Tribal Leadership - Leading The Teams Of The Future

Written by:

Dr Yvonne Sum

Author Profile

Surrender to succeed: Transforming the world one willing leader at a time!

Dr Yvonne Sum

Dr Yvonne Sum CSP ACC transforms leaders of tomorrow ... today. Her presentations (whether one-on-one or to hundreds) help people recognise simple things they may have taken for granted. In doing so, your senses are heightened to better understand yourself and those around you, resulting in more open communications, interesting and counterintuitive learning partnerships, more innovative possibilities, and simple joys.

Yvonne has honed her gift of helping others clarify useful behavioural frameworks across various contexts so that we may choose to easily deploy them in our daily lives. She consistently provokes senior business leaders to 'lose their minds and come to their senses' by integrating their leadership lessons at home successfully back into the work tribe.

Yvonne's breadth of international experience and clientele span across Australia, the USA and Asia Pacific. She has presented alongside Edward de Bono, Howard Gardner, Tony Buzan, David Perkins, Glenn Capelli and Colin James.

Dr Sum is an internationally certified Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) & Neuro-Semantic (NS) Trainer through the Global NLP Trainers Alliance.

Phone: +61 2 8014 8858

Email: support@dryvonnesum.com

Website: www.dryvonnesum.com

DR. YVONNE SUM

Tribal Leadership - Leading The Teams Of The Future

Introduction

As the world continues to change rapidly around us, what remains constant is the opportunity to inspire action through clarity of vision and purpose, that compels like-minded individuals to follow. In a word - leadership.

Though the opportunity to lead hasn't changed, leadership styles have. There has been a shift from control and command, to collaboration and connection. Moulding our existing leadership skills - and developing new skill sets - to suit the modern workplace will hold us in good stead, now and into the future.

In this Learning Module, we explore the teams of the future - or "Tribal Teams"; who they're made up of, how we can connect with them and how we can inspire them to achieve organisational goals, whilst maintaining our leadership authenticity.

Welcome To "The Age Of Connection"

Managers are doing it tough. They are expected to deliver ever more with ever dwindling resources, whilst attempting to engage (or re-engage) their teams, who often have low morale due to constant restructuring. They don't seem to be getting many breaks!

In the midst of these leadership challenges however, opportunity exists: "The Age of Reason" has been superseded by "The Age of Connection", where relationships are the new currency.

Savvy leaders are honing their skills to take advantage of new opportunities to connect and collaborate with team members, ensuring stronger ties that keep their teams focussed on the same passionate purpose.

How can we adapt our behaviour to more fully meet the needs of our followers? What can we learn from those we lead?

Birds of a feather flock together

People by nature are herd animals - we need the company of others. It's part of our psychological make-up. There are endless tribes which are important to us, and we move in and out of tribes as our life changes. For example:

- Individual tribal groups, such as: The family tribe; the sport tribe; the church tribe; young Jenny's dance class tribe, etc.

- Organisational tribes, such as: The sales tribe; the marketing tribe; the service tribe; etc.

- Who interact with each other, and connect with a range of external tribes too: The customer tribe; the supplier tribe; the industry tribe; the regulatory tribe; etc.

What do we want the result of our tribal leadership to be?

Employee engagement

Global research by consulting firm Blessing White revealed that fewer than one in three workers were fully engaged. The research results showed that:

- 78% of engaged employees plan to stay with their current employer, compared with 46% of disengaged employees

- Engaged employees appear to stay for what they give (they like the work they do)

- Disengaged employees stay for what they get (favourable job conditions, advancement, growth, job security, etc.)

Employees working at smaller companies were the most likely to be engaged - at 40% - probably due to the fact that they are more aware of, and identify with, the organisation's reason for existence. They know the leaders and owners and are able to see their own impact on the success of the business.

Engagement level variations were most noticeable across generations, organisation size, employee role and function.

Engaged employees are not just committed. They are not just passionate or proud. They have a line-of sight on their own future and on the organisation's mission and goals. They are enthused and in gear, using their talents and discretionary effort to make a difference in their employer's quest for sustainable business success.

Clearly, aligning employees' values, goals, and aspirations with those of the organisation is the best method for achieving the sustainable employee engagement required for an organisation to reach its goals.

Who's in the tribe?

In a Harvard Business Review article, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Laura Sherbin, and Karen Sumberg discuss leadership in meeting the different needs and values of Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers.

Two large-scale surveys of university graduates reveal remarkable similarities in workplace preferences between Baby Boomers and Gen Y - the oldest and youngest groups in the emerging workforce. Both Boomers and Gen Ys want to contribute to society through their labour; seek flexible working arrangements; value social connections at work and loyalty to a company; and prize other rewards of employment over monetary compensation.
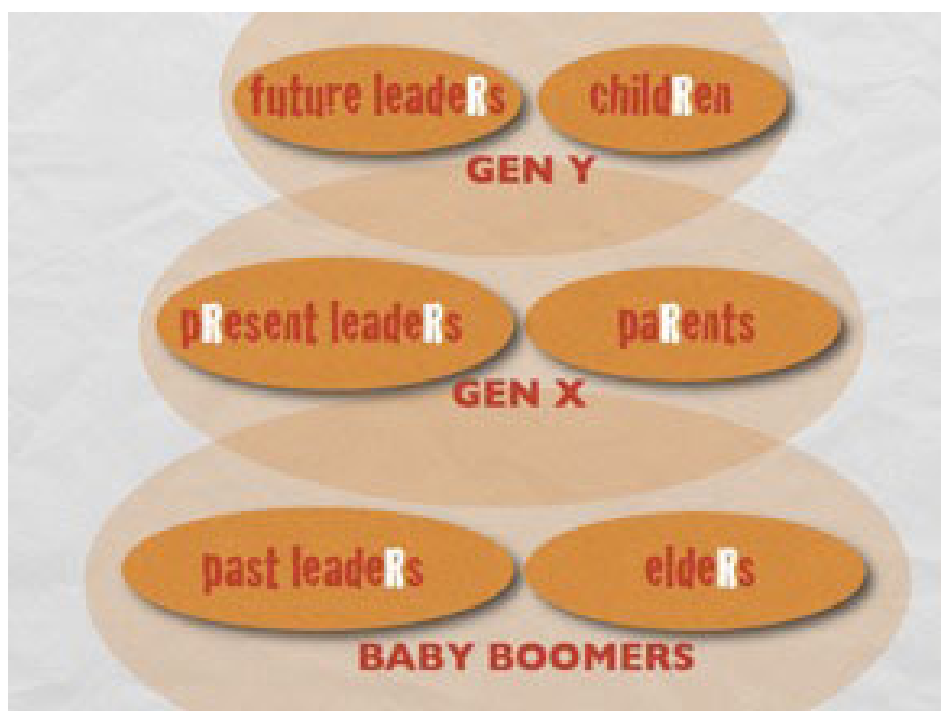
Given the greater numbers of Baby Boomers and Gen Y - relative to Gen X which lies between them - their workplace demands have significant practical implications for how employers should design work environments to attract and keep top talent.

Most Baby Boomers know what they want and what they are good at. This is reflected in the survey results, with 42% of older participants saying they are engaged at work. And in line with the global pattern, executives are more than twice as engaged as individual contributors.

Gen Y are not so clear on what they want - and it shows. At 25% disengagement, younger employees are the least engaged. However, this is a group that can be the most passionate when engaged.

It can be a matter of harnessing that youthful energy with something that appeals to them, which also suits the organisation's needs. The business can contribute to this with programs that help them clarify their values, realistically audit their skills and provide them with a career planning process.

Organisations will find themselves in a curious position over the next several years. As Baby Boomers slowly step out of full-time posts, Gen X will take on the highest executive roles - and will have not only a very dissimilar cohort to oversee in its juniors, but also the unprecedented challenge of caring for its lingering elders.

Thus, the generation in charge will need to manage a workforce it is fundamentally out of step with. How will leaders of the tribal teams of the future modify their actions to address this gap?

7 Leadership Actions That Nurture Tribal Teams

In teaching children, we traditionally talk about the 3 R's - Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. They form the basis of educational skills that lay the foundations to academic learning. But have you heard of the 7 R's of Parenting?

Today - with tribal influences having an indelible impact within organisations - the 7 R's of Parenting translate to the 7 R's of Leadership Actions.

I wish I could claim credit for discovering these 7 R's of Parenting - but I can't. But I've applied the wisdom of past generations as they've emerged, based on many years of organisational and family learning and assembled them in a manner applicable to tribal team leadership. The 7 R's of Parenting could be considered the practical principles of leadership essentials learnt at home, that involves partnering and learning with your team.

They are the ingredients for successful teams, and - when blended with care and dedication - are a recipe for organisational success as we embrace the future.
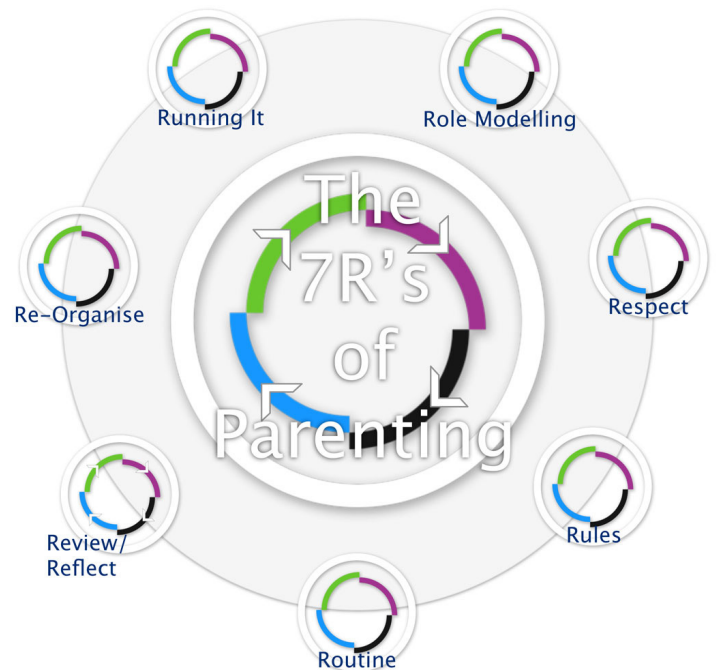
They provide a framework to deliver the employee engagement and buy-in we need to build success with a team that in all likelihood comes from three very different generations.

They also demonstrate the clear need to grow our leadership in a partnering way with our teams. Our Baby Boomer, Gen X and Gen Y team members expect (and deserve) to be treated with respect and inclusion.

Leadership, in partnership with our followers, with a spirit of authenticity, will provide the environment for the teams of the future to thrive and contribute with courage, conviction - and success.

The 7 R's of Leadership Action:

Functional work tribes are similar to happy families through:

- **R**esponse-ability - Running it

- **R**ole Modelling

- **R**espect

- **R**ules

- **R**outine

- **R**eview and reflect

- **R**e-Organise

It's important to understand that action will not simply happen by itself. You will need to continually build on these skills and processes. It's the 'doing' part of leadership. This is the engine room stuff. This is the daily operation of working your life and leadership plan. It is a cycle centred on you that looks like this:

So it goes - a journey for which you are accountable. You need to constantly monitor your behaviour, your actions and your thoughts.

Ask others what your leadership is like. Look for feedback. Then adjust what you do. Don't try and make huge changes - chunk it down and focus on critical areas that are stopping you and your team getting the best possible results. But take action - and ask those who've given you feedback what they've noticed.

Response-ability - Running it

Leadership starts with you, the leader, being responsible (or 'response-able') for two things:

1. Knowing and respecting yourself

2. Being accountable for your actions as a leader

This means leading a great life ourselves to excite our tribe to unleash their highest potential. It is about our ability to respond to the 'business-as-usual' day-to-day goings-on, as well as the unusual, unforeseen events that get thrown our way. It's about knowing we'll all make mistakes - but being responsible to acknowledge them and learn from them.

Remember that this is a learning partnership. If all parties are open and highly sensible (i.e. 'sense-able' - or able to come to their senses to read the situation), as well as able to respond to changing contexts, we will develop a very efficient organic system of mutual development.

It means trusting your team members to do their job without micro-managing. It means allowing your team members to develop their skills and build their experience by making mistakes. It means ensuring the team feel a part of the organisation and that they can contribute to its vision and greater purpose.

> What do you think is the first step to lead a great life - for you personally, and then for your organisational role?

Have you shared your personal vision, values and mission in life with your team? If not, why not?

Have you and your team clearly articulated your team vision, values and mission? How was this created? Is it all from you?

How does your team provide input?

When was it last re-visited?

Role modelling

We can all think of examples of what we consider to be good and bad leaders. We all have opinions about the people who lead us. Not surprisingly, our team have an opinion about what sort of leader we are. We have no choice in the matter - as leaders we are a role model to others.

Role modelling is about leaving a legacy of loving and living a great life. It is not about making your team (or other supporters and followers) multiple clones of you and your life. It is your authenticity that inspires them to, in turn, lead a great life according to how they define it, so they in turn can answer the question "Why should others be led by you?".

Being a positive and consistent role model can be a challenge. When teams are constantly under pressure to make budget and achieve targets, values can be compromised - the means can justify the ends.

When you think of great leaders - what are the qualities you'd like to emulate in your own life?

Can you 'walk your talk', 'live your values' and 'role model' these to your team? Can you think of 3 examples of how you do this?

1.

2.

3.

Do you actively look for feedback from your team about how you are performing as a leader for them?

Respect

Respect in its daily manifestations is as simple as keeping your part of the bargain. It is important to 'be your word' to everyone - regardless of age, experience, achievements or organisational status. Let us take care not to renege on promises. The key is to respect your followers by knowing what motivates them, and meet their needs whilst meeting your intent. How? It is about coming in early as a learning partner - and not late as a judge.

It is critical to not play favourites, but to demonstrate fairness and a willingness to support all team members - again, regardless of their position. It means trusting your people to do their job.

> Do you have an organisational 'civil code' of behaviour and expectations with a consistent set of consequences? If not - should you? What would be in the code?

> Do you know what makes work meaningful to each of your team members? Note them here.

> How have you created opportunities for them to shine in their strengths and to satisfy their values? What will you do if you haven't yet?

Rules

We are surrounded by rules. Society has rules, we follow personal rules, and organisations need rules to ensure they function efficiently. Clear boundaries are a cornerstone for self-esteem, independence, trust and connectedness.

It's important that we are aware of the rules that drive our behaviours both consciously and unconsciously. Furthermore, we should rewrite any rules that no longer serve us.

In a business environment it can be tempting to bend or break rules - often for a short-term gain. This will be a true challenge for many, but be warned: the immediate satisfaction of a quick sale will be long forgotten if it has come at the cost of losing respect from the team and others in the organisation. It's not only presidents and footballers who have lived to regret breaking their own rules.

Team members usually have a good sense of right and wrong. Have them write their own rules aligned with organisational culture and industry norms. We are more likely to obey rules we've set, agree with and understand.

> **What are the boundaries and unspoken rules in your team and organisation?**

> **Do these rules work? Are they appropriate? Can they be changed? Do the rules support the team culture you would like to cultivate as your team's leader?**

> **Is it authoritarian 'top-down management', or is it "collaborative empowerment"? Is it a mixture depending on the ages and experience of team members? Is this fair?**

Routine

When we understand the rules - written and unwritten - then we can collaborate to create routines to enable things to run efficiently and effectively with ease and grace. Routines free us up to be more spontaneous and creative. And the reality is that in a work environment we need the structure of routine to allow innovation to emerge.

For example, most jobs require a degree of administration or processes. Set up routines - but allow for individual difference. Some of your team will be great with detail and paperwork - a few will even like protocol. Within as large a canvas as possible let them determine their own administrative methods - methods which work for the individual. Yes - it's more work for the leader. But the outcomes are also much, much better.

Are the routines supported by the rules? Do rules and routines support the team and organisational culture?

What systems are in place to free your team to innovate?

How do you deal with a routine that no longer works? Is it a small tweak, or a major revamp?

R eview & Reflect

We then all need to review and reflect. This gives us the opportunity to learn from ourselves and one another - and provides ways to continuously improve. It also helps us live daily moments of bliss and connectedness by celebrating wins.

Encourage the team to reflect on what works and what doesn't work. What can we do more of as a team? What can we do more of at an individual level? As a leader, undertake this task with respect and regard for the established rules. The point is to allow people to learn. Welcome mistakes - even when it results in a lost sale. Children get a lot of skinned knees before they run a marathon. Similarly, our people need time, support and respect to see their efforts blossom.

Do you have a commitment to continuous performance improvement? Is this part of the team culture and is this done realistically? If not, what will you change?

Are there ways to celebrate achievement, to inspire ambition, to count every little win in your team? How is this done?

e-Organise

Based on our reflections and our reviews - we then need to re-organise. This is the natural course of things. Review and reflect constantly. Make small tweaks and celebrate often. Have the courage to take the first step. The next step comes easier. Just focus on the first step.

Using the administration example, we all know that methods we may have used to file and organise records 20 years ago may not work today. Use team feedback to find new ways to innovate and reorganise this essential aspect of the business process. Encourage team members to try new things. But make it incremental. Use pilot studies. Try new words, new methods, and new approaches. Let your team have a long leash - and measure the results. Then - you guessed it - review and reflect.

What capabilities do you possess as a leader?

What do you need to develop?

What are your allowable weaknesses?

Where can your team step up?

What can you do in an incremental fashion to help each team member develop their own leadership capacity?

Uniting Your Tribe Through Inspiring Leadership

With information freely available and accessible in today's world, knowledge is no longer the power. The currency of power is now connection. You see, we are overwhelmed by all this information. What we want is for the information to be in-formation - for someone to put it together for us into a simpler system so it is useful. We need someone to help us connect the dots. But not just anyone. We will only follow someone who thinks like us, who believes in what we believe in.

Seth Godin defines a tribe as a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea that inspires their passion. Remember, people are by nature herd animals - we need the company of others. It's part of our physiological and psychological make-up.

Whilst sometimes we follow because we are told to, the most powerful leadership occurs when we choose to follow someone because they inspire us.

This inspiration doesn't need to be charismatic - it can be based on knowledge, presence, passion, belief and a range of other positive aspects. People are drawn to ideas and the potential these ideas hold.

What do you feel your Story / Vision / Idea is currently that compels others to be led by you?

What gets your team excited to support you in overcoming organisational challenges?

Tribal leadership is about the interdependence between leaders and their teams:

> "Tribes need leadership. Sometimes one person leads, sometimes more. People want connection and growth and something new. They want change ... You can't have a tribe without a leader - and you can't be a leader without a tribe." Godin (2008)

Simon Sinek, author of "Start with Why" (2009) is a writer, consultant and social commentator, working with people to do what inspires them.

Watch this TED talk, where he describes the Golden Circle:
http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.html

Below are some pertinent extracts:

The Golden Circle

"This little idea explains why some organisations and some leaders are able to inspire where others aren't. Let me define the terms really quickly. Every single person, every single organisation on the planet knows **what** they do - 100 percent. Some know **how** they do it, whether you call it your differentiated value proposition or your proprietary process or your USP.
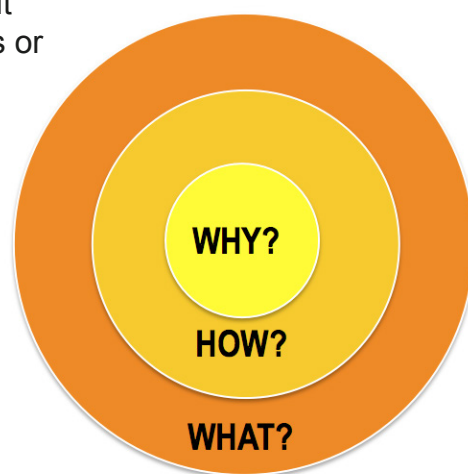
"But very, very few people or organisations know **why** they do what they do. And by "why" I don't mean "to make a profit". That's a result. It's always a result. By "why", I mean:

- What's your purpose?
- What's your cause?
- What's your belief?
- Why does your organisation exist?
- Why do you get out of bed in the morning?
- And why should anyone care?

The Golden Circle

WHY?

HOW?

WHAT?

"Well, as a result, the way we think, the way we act, the way we communicate is from the outside in. It's obvious. We go from the clearest thing to the fuzziest thing. But the inspired leaders and the inspired organisations - regardless of their size, regardless of their industry - all think, act and communicate from the inside out.

"Let me give you an example. I use Apple because they're easy to understand and everybody gets it. If Apple were like everyone else, a marketing message from them might sound like this: "We make great computers. They're beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly. Want to buy one?" "Meh". And that's how most of us communicate. That's how most marketing is done, that's how most sales is done and that's how most of us communicate interpersonally. We say what we do, we say how we're different or how we're better and we expect some sort of a behaviour, a purchase, a vote, something like that.

"Here's how Apple actually communicates: "Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently. The way we challenge the status quo is by making our products beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly. We just happen to make great computers. Want to buy one?" Totally different right? You're ready to buy a computer from me. All I did was reverse the order of the information. What it proves to us is that people don't buy what you do; people buy why you do it.

"None of what I'm telling you is my opinion. It's all grounded in the tenets of biology. If you look at a cross-section of the human brain, looking from the top down, what you see is the human brain is actually broken into three major components that correlate perfectly with the golden circle. Our newest brain, our Homo sapien brain, our neocortex, corresponds with the "what" level. The neocortex is responsible for all of our rational and analytical thought and language. The middle two sections make up our limbic brains, and our limbic brains are responsible for all of our feelings, like trust and loyalty. It's also responsible for all human behaviour, all decision-making, and it has no capacity for language.

"In other words, when we communicate from the outside in, yes, people can understand vast amounts of complicated information like features and benefits and facts and figures. It just doesn't drive behaviour. When we can communicate from the inside out, we're talking directly to the part of the brain that controls behaviour, and then we allow people to rationalise it with the tangible things we say and do.

"This is where gut decisions come from. You know, sometimes you can give somebody all the facts and figures, and they say, "I know what all the facts and details say, but it just doesn't feel right". Why would we use that verb, it doesn't "feel" right? Because the part of the brain that controls decision-making doesn't control language. And the best we can muster up is, "I don't know. It just doesn't feel right". It's all happening here in your limbic brain, the part of the brain that controls decision-making and not language.

"But if you don't know why you do what you do, and people respond to why you do what you do, then how will you ever get people to vote for you, or buy something from you, or, more importantly, be loyal and want to be a part of what it is that you do?

"Again, the goal is not just to sell to people who need what you have; the goal is to sell to people who believe what you believe. The goal is not just to hire people who need a job; it's to hire people who believe what you believe. I always say that, you know, if you hire people just because they can do a job, they'll work for your money, but if you hire people who believe what you believe, they'll work for you with blood and sweat and tears."

How can you translate the 'Golden Circle' concept to your tribal team? What is the common purpose - or "Why" - that brings your tribal team together?

Once you have decided what the "Why" is that you can rally your tribal team to, then you can leverage their different strengths and talents to execute the "What" and the "How".

Know your tribe members

How well do you know your tribal team members to be able to leverage thier strengths and talents?

Values

**Life & Business Experiences**

Strengths

Allowable Weaknesses

Use the following worksheet to detail each of these factors for the members of your tribal team. (Use more sheets as needed.) If you struggle to complete this worksheet, what will you do to improve your knowledge of your team members?

Name	Values	Life & Business Experiences	Strengths	Allowable Weaknesses

Managing expectations

Things do not always run to plan. In managing your tribal team, the greater the deviation from what is expected for the outcome of an event, the greater the intensity of emotions generated - be they positive (if it exceeds their expectations) or negative (if they are below).
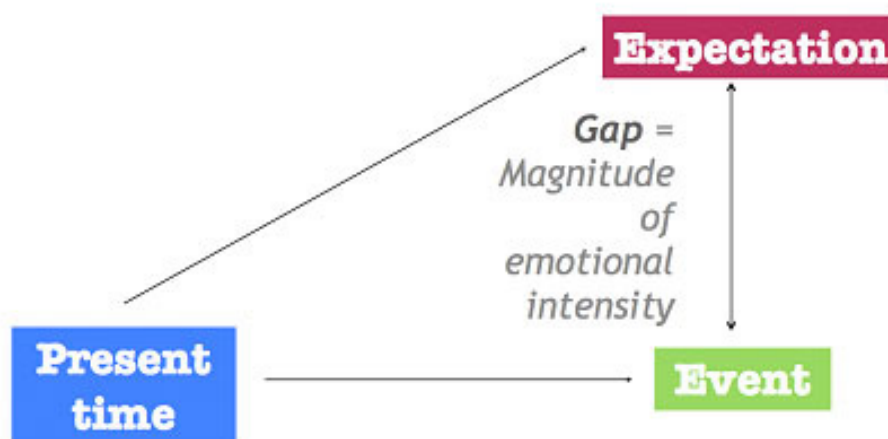
How well do you know those you lead in order to gauge their expectations, so that you can keep them engaged and motivated? If not, ask each of them the following to help you get to know them better:

- What are your needs?

- What are your key frustrations?

- What are your vulnerabilities?

Maintaining Authenticity

Does it matter if your team sees you as an 'authentic' leader? Isn't it better to just 'get the job done' without all the "touchy feely" stuff? Following Seth Godin's Tribe Model, we need to have followers who **want** to listen to our message before they will adopt our vision and see us as trustworthy. In other words, we need to be authentic in our leadership.

Particularly if these concepts start to sound a little "fluffy", we need to be able to link authenticity into a business case with some evidence. So how do we define our leadership to be authentic?

Defining our leadership to be authentic

Research by Goffee and Jones (2006) - gathered from hundreds of leaders and followers from many industries and published by Harvard Business School Press - presents an evidence based model to apply to the concepts we are exploring.

The understanding of authentic leadership from Goffee and Jones will help us to better communicate our message so that others listen.

Watch this video of Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones discussing the CASE framework:
http://youtu.be/8sYX0Zoeiwk

Below is a brief explanation of the four key CASE elements.

The CASE model relates to meeting the needs of the followers:

- **Community**

  Followers long for a sense of belonging, to feel part of something bigger. Leaders must help them connect to others (not just to the leaders themselves) as well as to the overarching purpose of the organisation.

- **Authenticity**

  Followers choose to be led by humans - not titles or credentials. Leaders must be able to identify and deploy their personal differences, foibles, and strengths to inspire employees to apply their energy and talents.

- **Significance**

  Followers want to believe their efforts matter. Leaders need to recognise contributions in a meaningful way, with highly personalised feedback.

- **Excitement**

  Followers need a spark to trigger their exceptional performance. Leaders who articulate their own passion, values, and vision provide the energy and enthusiasm employees hunger for.

How are you meeting the needs of your tribal team members through each of the four areas discussed?

Community

Authenticity

Significance

Excitement

Conclusion

In conclusion, review this clip on Daniel Pink discussing the surprising truth of what motivates us:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc

What are your key insights and learnings from this Learning Module?

What will be your next actions as a result of these insights and learnings?

IIDM
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF DIRECTORS & MANAGERS

IIDM is a 24/7 global centre of learning, with an expansive research library, providing the latest in management development and thought leadership from around the world.

Launched in November 2000, IIDM has been developed in association with The CEO Institute to provide business leaders and managers with an efficient and cost effective way of staying abreast of current information, solutions and bottom line business benefits.

Discover proven management solutions. Join thousands of business leaders and managers worldwide who get fresh tips every day designed to enhance their management and leadership skills, build competitive advantage and improve the performance of their business.

Authority to republish

Republication of IIDM Learning Modules is prohibited without written permission from IIDM. Having been granted permission from IIDM, the material must not be edited or modified in any way without obtaining prior written approval.