



Hello,

It's tough out there. But what we need now isn't tough leadership - we need sensitive leaders.

A recent poll of 2,000 adults for the Mental Health Foundation found that 77% found the world more frightening than in 1999. The media, business leaders and politicians are fueling this "culture of fear". We desperately need leaders who can lead beyond fear.

Leading Beyond Fear

How do you feel about the term 'human capital'? It has become a widely accepted term in many organisations - and I find it repugnant. Companies who think of their staff in this way are the kind who treat them as disposable commodities. I wonder how many companies with 'people are our greatest asset' plastered on the walls during the boom times could be seen to stand by those values now?

Take the case of Visteon UK - the auto parts manufacturer who earlier this month closed 3 plants. Employees were given a few minutes notice before being asked to clear their lockers and leave - some had 20 years or more service. Where is the humanity in such leadership? KPMG and Visteon leaders had difficult decisions to make, of that there is no doubt, however the execution of those decisions leaves a lot to be desired. This type of behaviour is savage and brutal. It is tough leadership - and it is driven by fear.

It is easy to cut out your heart and close down emotions in the name of 'business'. Terminator gets the job done but at what cost? Human beings are complex with irrational motives and desires. We struggle to understand ourselves never mind others. Reducing human beings to 'assets' makes it easier to dispose of them - like old stock in a warehouse.

Very difficult decisions have to be taken in these difficult times however the manner in which those decisions are communicated and executed is crucial to morale and motivation. Self awareness is vital here. If as a leader, you are out of touch with your own feelings, you will be out of touch with the feelings of others. My job is simple - to help you see yourself and your behaviour more clearly. If you are unaware of the impact your leadership style has on others, you are on dangerous ground.

One of the key roles of any leader is to maintain staff morale and generate enthusiasm - ultimately to keep hope alive. This is an impossibility unless you have the capacity to reach deep inside, to keep your heart open and resurrect a fighting spirit. Don't fuel a "culture of fear" by being tough leaders. Be even braver and become the sensitive leaders that we so need right now.

If we can elect an African American as President and see a 100-1 shot win the Grand National then what else is possible? The Easter season is a time of renewal. Let's lead with sensitivity not fear. Keep hope alive. You owe it to yourself and everyone else.

Wise Words

"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul.
And sings the tune
Without the words,
and never stops at all."

Emily Dickinson, US poet (1830 - 1886)

Recommended Reading

The Hungry Spirit
Beyond Capitalism
A quest for Purpose in the Modern World

By Charles Handy
ISBN 0-09-922772-X

Your Views

As always, I enjoy hearing your thoughts and comments so please do get in touch.



t:01325 489 766

m:07740 416 891

e:juliette@juliettelee.co.uk

www.juliettelee.co.uk
