisingly modern prescription:

> "If your actions inspire others to dream more, do more, learn more and become more, you are a leader."

If Dave can do that with his merry band, he will be a leader.

That is how we think about leadership in this book; frontline managers making a difference through their teams and to the people in their teams.

Management and leadership

Here's another stake in the ground. We don't go with the gulch of difference between leaders and managers that John Kotter, Warren Bennis, et al. have been peddling for the last three decades. Dave wants to do both. He must successfully manage his unit's contribution to the workings of the organisation and take his people to a better place where there is growth, autonomy, flexibility, and reasonable levels of work satisfaction and engagement. Dave aspires to being a manager and a leader.

As Simon Sinek puts it: "Manage the work and lead the people."

Why is that still so controversial?

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CHAPTER 1:
THE STATE OF MANAGEMENT TODAY

“Engaged employees are in the game for the sake of the game; they believe in the cause of the organisation.”

PAUL MARCIANO

ANY CONVERSATION ABOUT MANAGEMENT NEEDS TO START WITH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Engaged employees are on-mission, accountable and energetic.

Engaged employees identify with the mission.

They take accountability for their outcomes and commit themselves with energy and enthusiasm.

They take pride in their work and get satisfaction from delivering on their commitments.

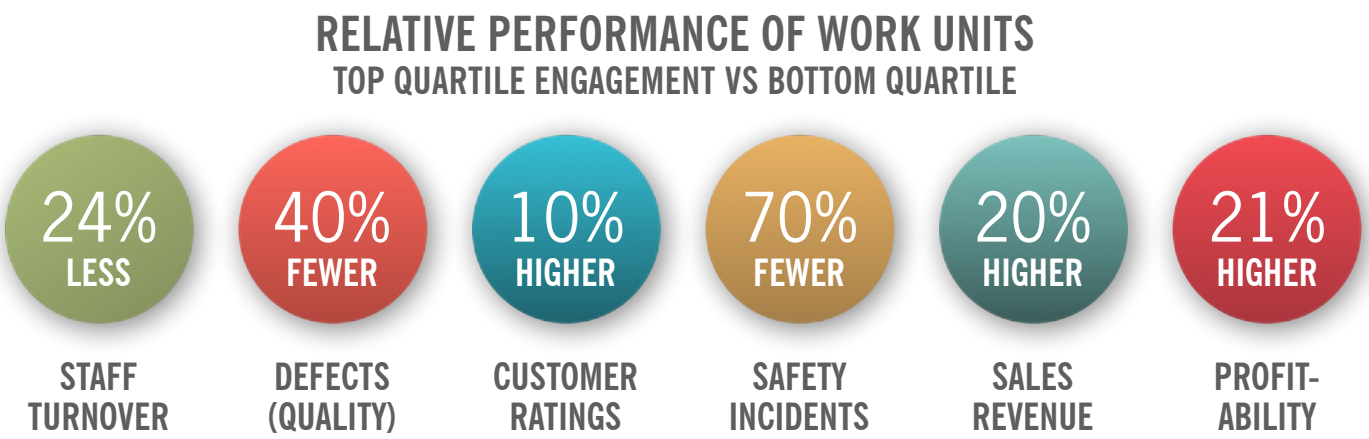
Engaged employees generally feel cared for by their managers.

Typically they will say, “I love my job!”

As we will see on the next page, strong engagement drives high performance for the individual and the organisation.

Engaged employees are happy at work.

ENGAGED EMPLOYEES DELIVER SUPERIOR RESULTS



When Gallup analysed the differences in performance between engaged and disengaged work units, those scoring in the top quartile on employee engagement way outperformed those in the bottom quartile*.

Engaged employees deliver superior results on every business performance metric regardless of country, culture, industry or organisation.

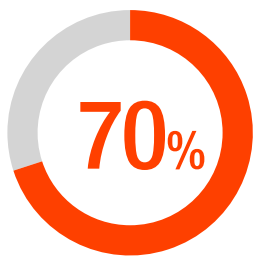
*The study covered more than 82,000 teams — over 1.8 million employees — in 230 organisations across 49 industries and in 73 countries. GALLUP, 2019.

High employee engagement must be a key objective for any and every organisation.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LARGELY DEPENDS ON GOOD MANAGERS

"Frontline Leaders Are Corporate Strength #1."

TOM PETERS



70% OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS DUE TO THE MANAGER

Although systems and processes matter, research shows that an employee's manager is the primary factor in their engagement and performance.

70% of employee engagement is due to the manager.

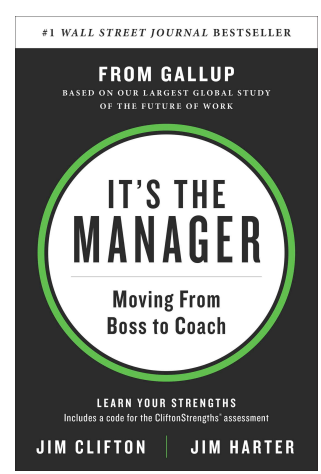
Here's another, more recent research finding by Gallup (2019):

THE QUALITY OF MANAGERS AND TEAM LEADERS IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN YOUR ORGANISATION'S SUCCESS.

That is big! I am unaware that anyone suggested the primacy of manager quality before Gallup did in 2019. We certainly weren't talking about it.

"Developing good managers with the skills to engage their people should be a top-priority investment."

Jim Clifton and Jim Harter, in It's The Manager, Gallup, 2019.

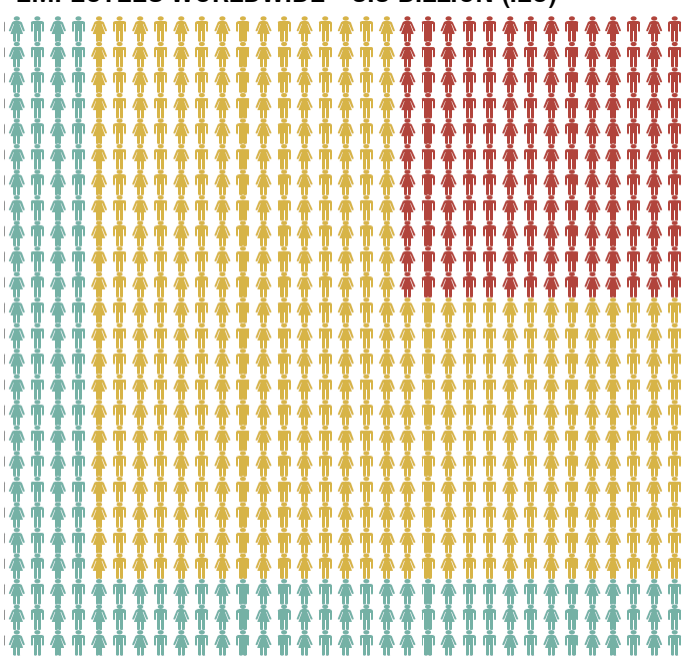


ONLY 1 OUT OF 5 EMPLOYEES WORLDWIDE IS ENGAGED

Only 21% of the world's 3.3 billion employees are engaged.

79% are not engaged; about 2.6 billion people - a third of the world's 8 billion - whose work day is, at best, unfulfilling and, at worst, miserable.

EMPLOYEES WORLDWIDE - 3.3 BILLION (ILO)



State of the Global Workplace, Gallup, 2022

To perhaps half the families on earth, one brings home powerlessness every night. Read that again.

Workplace unhappiness is a global humanitarian catastrophe.

2.6 billion people
are not happy at work, an unheeded humanitarian crisis of global scale.

☹	19% ARE ACTIVELY DISENGAGED	600 MILLION PEOPLE
😐	60% ARE DISENGAGED	2.0 BILLION PEOPLE
☺	21% ARE ENGAGED	700 MILLION PEOPLE

MOST CAUSES OF DISENGAGEMENT ARE FAILURES OF MANAGEMENT

Many factors can push an employee to disengage

Most are due to poor management

FACTORS CAUSING DISENGAGEMENT

- Unclear role and goals
- Inadequate resources
- Lack of support by superior
- Lack of guidance or feedback
- Lack of recognition
- Poor communication
- Lack of growth opportunities
- Limited autonomy
- Not being heard
- Micromanagement
- Low alignment with corporate mission
- Inauthentic values or leadership behaviours
- Favouritism
- Unfairness
- Poor work-life balance
- No sense of community

Bad bosses aren't all bad people

You'll notice nothing in here could be construed as genuinely malicious. Mainly they arise from poor management - bad bosses.

Bad bosses aren't all bad people. Without better advice or proper training, managers tend to imitate, for better or worse, what they see others doing.

The default style is often some version of command-and-control

Unfortunately it's often for worse. The default management system worldwide is old-school command-and-control, the fount of almost all sad tales of bad bosses and broken workplaces.

“Companies used to be able to function with autocratic bosses.

We don't live in that world anymore”.

ROSABETH MOSS KANTER

COMMAND AND CONTROL IS THE MAJOR CULPRIT IN THE DISENGAGEMENT FIASCO

Command-and-control leadership plays a major part in disengagement

Command-and-control is a top-down, autocratic management approach in which executives make decisions and workers execute by rigid standards and procedures.

- It is highly controlled through targets and measurement.
- Carrot and stick motivation (fear).
- It can be effective for a while until disengagement sets in.
- The dominant management approach worldwide despite evidence that it doesn't work.

Why doesn't authoritarian leadership work?

- Command-and-control is built to tell workers what to do.

People are secondary

- The focus is on results. People are regarded as a means to that end and are entirely secondary.

Strips away autonomy

- But humans like to do things under our own steam. People love autonomy. We hate being told what to do!

C&C motivates by fear, causing stress and anxiety

- Command-and-control makes no attempt to engage. Motivation is through fear of negative consequences.

Authoritarian leadership is the leading cause of the pervasive workplace stress we see today.

THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE ARE SECONDARY TO SUCCESS HAS A LONG HISTORY

WHEN DID IT START, THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE ARE DUE A LOWER STANDARD OF TREATMENT ONCE THEY CROSS THEIR WORKPLACE THRESHOLD? MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY HASN'T IT STOPPED?

Even with a good shove forward from Covid, the idea of People First still has a long way to go.

Perhaps surprisingly for the already-converted, there is not yet universal subscription to the principle of People First, by a long way.

The old-school camp, from Scientific Management over 100 years ago to command-and-control today, has had - and still has - heavyweight support.

The rogues gallery below features a few of the high-profile individuals who have helped entrench the idea that people are secondary, at best, in business success; mere components in the apparatus of production. Worker as robot is the implicit tenet even today.

Devised 'Scientific Management' while working for Ford. Time and motion efficiency.

"WORKER AS ROBOT"

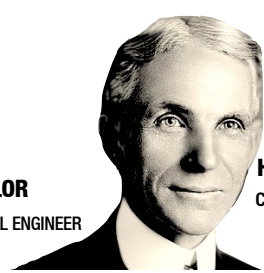


F W TAYLOR

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Applied Taylor's models to produce affordable cars. Working conditions were appalling. Production first.

"WORKERS LAST"



HENRY FORD

CHAIRMAN FORD

Ran General Motors on rigorous financial controls. Controls first.

"PEOPLE LAST"

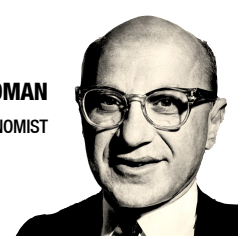


ALFRED P SLOAN

CHAIRMAN GM

Cemented the notion that the sole purpose of business is to maximise returns to shareholders.

"PROFIT BEFORE PEOPLE"



MILTON FRIEDMAN

NOBEL ECONOMIST

“Broken workplaces shouldn’t stay broken.

Improving life at work isn't rocket science, but the world is closer to colonising Mars than it is to fixing the world’s broken workplaces.

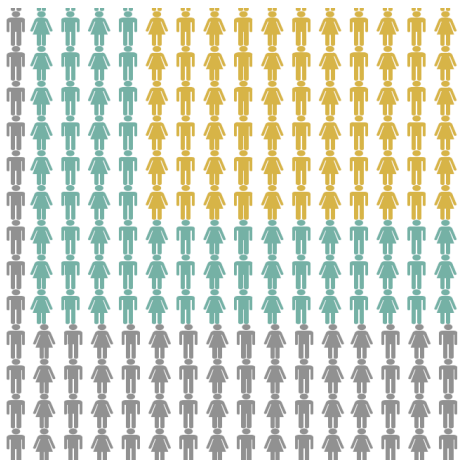
According to the world's workers, the real fix is unmistakable:

Better leaders in the workplace and an environment that promotes employee engagement.”

State of the Global Workplace, GALLUP, 2022

CHAPTER 1: SUMMARY
THE STATE OF MANAGEMENT TODAY

1. A conversation about management needs to start with employee engagement.
2. Engaged employees are happier and deliver better results.
3. Worldwide, only 1 person in 5 is engaged.
4. 4 in 5 (2.6 billion people) are disengaged and not fulfilled at work, a global humanitarian crisis.
5. Most cause of disengagement are attributable to bad management.
6. Command and control management is the default style and the major culprit in disengagement.
7. Even today, the idea that people are secondary to business success is well entrenched.
8. Broken workplaces shouldn't stay broken.
9. The fix is better leaders, and an environment that promotes employee engagement.



CHAPTER 2:
THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

“The end of being unhappy at work is here.”

DUENA BLOMSTROM, LINKEDIN, JULY 2021.

POST COVID, EMPLOYEES WANT MORE IN RETURN FOR THEIR LABOUR

"I'm done with meaningless toil, poor treatment and lousy bosses."

The Great Re-evaluation has raised the bar for employers.

With its tragic toll, the pandemic caused many to confront mortality and reflect on what's essential in life.

Across the globe, millions of people came to the same conclusions about their work:

"I'm done with meaningless toil, poor treatment and lousy bosses.

"I deserve more for my precious labour: purpose and commitment to my growth.

"I want flexibility around where and when I work.

"I don't want a boss. I want a coach."

"Most of all, give me better leadership. Someone who is more like a coach".

Thus is the bar raised for employers, never to regress to the old mark.

Managers will be at the frontline of delivering the change employees expect.

However, it falls to managers and team leaders to shift to a coaching style and meet employees' heightened expectations.

It's a New World of Work.

Welcome!

THE NEW WORLD OF WORK NEEDS A NEW KIND OF MANAGER

THE OLD AGENDA

- MY PAYCHECK
- MY SATISFACTION
- MY ANNUAL REVIEW
- MY WEAKNESSES
- MY JOB

MY BOSS

Employees want a different and ongoing conversation with their manager.

Can managers shift to being coaches?

MY NEW AGENDA

- MY PURPOSE
- MY DEVELOPMENT
- MY CONVERSATIONS
- MY STRENGTHS
- MY LIFE

MY COACH

"The best workers want managers who catalyse outstanding performance, development and engagement through conversation.

Leaders should want that kind of manager too".

GALLUP, 2020

FROM OLD-SCHOOL BOSS TO MODERN COACH: THE SHIFT BACK TO HUMAN

Managing as a coach is different from more traditional management styles. For example, an essential skill in coaching is listening rather than talking or telling.

The good news is that the values underpinning a humanist coaching style are the simple human ones we all share. We all have the capacity for empathy. Everyone is born kind, for example.

While there may be some dusting off needed (!), these abilities are innate and can be revitalised and further developed.

BOSS		COACH
OLD SCHOOL	PHILOSOPHY	HUMANIST
Command and control	MANAGEMENT MODEL	Safety, inclusion, empowerment
Hard charging, hard driving	PERSONAL STYLE	Quiet power
Results through compliance	INTENTION	Your success is our success
Accountability Compliance Performance	VALUES	Kindness Accountability Growth
Humans are resources	PEOPLE STRATEGY	People first
"Not relevant"	EQ	Medium to high. Improving
■ Does all the talking ■ Has all the answers ■ Gives instructions ■ Tells you how to do it ■ Controls	BEHAVIOUR	■ Listens ■ Asks questions ■ Inspires and motivates ■ Helps you learn how ■ Empowers
YOU SERVE ME	POWER MODE	I SERVE YOU

MANAGING AS A COACH NEEDS A NEW MINDSET AND NEW SKILLS

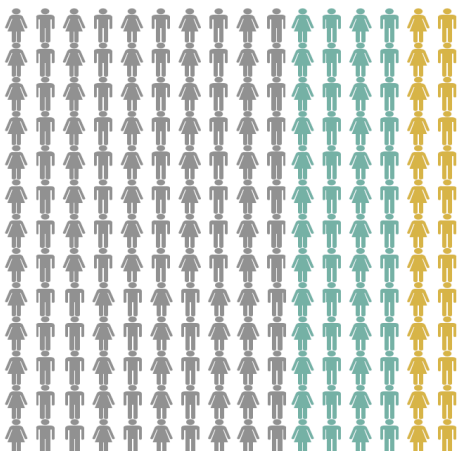
Managers will need training and ongoing development to build the mindset and skills they need to become proficient coaches.

In addition to coaching training, the right training program will emphasise simple, practical routines - like running great meetings and giving constructive feedback - designed to bring their coaching style to life as they conduct the daily business of running their teams.

COACH	NEW MINDSET	+	NEW SKILLS AND TOOLS
HUMANIST	HUMANIST		
Safety, inclusion, empowerment			Safety, inclusion, empowerment
Quiet power			Quiet power
Your success is our success	Your success is our success		
Kindness Accountability Growth	Kindness Accountability Growth		
People first			People first
Med - High, improving			Med - High, improving
■ Listens ■ Asks questions ■ Inspires and motivates ■ Helps you learn how ■ Empowers			■ Listens ■ Asks questions ■ Inspires and motivates ■ Helps you learn how ■ Empowers
I SERVE YOU	I SERVE YOU		

CHAPTER 2: SUMMARY
THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

1. Post Covid, employees expect more in return for their labour: purpose, growth, autonomy, flexibility - and better leadership.
2. Employees say they want managers who are more like coaches than bosses.
3. A modern manager/coach has a different mindset and operates very differently from an old-school boss.
4. The values underpinning a humanist or people-centric coaching style are innate human qualities we all share: kindness, empathy, compassion, respect and connection.
5. Managers will need practical training and development to build the mindset and skills for a coaching style.



CHAPTER 3:
A PROFILE OF THE MODERN MANAGER

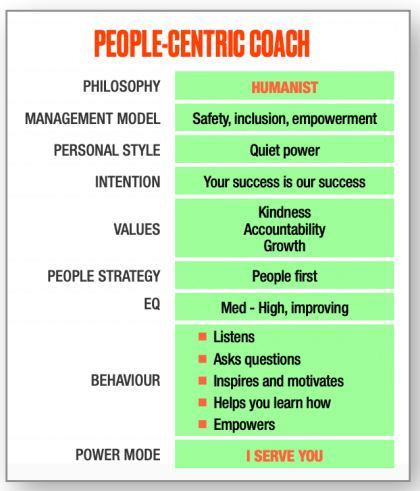
“Know the power of great managers.

Great managers help colleagues learn and grow, recognise them for doing great work, and make them truly feel cared about.

In environments like this, workers thrive.”

Gallup.

WE NEED DATA FOR OUR PROFILE OF THE MODERN MANAGER



SKETCH PROFILE OF MANAGER AS COACH

BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH

In this chapter, we will flesh out the outline of the humanist coach we drew in Chapter 2.

To be useful, our profile should describe in practical detail what a great modern manager does.

We need How To's for the descriptors in the sketch. How to create psychological safety, for example.

Is there rigorous research linking manager performance to specific behaviours and traits?

Fortunately, two landmark research projects provide some of the insight we need.

Both were undertaken relatively recently by Google.

Google is admired for its People First culture and progressive people ethic.

Google

PROJECT OXYGEN: WHAT DO GREAT MANAGERS DO?

8 THINGS GREAT MANAGERS DO

1. Be a good coach.
2. Empower. Don't micromanage.
3. Be interested in direct reports' success and well-being.
4. Don't be soft. Be productive and results-oriented.
5. Be a good communicator and listen to your team.
6. Help your employees with career development.
7. Have a clear vision and strategy for the team.
8. Have key technical skills so you can advise the team.

GOOGLE'S PROJECT OXYGEN

About ten years ago, Google launched a research project to answer the question: What are the traits of our best managers?

After two years of analysis, the study produced the list on the left - an authoritative, empirical description of what a great manager does, in order of importance.

That study, Project Oxygen, has since become famous. Its results are now widely accepted as the most credible template available for the behaviours of a great modern manager.

Great managers coach, empower and connect with their team members

Google, Project Oxygen, 2012.

PROJECT ARISTOTLE: WHAT EXPLAINS THE SUCCESS OF GREAT TEAMS?

GOOGLE'S PROJECT ARISTOTLE

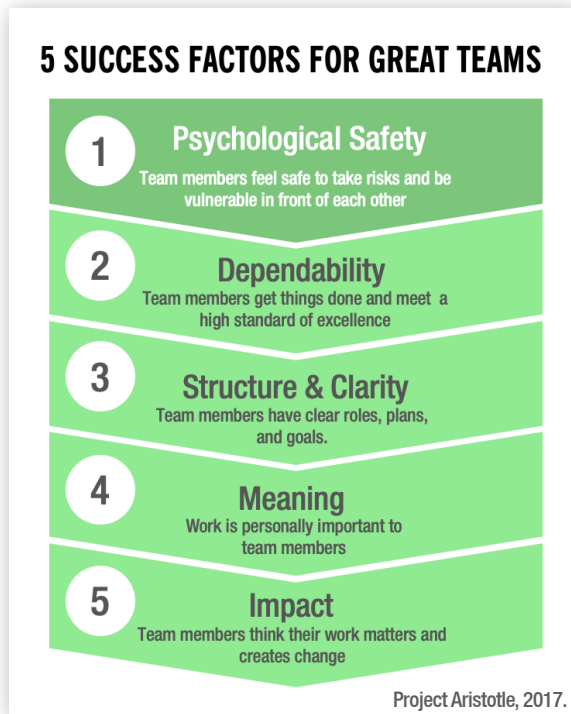
In a second study, Google posed the question: What explains the success of our most successful teams?

Project Aristotle, now also famous, concluded that the most vital factor for team success – by far - is that team members feel psychologically safe.

In psychological safety, people speak up, ask questions and admit mistakes without fear of ridicule, rejection, or other negative consequences.

Psychological safety develops when team leaders treat each team member in ways that make them feel included and valued.

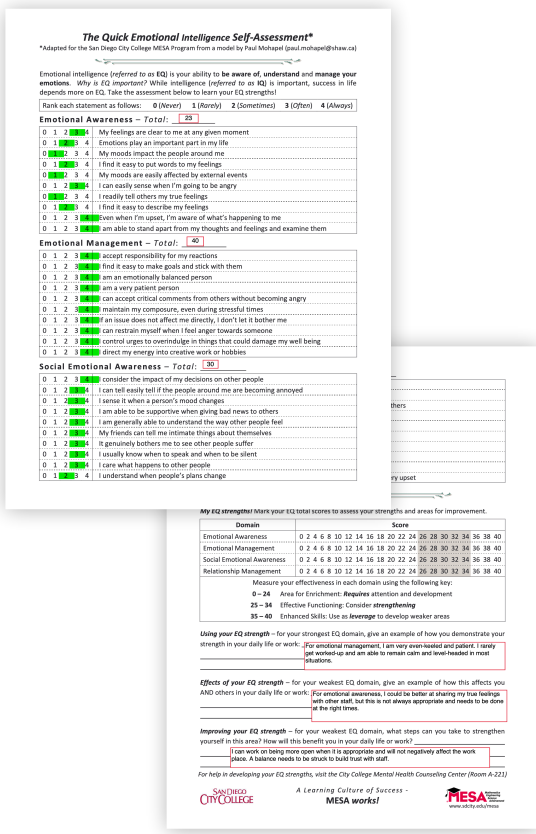
Dependability, the second factor, develops when people meet their commitments - do what they say they are going to do—team leader first, of course.



Great managers foster psychological safety for their team to flourish

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: LEAD WITH EMPATHY

Great manager/coaches tend to be high-EQ individuals who can lead with empathy



The Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment*

*Adapted for the San Diego City College MESA Program from a model by Paul Mohapel (paul.mohapel@shaw.ca)

Emotional intelligence (*referred to as* **EQ**) is your ability to **be aware of**, **understand** and **manage your emotions**. *Why is EQ important?* While intelligence (*referred to as* **IQ**) is important, success in life depends more on EQ. Take the assessment below to learn your EQ strengths!

Rank each statement as follows: **0** (*Never*) **1** (*Rarely*) **2** (*Sometimes*) **3** (*Often*) **4** (*Always*)

Emotional Awareness – *Total:* 25

0 1 2 3 4	My feelings are clear to me at any given moment
0 1 2 3 4	Emotions play an important part in my life
0 1 2 3 4	My moods impact the people around me
0 1 2 3 4	I find it easy to put words to my feelings
0 1 2 3 4	My moods are easily affected by external events
0 1 2 3 4	I can easily sense when I'm going to be angry
0 1 2 3 4	I readily tell others my true feelings
0 1 2 3 4	I find it easy to describe my feelings
0 1 2 3 4	Even when I'm upset, I'm aware of what's happening to me
0 1 2 3 4	I am able to stand apart from my thoughts and feelings and examine them

Emotional Management – *Total:* 40

0 1 2 3 4	I accept responsibility for my reactions
0 1 2 3 4	I find it easy to make goals and stick with them
0 1 2 3 4	I am an emotionally balanced person
0 1 2 3 4	I am a very patient person
0 1 2 3 4	I can accept critical comments from others without becoming angry
0 1 2 3 4	I maintain my composure, even during stressful times
0 1 2 3 4	If an issue does not affect me directly, I don't let it bother me
0 1 2 3 4	I can restrain myself when I feel anger towards someone
0 1 2 3 4	I control urges to overindulge in things that could damage my well being
0 1 2 3 4	I direct my energy into creative work or hobbies

Social Emotional Awareness – *Total:* 30

0 1 2 3 4	I consider the impact of my decisions on other people
0 1 2 3 4	I can tell easily tell if the people around me are becoming annoyed
0 1 2 3 4	I sense it when a person's mood changes
0 1 2 3 4	I am able to be supportive when giving bad news to others
0 1 2 3 4	I am generally able to understand the way other people feel
0 1 2 3 4	My friends can tell me intimate things about themselves
0 1 2 3 4	It genuinely bothers me to see other people suffer
0 1 2 3 4	I usually know when to speak and when to be silent
0 1 2 3 4	I care what happens to other people
0 1 2 3 4	I understand when people's plans change

My EQ strengths! Mark your EQ total scores to assess your strengths and areas for improvement.

Domain	Score
Emotional Awareness	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40
Emotional Management	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40
Social Emotional Awareness	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40
Relationship Management	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40

Measure your effectiveness in each domain using the following key:

0 – 24 Area for Enrichment: ***Requires*** attention and development
25 – 34 Effective Functioning: Consider ***strengthening***
35 – 40 Enhanced Skills: Use as ***leverage*** to develop weaker areas

Using your EQ strength – for your strongest EQ domain, give an example of how you demonstrate your strength in your daily life or work: For emotional management, I am very even-keeled and patient. I rarely get worked-up and am able to remain calm and level-headed in most situations.

Effects of your EQ strength – for your weakest EQ domain, give an example of how this affects you AND others in your daily life or work: For emotional awareness, I could be better at sharing my true feelings with other staff, but this is not always appropriate and needs to be done at the right times.

Improving your EQ strength – for your weakest EQ domain, what steps can you take to strengthen yourself in this area? How will this benefit you in your daily life or work? I can work on being more open when it is appropriate and will not negatively affect the work place. A balance needs to be struck to build trust with staff.

For help in developing your EQ strengths, visit the City College Mental Health Counseling Center (Room A-221)

San Diego City College — *A Learning Culture of Success* - **MESA *works!*** — MESA www.sdccfp.edu/mesa

AN EQ SELF-ASSESSMENT

MANAGING PEOPLE IS AN EMOTIONAL BUSINESS

Modern managers apply and develop their emotional intelligence to deepen self-awareness, improve self-management, and build productive relationships.

In the past (and still today in command-and-control organisations), it was the rule that emotions had no place at work.

Today we recognise that managing and leading require the ability to tune into people's emotional reality and respond empathetically, sometimes called 'getting into the emotional lane'.

The modern manager/coach will know their EQ (online self-assessments are plentiful), their strengths and how to leverage them and work on growing their EQ over time.

Fundamentally, the modern manager has to CARE about the people in her charge.

THE MODERN MANAGER MOTIVATES WITH INTRINSIC DRIVE AND INCLUSION

FIND THEIR FIRE

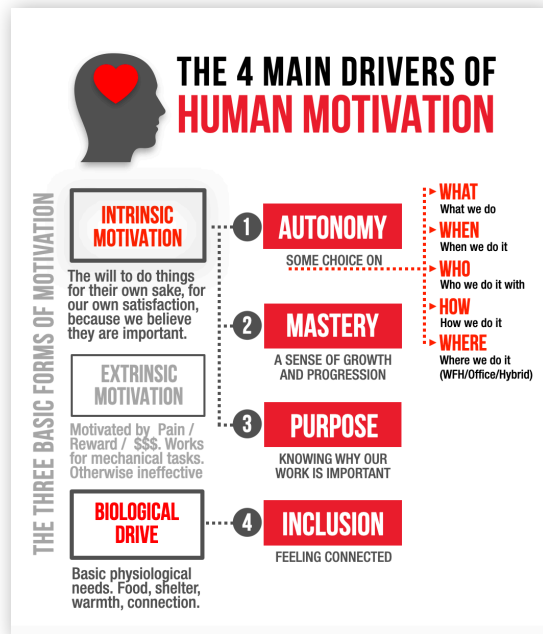
The modern manager/coach knows that carrot-and-stick motivation has only short-term effects. Financial rewards lose their draw over time, becoming expected regardless. Threatening pain (the social kind, embarrassment, humiliation or rejection) is profoundly dissociating. Resentment and disengagement will surely follow.

We, humans, get fired up to do things for our satisfaction or because we believe they are important. This intrinsic drive has three types*:

Autonomy:	Having some choice over how, when and where we do our work.
Mastery:	The sense that we are learning and growing.
Purpose:	Knowing what we do makes a difference.

Map a path that sparks their fire.

* Drive, by Dan Pink, 2009. The must-read guide to motivation.



BRING THEM INTO THE FOLD

Inclusion is a powerful human impulse.

Promoting healthy social networks amongst colleagues, and helping individuals feel accepted, builds a sense of family-at-work that can be very meaningful and motivating.

"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand."

KARL A. MENNIGER, PSYCHIATRIST

THE MODERN MANAGER IS A POWERFUL LISTENER

Why we are bad listeners

We can process 400 words a minute, but most people only speak 125 words per minute. We typically use the rest of our mental capacity to think about other things.

PAY ATTENTION!

You can't listen if you are talking.

People need attention. Your team members need your intense, focused, palpable attention. Stop talking. Start listening.

Nothing will set you apart from your old-school counterpart more than your ability to actively, intensely listen.

One of the most sincere forms of respect is to actually listen to what another has to say.

Close your laptop. Mute your phone and put it away. Deflect interruptions. Take no calls. Whatsoever.

Open your body posture. Lean towards the speaker.

Maintain eye contact. Focus. Think about what you are hearing. Process. Be working hard to understand.

Use reflective listening techniques: paraphrase, reflect, summarise, and ask questions. Listen to their emotions.

Don't even think about pretending to listen. Your eyes will give you up in a moment.

BETTER LISTENER, SMARTER SPEAKER

Did you know that when the speaker believes you are listening intently, their cognitive ability improves? The better you listen, the smarter they become. Oxytocin at work, yet again.

Be a powerful listener.

Nothing will better show that you care.

Be a powerful listener. Nothing will better demonstrate that you care.

CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY
A PROFILE OF THE MODERN MANAGER

TRAITS AND BEHAVIOURS OF THE MODERN MANAGER

While this table is relatively detailed, it is surely not exhaustive. Hopefully, there's enough to form a good picture of the modern manager's traits and style.

As an interesting exercise, run through the list of behaviours and ask yourself: would an old-school boss typically do this? After the third bullet, I get NO all the way down - a clear contrast between old-school and modern.

The modern manager is doing a completely different job. And that's good news!

BUSINESSLIKE	■ Ensures each team member knows their role and feels accountable for their agreed outcomes. ■ Sets high expectations and makes sure they are clear. ■ Is action focused, insisting on follow through and delivery on time to a high standard. ■ Employs a coaching style to manage team members' performance and growth.
INSPIRING	■ Works with the team to build a shared and inspiring understanding of the vision, strategy and purpose. ■ Coaches each team member to fashion motivating roles, projects and development experiences that resonate with their ambitions. ■ Establishes her natural leadership through competence, care, responsiveness, thoughtfulness and kindness.
EMPOWERING	■ Empowers colleagues to exercise some choice in how, when, where and with whom they do their work. ■ Uses a coaching approach to help team members think through and resolve issues they raise with her. ■ Is open to improvement and innovation ideas, frequently tasking team members to pilot and experiment.
INCLUSIVE	■ Is inclusive, ensuring that each individual feels accepted, connected, heard and valued. ■ Regularly checks in on team members' well-being. ■ Collaborates whenever possible, knowing that collaboration builds commitment. ■ Monitors team performance with the team.
TRANSPARENT	■ Communicates clearly and often. ■ Where possible, shares with the team reporting and other communication to and from superiors. ■ Involves the team in problem-solving and decision-making where possible. (Final decision by the manager).
SUPPORTIVE	■ Gets to know the individuals on her team to know them in the context of their whole life, not just their work life. ■ Knows and grows his EQ to understand and manage his own emotions, engage empathetically with others and build productive relationships. ■ Makes himself available and is a powerful listener. ■ Checks in on team members' work progress without micromanaging. ■ Conducts a non-negotiable monthly 1-on-1 with each team member, and records decisions and next steps. ■ Cares about the people in her team and supports them unequivocally.



CHAPTER 4:
THE MODERN MANAGER'S MINDSET AND SKILLS*

*SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT SKILLS IN THE SET. THE FULL SKILL SET IS MAPPED IN APPENDIX 1.

A NEW STYLE, A NEW MINDSET

> **"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make".**
>
> JANE GOODALL

YOUR STYLE

Your style is the way you play your role, the way you do things. For the modern manager this is going to be different from old school.

It starts with a new and different mindset.

MINDSET = INTENTION + VALUES

How do you visualise yourself in action? How do you prepare yourself mentally for the work ahead, at a macro level for your role or specifically for a team meeting, say, or a coaching conversation?

Mindset is part intention and part values.

INTENTION

What outcomes am I seeking here? What difference am I trying to make?

For a People First manager, the overarching intention must be to orchestrate the success and well-being of your team, collectively and individually. You need to imagine what that picture looks like for you.

VALUES

How am I going to conduct myself as I do this work? How shall I behave?

Your values will guide your actions. For People First, we hark back to our inherent human qualities, the pro-social traits we evolved to promote group cohesion and success.

These values are about how we treat each other: Kindness, Compassion, Respect and Honesty.

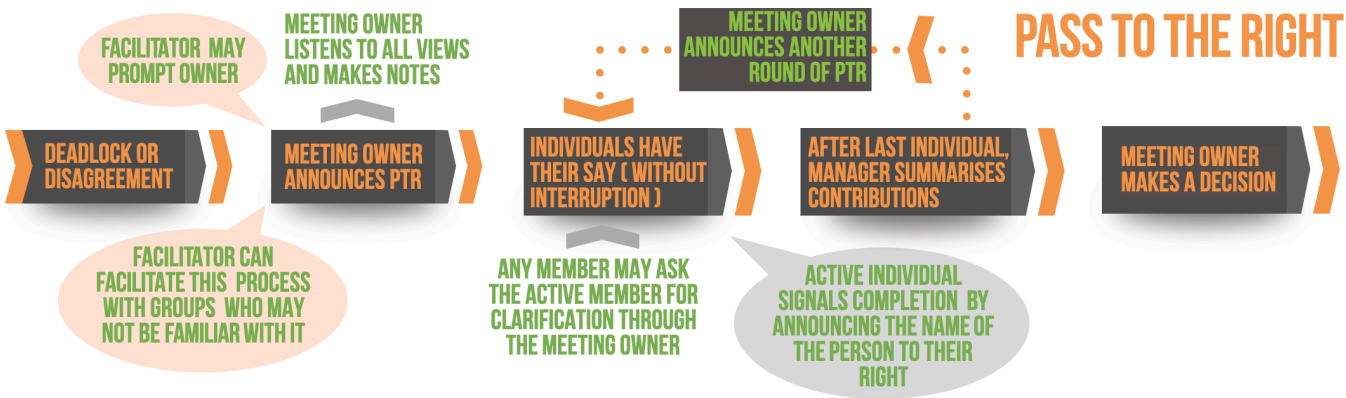
A recent study found that leaders who consistently see kindness as a core value and communicate it have happier and more productive employees.

Kindness is active.

Acting with the other's interests at heart.

PASS TO THE RIGHT: A SIMPLE TOOL FOR BOOSTING EQUAL VOICE





EQUAL VOICE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

When a team meets, one or two people typically have a lot to say, and a few usually say little or nothing. Ensuring each individual has a voice and feels heard promotes inclusion and psychological safety.

A simple technique for Equal Voice is Pass to the Right: giving everyone in the meeting one minute (or less) to talk uninterrupted on the subject. The meeting owner frames the topic and says, “Pass to the right. Maria.”
And around it goes, person to person.

INCLUDING THE TEAM IN A DECISION

PTR is handy when consulting the team in decision-making, when there are opposing views or deadlock, or when the team leader wants to ensure she’s got everyone’s perspective before she makes her decision.

WARM UPS AND ICEBREAKERS

PTR is excellent for warming up at the beginning of a Zoom call: one minute of news from each person, for example, makes everyone feel included and heard, warming the tone for an engaged session.

"It's so much better to be in a workplace where you can be your real self, and contribute to the work in a meaningful way."

AMY EDMONDSON

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: IT'S HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY (NO FEAR)

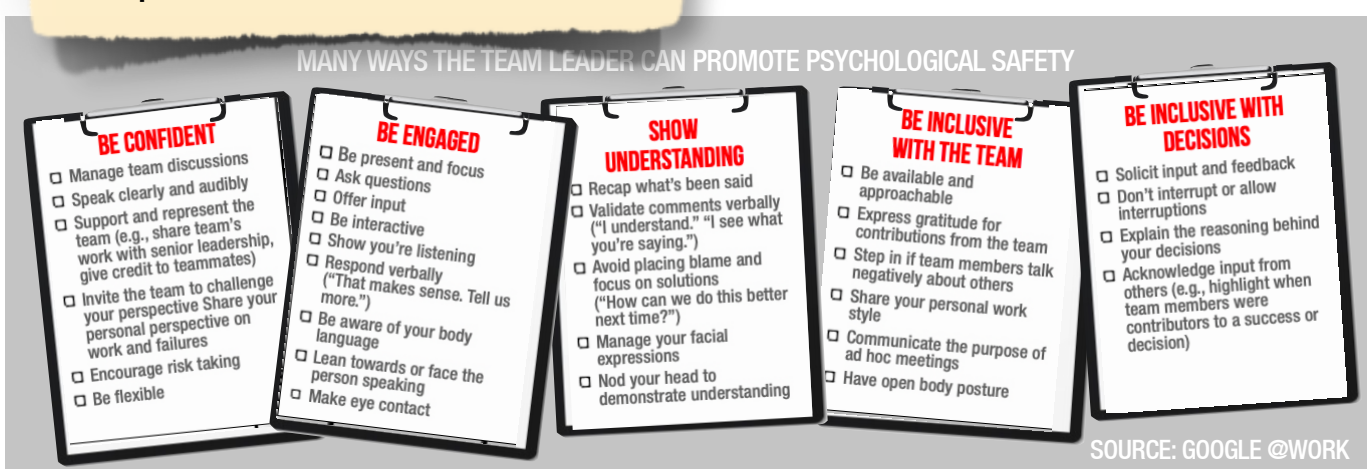
- The belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.
- Knowing that your colleagues have your back.
- The sense that you can be yourself, without having to manage the impression people have of you.

TWO EASY WAYS TO START…

Active listening. Show the speaker you are listening closely, and understand.

Equal voice. Ensure that everyone on the team feels more-or-less equally heard. Use Pass To The Right often.

Start doing these two things and you will immediately see a difference in your team.



GREAT COACHES RESOLVE CONFLICT QUICKLY AND FAIRLY



CONFLICT IS NORMAL!

Healthy disagreement within a team is a sign of psychological safety. Team members feel secure enough to express what is on their minds.

A strong coach will encourage challenge and debate, ensuring respect is maintained, and things don't get personal.

A good manager will resolve interpersonal conflict quickly.

A script such as DESC (left) provides a simple path to resolution.

A great coach is ready to accept another point of view, if well argued.

GREAT COACHES GIVE MOTIVATING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

> **"Feedback is the breakfast of champions."**
>
> KEN BLANCHARD

ONLY TWO KINDS

There are only two kinds of feedback:

POSITIVE and CONSTRUCTIVE

Positive is easy. Catch someone doing something right. Do that much more often!

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Constructive feedback is the one we trip up on.

I recommend the tool on the right. It's the most effective feedback technique we have found, and it's based on brain science.

Two keys to the method:

- Start on a positive note to open the person's mind to learning and set a positive tone for the whole conversation.
- In Step 2, don't use BUT; say AND, even if it feels a bit weird grammatically.
  BUT is an instant stressor, an alarm bell warning of unhappiness ahead.
- Cut the stress. Lose the BUT!

AND. NOT BUT!

Motivate with quick constructive feedback.

1. **DESCRIBE SOMETHING THE PERSON DID WELL**
   "I really liked the way you…
2. **NOTE WHAT THE PERSON DID LESS WELL**
   "And (NOT BUT!) I noticed that…
3. **EXPLAIN THE IMPACT OF THE BEHAVIOUR**
   "With the result that…
4. **SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF BEHAVING**
   "Perhaps next time, try…

MODERN MANAGERS ROCK MEETINGS
A QUICK GUIDE

"Meetings = Leadership Opportunity #1"

TOM PETERS

SHOWTIME!

Your team meeting, where it all comes together. Be in charge. You're on prime time.

- **Demonstrate your leadership**
  The stage is yours. Make it count.
- **Provide direction**
  Reinforce roles and accountabilities.
- **Build momentum**
  Spur action. Strengthen a culture of delivery.
- **Model the values**
  Be the example of good conduct.
- **Bring people together**
  Create shared purpose and mutual support.
- **Enhance psychological safety**
  With Active Listening and Equal Voice.

YES. YOU ROCK!

It's not rocket science. The guide on the right may look daunting, but each point is simple. You can quickly master them all. Rock it science!

You'll have shorter, more productive meetings. And more fun! Your team will love you for it.

TACTICAL TIP - MEETINGS AND ZOOM CALLS

ALWAYS START EXACTLY ON TIME

Use the clock on your phone to start every meeting precisely on time.
To the second. Exactly. Every single time.

58.. 59.. 00.
"OK guys, let's get going".

No fuss. No waiting. Ever. For anyone.

No pause or recap for latecomers.
Just a nod or "Morning Max" as they sit.

The stragglers and the stroll-in-late power-gamers will soon learn.

Without saying a word, your authority will be crystal clear:

1. **Here, we mean business.**
2. **I'm quietly, firmly in charge.**

RELAX. YOU'VE GOT THIS!

1. Prepare! Preparation builds confidence.
   Check: Your intention, purpose, attendees, invitations, agenda, materials, previous next steps.
2. Need a facilitator? If you want more freedom to participate, or the issues are complex, have a team member facilitate.
3. Start on time! NB Tactical Tip (left). Note apologies.
4. Review agenda and expectations. Review expectations but don't overload the agenda. Assign times for items.
5. Set the time contract. Agree the finish time and stick to it. It's a contract.
6. Review previous next steps. Build a sense of accountability. Resist rolling over to the next meeting. This is the front line in creating a culture of delivery.
7. Control input. In most poor meetings there's too much talking. Stick to the agenda. Politely signal time out to the windbags. "Thanks Maria. We need to move on. Let's take that offline".



8. Manage the time. Appoint a timekeeper. Aim to get through the agenda. People find it discouraging otherwise. If an item runs long, reschedule.
9. Encourage Equal Voice. Use Pass to the Right to ensure the quiet ones feel heard. Critical for fostering psychological safety.
10. Practice Active Listening. Demonstrate passionate listening. Outlaw distractions. Shut down sidebars.
11. Log Decisions and Next Steps. Appoint a scribe. Use the whiteboard in What, Who, When format.
12. Do Benefits and Concerns. For reflection, and to ensure there are no lingering unvoiced concerns when people leave the room.
13. Close on time! Honour the time contract.
14. Distribute Next Steps. Send them out immediately, or within a few hours at most.

“A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are”.

ARA PARSEGHIAN

KEYS TO A COACHING STYLE: LISTEN AND ASK QUESTIONS

COACH TO EMPOWER AND MOTIVATE

A coaching approach aims to help the coachee reach their own insights and draw their own conclusions, and empowers them to make their own choices.

Coaching stimulates critical thinking, strengthens ownership and sharpens accountability for outcomes.

Exercising one's judgement to make meaningful choices is also highly motivating.

KEYS TO A COACHING STYLE

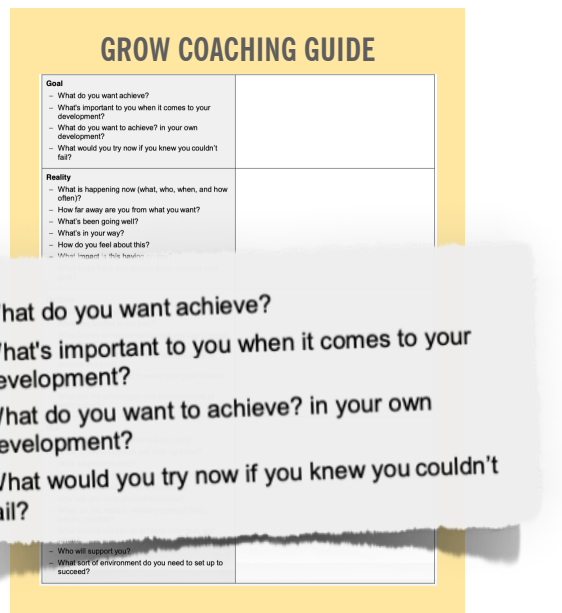
To switch into coaching mode:

Listen more, talk less. The coachee should be doing most of the talking. The coach is using powerful listening skills.

Ask questions. Probe and guide with open-ended questions. Resist the temptation to offer solutions, advice or even options. The coachee must get there under their own steam.

STRUCTURE WITH GROW

GROW is a useful framework for structuring a coaching session, with guideline questions for each stage (Goal, Reality, Options, Will do).



CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY
MINDSET AND SKILLS OF THE MODERN MANAGER

1. A new style needs a different mindset. Mindset = Intention + Values
2. Intention will be a personal statement of how to help the team and each member succeed.
3. Values will be a personal take on our innate human qualities, starting with kindness.
4. We looked at some of the most useful skills the modern manager needs: pass to the right, fostering psychological safety, resolving conflict, constructive feedback, running a great meeting and a coaching style.
5. The simple but powerful tactic of starting meetings precisely on time helps establish the team leader's quiet authority.



CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

PEOPLE FIRST IS NOT OPTIONAL

Modern management is not optional

The new world of work may have lately drawn attention to engagement and the quality of management, but the sore has been festering for decades. Dumping authoritarian leadership to embrace humanism was imperative long before Covid cut its swathe.

Parochially, the owners of capital and the legions of professional bosses need to read the tea leaves; your returns, results, and jobs depend on the elective effort of happier workers. The blind to that sign will squint into empty lunchboxes as the competition chomps into the distance.

On the broader view, the sheer weight of human misery in broken workplaces, and its social consequences, cannot be ignored. In our age of democracy and human rights, the anomaly of poor worker treatment should be a banner cause. We must roll back the darkness of command and control with the bright clear light of people first.

To re-quote Gallup:

> "According to the world's workers, the real fix is unmistakable:
>
> Better leaders in the workplace and an environment that promotes employee engagement."

The good news is that leading better is within anyone's reach. Modern management is no more a stretch than practical skills and natural-born human values.

Bring your human to work. Not optional.



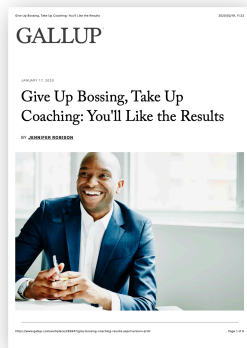
APPENDICES

1. THE FULL SKILLSET
2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
3. ABOUT THE AUTHOR
4. THE MANAGER'S TOOLKIT
5. CASE STUDY: AFRICAN PARKS

1. THE MODERN MANAGER'S FULL SKILLSET

TRAITS	SKILLS OF THE MODERN MANAGER			
BUSINESS-LIKE	1 Structure Team KPIs	2 Clarify Accountabilities	3 Be Action-Focused	4 Run Great Meetings / Calls
	5 Coach for Performance	6 Manage Change Resistance	7 Resolve Conflict	8 Think It Through
INSPIRING	9 Build Vision Strat. & Purpose	10 Foster Initiative and Innovation	11 Motivate With A.M.P.I.	12 Demonstrate Care
EMPOWERING	13 Set Empowering Goals	14 Delegate With Autonomy	15 Get Into Coaching Mode	16 Coach for Growth
	17 Give Construct. Feedback			
INCLUSIVE	18 Pass to the Right	19 Quick Check-in	20 Solve Problems Collaboratively	21 Make Decisions Collaboratively
TRANSPARENT	22 Listen Actively (Powerfully)	23 Communicate Clearly	24 Choose Media and Channel	25 Manage Your Body Language
SUPPORTIVE	26 Conduct Monthly 1-on-1	27 Get Into the Emotional Lane	28 Guide the Change	29 Give Positive Feedback
	30 Create Psych. Safety	31 Be Kind		
AVAILABLE	32 Visualise Your Day	33 Use the Time Mgmt Matrix	34 Prioritise Your to-Do List	35 Eat the Frog!
	36 Boss Your Email	37 Establish Routines		
SELF AWARE	38 Know Your Big Five Profile	39 Know Your EQ Profile	40 Strengthen Your EQ	41 Develop Your Mindset
SELF COMPOSED	42 Grow Your Quiet Power	43 Set Your Stretch Goals	44 Seek Feedback From Others	45 Motivate Yourself

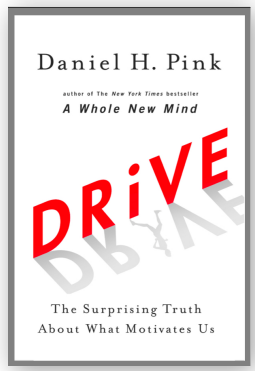
2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Gallup runs a longitudinal survey of international workplace dynamics, mainly focusing on employee engagement, well-being, and manager effectiveness. They publish a wealth of papers like the one on the left.

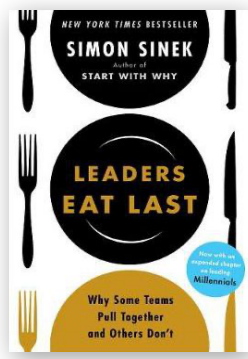


While writing this, I discovered Tom Peters' new book Excellence Now: Extreme Humanism (2021). The messages resonate.

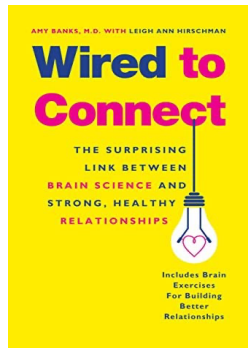


Dan Pink's Drive (2011) is the go-to on human motivation. His model of intrinsic motivation is accessible and usable: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose.

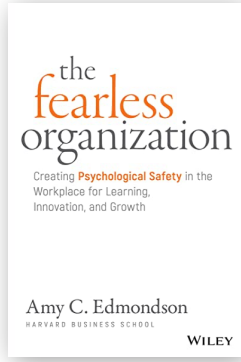
2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (2)



Simon Sinek's Leaders Eat Last, (2014), lays out the case for modern leadership and what it means to be a modern leader.



In Wired to Connect, (2016), Dr. Amy Banks explains the physiology and neurology of our need for inclusion - how we are built to thrive in community, rather than independently.



The Fearless Organisation, (2019), by Amy Edmondson, the authority on psychological safety, and originator of the term.

3. ABOUT THE AUTHOR STEPHEN ASBURY



Stephen Asbury is a lifelong student of management and leadership.

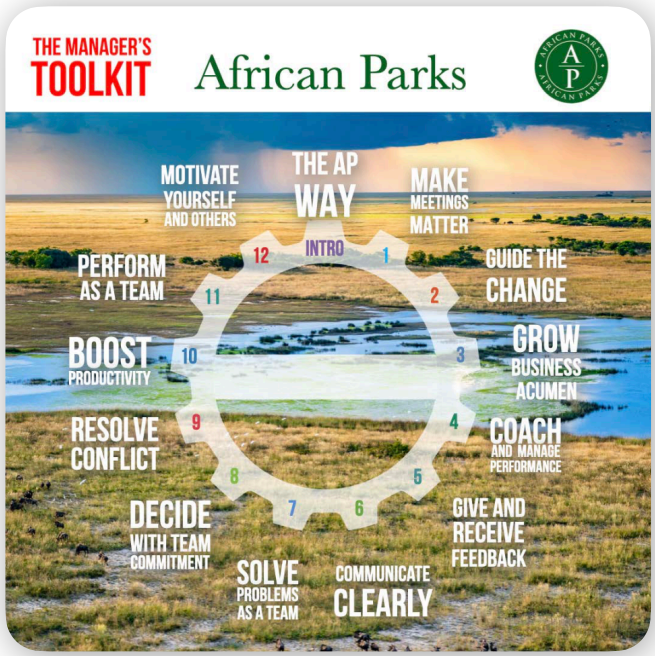
A career in management consulting and management development spans three decades, two in senior roles at global consultancies and one in his own firm. He was previously a general manager in industry.

Stephen's particular interest is in management and leadership skills development.

He is the creator of The Manager's Toolkit and co-author with Antony Ball of The Winning Way: Lessons from Super-performing South African Companies (1989).

Stephen currently lives in Johannesburg.

4. ABOUT THE MANAGER'S TOOLKIT



THE INDEX CARD FOR AFRICAN PARKS, AFRICA-WIDE CLIENT 2020 - 2022.

Une version complète en français est aussi disponible.
The program is also available in French.

HUMAN SKILLS FOR MODERN MANAGERS

The Manager's Toolkit is a 14-module course in human-centric skills for modern managers and team leaders.

Developed over the past eight years, the Toolkit has been fully updated for the new world of work, and includes proven training for the full skillset mapped in Appendix 1.

The 14-week cohort-based program is delivered remotely as a blend of online learning and virtual instructor-led workshops on an award winning cloud learning management system (TalentLMS).

A free mobile app enables content downloads for offline study.

The Manager's Toolkit is an accredited skills program at Level 4 of the South African National Qualifications Framework.

The Toolkit is available to corporates as a customised in-house program, and open to individuals and small groups on scheduled cohort start dates.

For more information go to http://bit.ly/3vvE8BJ



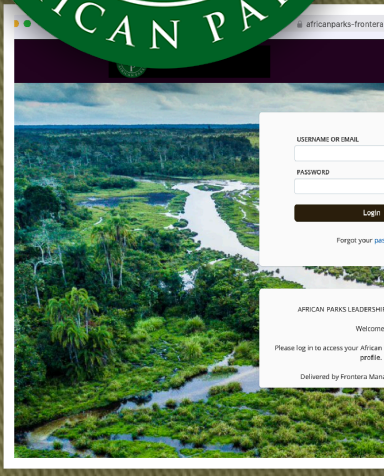




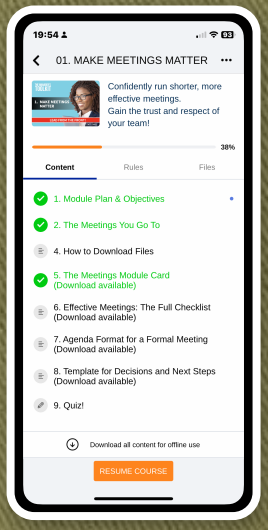



5. CASE STUDY: AFRICAN PARKS

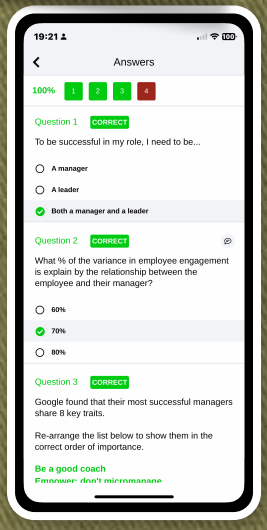


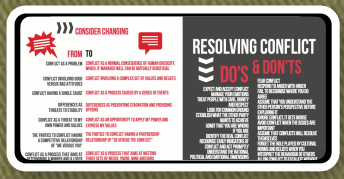




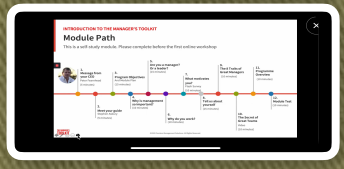








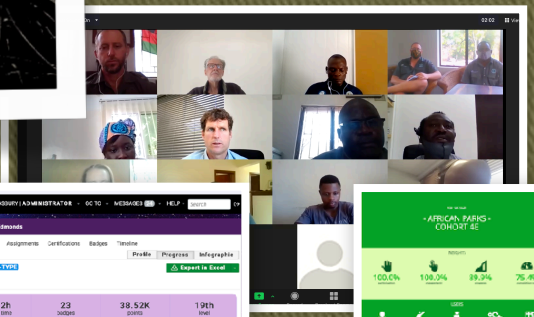


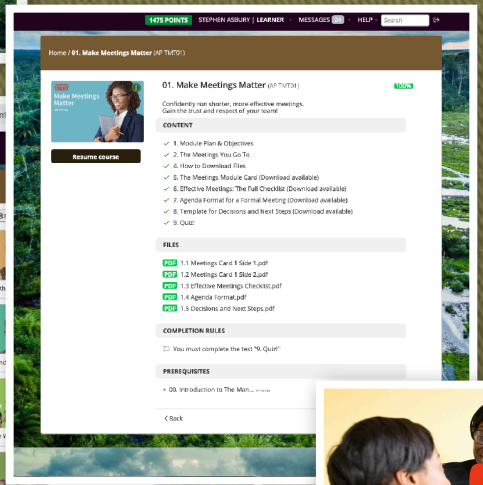


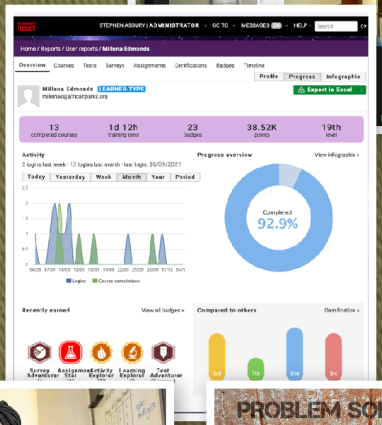
OFFLINE LEARNING ON THE MOBILE APP



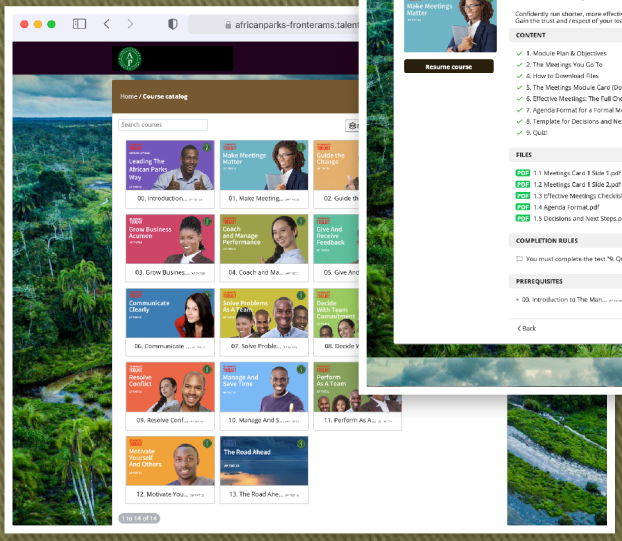


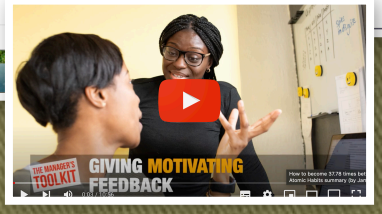


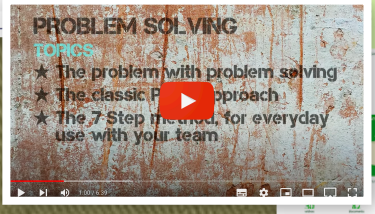












Information and screens courtesy of African Parks

THE MANAGER'S TOOLKIT

HUMAN SKILLS FOR MODERN MANAGERS

The Manager's Toolkit open cohort-based programs will run on scheduled start dates in 2023.

For information on upcoming open programs go to http://bit.ly/3vvE8BJ

For information on customised corporate in-house programs please email Stephen Asbury at stephen.asbury@frontera.co.za