Coaching Book Club:

Vulnerability in Leadership

Participant's Book

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Created with love by:
Suzanne Pilch PCC
for MPEC srl

The Man in the Arena

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

L'Uomo Nell'Arena

Non è il critico che conta, né l'individuo che indica come l'uomo forte inciampi, o come avrebbe potuto compiere meglio un'azione. L'onore spetta all'uomo che realmente sta nell'arena, il cui viso è segnato dalla polvere, dal sudore, dal sangue; che lotta con coraggio; che sbaglia ripetutamente, perchè non c'è tentativo senza errori e manchevolezze; che lotta effettivamente per raggiungere l'obiettivo; che conosce il grande entusiasmo, la grande dedizione, che si spende per una giusta causa; che nella migliore delle ipotesi conosce alla fine il trionfo delle grandi conquiste e che, nella peggiore delle ipotesi, se fallisce, almeno cade sapendo di aver osato abbastanza. Dunque il suo posto non sarà mai accanto a quelle anime timide che non conoscono né la vittoria, né la sconfitta

– Theodore Roosevelt

Trust and V........ty

Permission slips are a great way to start building trust in a group and to start container building. If you're working on your own, it's a helpful tool to identify what might get in your way of learning and practicing new ways of showing up. What do you need to give yourself permission to do, feel, or not do to show up for this part of the workshop?

Sometimes the first step in getting started is giving ourselves permission.
Maybe you need to give yourself permission to:
01. Stay open minded
02. Give yourself the time you need
03. Make a list of questions
Or if you're doing this in a group setting, permission to:
01. Prioritise Yourself and Restrict Multitasking
02. Ask for what you need
03. To pass during group sharing
04. Ask for more time
Write your permission slips below or on a sticky note. Feel free to have more than one.

I give myself permission to:

Dis-armouring and Showing up

- What do you need to show up and do the work?
- What will get in the way of you showing up and doing the work?
- What does support look like?

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What Stands in the Way Becomes the Way

In Dare to Lead, Brene Brown talks about ten behaviours and cultural issues that leaders identified as getting in our way in organisations across the world.

01. We avoid tough conversations, including giving honest, productive feedback.
02. Rather than spending a reasonable amount of time proactively acknowledging and addressing the fears and feelings that show up during change and upheaval, we spend an unreasonable amount of time managing problematic behaviours.
03. Diminishing trust caused by a lack of connection and empathy.
04. Not enough people are taking smart risks or creating and sharing bold ideas to meet changing demands and the insatiable need for innovation.
05. We get stuck and defined by setbacks, disappointments, and failures, so instead of spending resources on clean-up to ensure that consumers, stakeholders, or internal processes are made whole, we are spending too much time and energy reassuring team members who are questioning their contribution and value.
06. Too much shame and blame, not enough accountability and learning.
07. People are opting out of vital conversations about diversity and inclusivity because they fear looking wrong, saying something wrong, or being wrong. Choosing our own comfort over hard conversations is the epitome of privilege, and it corrodes trust and moves us away from meaningful and lasting change.
08. When something goes wrong, individuals and teams are rushing into ineffective or unsustainable solutions rather than staying with problem identification and solving. When we fix the wrong thing for the wrong reason, the same problems continue to surface. It's costly and demoralising.
09. Organisational values are gauzy and assessed in terms of aspirations rather than actual behaviours that can be taught, measured, and evaluated.
10. Perfectionism and fear are keeping people from learning and growing.

We need to trust to be vulnerable, and we need to be vulnerable in order to build trust.

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The Six Myths of Vulnerability

Thinking about the six myths of vulnerability, complete or answer the following:

1. I grew up believing that vulnerability was ...
2. For me, vulnerability feels like ...
3. What does it physically feel like for me? What does it emotionally feel like for me? What am I thinking?
4. For each of the six myths of vulnerability, rate on a scale of 1-5 how much you need to "unlearn." (1=none, 5=a lot)
5. _____ Vulnerability is weakness.
6. _____ I don't do vulnerability.
7. _____ I can go it alone.
8. _____ You can engineer the uncertainty and discomfort out of vulnerability
9. . _____ Trust comes before vulnerability.
10. _____ Vulnerability is disclosure.
11. In my organisation, the messages and expectations about vulnerability are ...
12. When was the last time you saw someone bravely facing uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure?
13. When was the last time you bravely faced uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure?
14. When you reflect on how you want to show up and be seen as a leader, what do vulnerability and courage look like for you?
15. What is one way you'll experiment with being more vulnerable at work?

Exercise Instructions: This is an important exercise to round robin – meaning everyone completes the exercises then shares their answers to #1. Next, everyone shares their answers to #2, and so on. Don't forget to give yourself and others permission to pass!

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The Armour Assembling

We all use armour to protect ourselves, but that armour is heavy and prevents us from growing, being seen, and being in connection with others.

When we're in fear, or an emotion is driving self-protection, there's a fairly predictable pattern of how we assemble our armour, piece by piece:

- I'm not enough.
- If I'm honest with them about what's happening, they'll think less of me or maybe even
- use it against me.
- No way am I going to be honest about this. No one else does it. Why do I have to put myself out there?
- Yeah. Screw them. I don't see them being honest about what scares them. And they've got plenty of issues.
- It's actually their issues and shortcomings that make me act this way. This is their fault, and they're trying to blame me.
- In fact, now that I think about it, I'm actually better than them.

01. What are two situations that are likely to lead to you armouring up?
02. What does your "armouring up" process look like?
a. My body language?
b. My words?
c. My thoughts?
d. My go-to transformer behaviours?

FOLLOW UP:

01. What is your personal call to courage as a leader? Be specific. Ex. I want to be braver at giving constructive feedback.
02. What is the cave you fear to enter and why?
Ex. My cave is looking at the engagement problems in my organization.

This is NOT what we want

- oversharing and sympathy seeking
- manipulation
- no boundaries
- emotional purging

Vulnerability minus boundaries is not vulnerability. It's confession, manipulation, desperation, or shock and awe, but it's not vulnerability

They are NOT a part of courageous leadership

Not only is· fake vulnerability ineffective- but it breeds distrust. There's no faster way to piss off people than to try to manipulate them with vulnerability. Vulnerability is not a personal marketing tool. It's not an oversharing strategy

Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, and joy

We know that vulnerability is the cornerstone of courage building, but we often fail to realise that without vulnerability there is no creativity or innovation. Why? Because there is nothing more uncertain than the creative process, and there is absolutely no innovation without failure. Show me a culture in which vulnerability is framed as weakness and I'll show you a culture struggling to come up with fresh ide·as and new perspectives.

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My Credo

Don't Save Yourself

Don't stay motionless
by the side of the road,
don't suspend joy
or love halfheartedly
don't save yourself
now
or ever.
don't save yourself.
don't fill yourself
with calm.
don't reserve a still corner in this world
don't let your eyelids droop heavy
like judgements
don't forsake your lips
don't go to sleep
without heavy eyes,
don't consider yourself bloodless
Don't judge yourself
without time.
But if,
despite it all,
you can't help it
and you suspend joy
and you love halfheartedly
and you save yourself,
and you become calm,
reserve a still corner in the world
let your eyelids droop heavy as judgements
and remain without lips
and sleep without cause,
imagine yourself bloodless,
judge yourself in haste and
Stay motionless by the side of the road
and you save yourself
then
Do not stay with me.

Mario Benedetti

Non Ti Salvare

Non restare immobile
sul bordo della strada
non congelare la gioia
non amare con noia
non ti salvare adesso
né mai
non ti salvare
non riempirti di calma
non appartare del mondo
solo un angolo tranquillo
non lasciar cadere le palpebre
pesanti come giudizi
non restare senza labbra
non t'addormentare senza sonno
non pensarti senza sangue
non ti giudicare senza tempo
però se
malgrado tutto
non puoi evitarlo
e congeli la gioia
e ami con noia
e ti salvi adesso
e ti riempi di calma
e apparti del mondo
solo un angolo tranquillo
e lasci cadere le palpebre
pesanti come giudizi
e ti asciughi senza labbra
e ti addormenti senza sonno
e ti pensi senza sangue
e ti giudichi senza tempo
e resti immobile
al bordo della strada
e ti salvi
allora
non restare con me.

Mario Benedetti

Links and Bibliography

"Dare to Lead": Brené Brown says vulnerability is the "only path to courage" (6 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEnqV_M_Dm4

• The power of vulnerability | Brené Brown (20 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o

• Dare to Lead + LinkedIn = Global Read-Along (set of short Q&A videos by the author) https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/linkedin-read-along-series/

Reading List For Ambitious Participants

- Brown, Brené. "Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts." Random House, 2018.
- Covey, Stephen R. "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change." Simon & Schuster, 1989.
- Goleman, Daniel. "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ." Bantam Books, 1995.
- Sinek, Simon. "Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action." Portfolio, 2009.
- Manson, Mark 'The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck
- Kahneman, D. Thinking Fast and Slow

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Notes