



Hello,

The past few weeks have seen even deeper erosions of public trust. We are all wondering where have all the good men and women gone?

These lost leaders can be found and they will surface, provided we change the way we recognise and reward those at the top of our organisations and institutions.

Lost Leaders

Disgraced leadership within our financial services sector is piling alongside the corrupt governance within our political world. Sadly leaders with integrity seem to be in short supply.

Facts are helpful when discussing the highly emotive subjects of integrity and trust. PR firm Edelman published its 10th study of trust and credibility, Edelman Trust Barometer in January this year. Almost two thirds of people trusted companies less this year than last and even worse CEO's were trusted by only 29% of people in 18 out of the 20 countries surveyed. How can a company possibly function and prosper without trust in its leader? The answer of course is that it can't.

Trust is built on a daily basis through behaviour and actions. We all instinctively make judgements about who we trust. If we find people to be people consistently moral and honest - note I didn't say perfect - then we place our trust in them. However the huge problem we currently face is the lack of visibility of the actions and behaviours of leaders at the top of our organisations and institutions. Much has gone on behind the scenes and only now being exposed. Thankfully all that is done in darkness will eventually come to light. That is the nature of the world we live in. But the consequences of unethical behaviour and decisions are far reaching and deep. Once broken, trust is very difficult to rebuild.

Integrity is about how you behave when no-one is looking. In too many instances, we have appointed those with sharp business minds and ambition into top roles with little regard for their character. This has to change. Yet how do we identify those leaders who understand what integrity is truly about?

Most of us are hard wired to know what is morally right or wrong - sociopaths and psychopaths being the exception. However we all need the eyes and ears of others

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to help us see ourselves and our behaviour clearly. We are none of us perfect and need to be open to challenge. It is vital that we understand our innermost drives, values and motives.

Leaders must have the maturity and self-awareness to take counsel and guidance on whether their behaviour is acceptable or not. It is a fundamental part of my role as a coach to deliver difficult messages on the behaviours and actions of the CEO's and executive teams that I work with. It is to their credit that they recognise the need for someone to hold up a mirror. Sadly, too many do not have this level of maturity. Huge egos are blind and deaf.

The concept of servant leadership (see recommended reading)- leaders who serve others with humility and responsible governance- should be at the heart of anyone with a role at the top. Until we appoint and reward those with good character as well as good business sense, we cannot repair trust and build healthy and prosperous The opportunity for huge reform in leadership is here. However it is not about holding out for heroes and heroines, we can and must, all play our part by 'living up to what light we have'.

Wise Words

"I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed but I am bound to live up to what light I have."

Abraham Lincoln

Recommended Reading

Servant Leadership

A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness

Robert K. Greenleaf

ISBN 978-0-8091-0554-0

Your Views

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



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