



Head & Heart is a collection of ideas, resources and frameworks to support your personal and professional development in leading yourself, others and organizations with head and heart.

Summer 2011

## From the Editor

### Dear Readers,

We've been given countless new technologies and tools to boost our business success in the past decade. Blackberries, iPhones, remote access, share points, and blue-tooth to name a few. We generate rainbows of data driven pie charts and bar charts concerning employee engagement and leadership effectiveness aimed at supporting our efforts to perform at the top of our game.

But at the end of the day, it's not tools and technologies that determine how successful we are. It's the deep rooted confidence in ourselves that matters. And when we sign up to lead people, it's all about the confidence we instil in others that determines how we address and manage the challenges that lie in front of us.

In our Summer Issue of Head & Heart, we'll share with you some of our key insights of how to become a more confident leader. Enjoy your read!

*Dan Norenberg*

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## Thought Leadership

### Leadership Confidence

*"A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader, a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves."*

Confidence is the bridge connecting expectations and performance, investment and results. When this bridge is in place, we experience the remarkable dynamics of positive growth in which confidence breeds ever more confidence, growth and optimism. We know that unmanaged confidence and growth will always result in a life cycle of peak and decline. The experience of decline is also remarkable for its power to generate unbridled pessimism and negative behaviors very quickly e.g. lack of communication, growing sense of isolation, loss of aspiration, criticism and blame.

We have had one of these decline cycles only recently and we all know what that felt like. Yes, a bewildering collapse followed by a prolonged economic downturn on a global scale. Here, confidence had moved beyond confidence to over-confidence. The firm solid bridges between positive expectation and favorable outcome had become steadily weakened by a denial of reality that, in the end, could only be described as fantasy. Confidence had become wishful thinking.

So how is a leader to manage the potential power of confidence effectively?

The paradox is that without confidence there is no leadership. Clearly, a degree of self confidence in a leader is imperative but self confidence is

not the real secret of leadership; the more essential ingredient is having confidence in other people. When the leader has confidence in others, they, in turn, will have a confidence to generate the confidence in others to perform. Confidence to perform is created and underpinned by three cornerstones: **Accountability, Collaboration and Initiative** where there is: *Straight talk about problems and expectations, courage to admit responsibility for problems, open dialogue & widespread communication, clear priorities & attention to detail and performance feedback (the mirror of accountability).*

And when those bridges break, the repair work is not for the impatient or the faint of heart. The challenge to break the downward cycle of business failure lies in finding a leadership that will regenerate a "real" confidence by reframing energy into positive action, by making initiative possible and desirable, starting with small wins and by generating the widespread belief that the business has a real value worth restoring.

The maintenance of a culture where confidence is balanced effectively between optimizing growth and avoiding decline lies in the capacity of its leadership to have the courage to meet the demands of its reality.

*Ed Norman*

## Leading Self

### Developing Confidence at the Edge

*"Come to the edge," he said.  
They said, "we are afraid."  
"Come to the edge," he said.  
They came.  
He pushed them and they flew.*

*Guillaume Apollinaire*

Remember those grand thoughts of flying when you were young? There are few people I know who didn't dream about flying when they were growing up. But was it really flying that we wanted to do? Or was flying simply a metaphor that represented our youthful belief and confidence that anything was possible?

Confidence is, without question, a precursor to exceptional performance. Regardless of where we look, in sports teams, business or social organizations or individuals who have made their mark, we are able to find part of their success grounded in confidence.

How can we fly high, when we reach this edge described in the opening quote? All of us come to the place where we are not quite sure of ourselves. How can each of us find the "gentle push" that gives us the confidence we need in these challenging situations? Looking back at my personal and professional experience, I can certainly remember times when I found this gentle push, and other times when I didn't. I sifted through my "edge experiences" and rediscovered these fundamentals that helped me in such situations:

**Be yourself; everyone else is already taken,** to quote Oscar Wilde. Don't pretend to be someone you're not. Early in my career, new to business, I tried to mold and conform to what I thought I should be. It takes a great deal of energy and nobody can really get connected to who you are or what you can really do.

**Play upcoming situations in your head and listen carefully to your self talk.** Self talk is the little voice that you hear before you take on something new and untested. Imagine your first presentation in front of a group of important new clients or a new challenge at work – play it through in your mind and listen to your self talk. Do you hear the confident self talk? If not, rewind, run the situation again and do some fine-tuning until you hit the positive self talk channel. It takes discipline and time but it works.

**Last but not least, practice, practice, practice.** Look for opportunities where you can put yourself in uncertain waters and test yourself. By doing this you will gain valuable experience and become more comfortable in these "edge situations". Remember that you are more likely to act yourself into new ways of thinking then trying to think yourself into new ways of acting. Martin Luther King once said, "you don't need to see the whole staircase – just take the first step."

What are you waiting for? Step over your edge and fly!



*Dan Norenberg*

## Point of View

### The Two Sides of Confidence

*"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."*

*Wayne Dyer*

Like all attributes, confidence has two perspectives. On one side, it's important to believe in yourself, even when others don't. Confidence can be like wind at our back during a challenging race.

On the other hand, too much confidence can be like an anchor, holding us back from understanding and profiting from the experiences and insights of others; if we are too confident about our own point of view.

So, like all things in life, too much of a good thing can be too costly – even confidence!

How can one keep these two sides of confidence in healthy balance?

When I feel a lack of confidence I ask myself, "what would I do if I knew I couldn't fail?" and this frame or scope of the situation always seems to give me the refreshing boost I need to renew my confidence.

Likewise, when encountering opinions and ideas different than my own, I ask myself, "why is it so important for me to be right here or what could I learn if I open myself up to another point of view?" These mild mental prompts are sometimes all it takes for me to scale back my overconfidence into a more balanced perspective.

I was recently reminded, that if we cannot change our minds, we cannot really change anything. At the end of the day, it all depends on our point of view.

*Dan Norenberg*

**Word Watch****Leadership Confidence**

Look up the meaning of the word 'confidence' and you will find a range of definitions: a feeling of trust; faith in a person or thing; freedom from doubt.

The Latin origin of the word comes from *confidere* which means to trust or to have faith in. According to uca-dia.com, "confidence is a result of a consistent projection of behavior/belief over some period of time". Along these lines, a leader, with inconsistent behavior, could be seen as lacking "leadership confidence". I believe a leader must wholly trust in themselves before confidence can be perceived by others. Furthermore, confidence must be projected consistently in their behavior over time before others will follow.

What does it take to build an innovative, recession-proof business empire? To take a humble charity from nothing to a global operation in over 100 countries? Or to top *Forbes* recent list of most powerful entertainers in the world? Love them or hate them, but Steve Jobs, Mother Teresa and Lady Gaga have all had the confidence and charisma to forge an emotional connection with those they lead and who have chosen to follow them.

So how does one build the confidence to inspire others and to make people want to follow them? First, believe in yourself. Second, lead by example – 'you are being watched'. Third, commit to your decisions and take responsibility for both the good and the bad. And lastly, show courage at every turn. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Trite, but true.

*Tim Nash*

**Leading Others****Becoming A True High Performer**

*"Self-assurance is contemptible and fatal unless it is self-knowledge"*

*George Santayana*

True high performers differ from "bravado" high performers; although spotting the difference is hard. True high performers have genuine self-confidence and with it a strong awareness of their own abilities – what they know they can do. By implication, they also know the limits of their abilities. So they know when to get external support.

Take the case of Julie (not her real name) who manages a software development group. A high achiever with a sparkling track record, she is well respected for her innovative thinking and product development. She seems to possess a "sixth sense" for what customers want and always delivers the right technical solution at just the right time.

After years of praise and promotions, she was recently assigned to lead an initiative to design and launch a new product. Clear revenue targets were set for the year. Julie was confident they could reach them. Eight months into the year, Julie's group was way behind its targets. The product had been launched late and now design faults were coming to light, damaging the company's reputation.

Her team leaders were grumbling behind her back about her leadership style. They were losing confidence in her. All attempts by the boss to point this out to Julie failed. She refused to

see it, deflecting the criticism. "It's always like this. There's always the motivation dip in the middle of a big project" she claimed, "If we just keep making the effort, we will win."

Julie possesses many of the key components of confidence: high self-esteem, self-respect, belief in herself and a big dose of determination. But there's another key component – self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance is understanding who you are and accepting your faults, so knowing your limitations. In this case, Julie's perception of herself is distorted. The praise and plaudits, acclaim and applause she has got over the years have created a sense of invincibility. For Julie, she has no faults that she cannot overcome.

Contrast Julie's attitude with Richard Branson's. Branson, the successful entrepreneur behind the Virgin brand, is famous for his marketing skills and creativity. Many people view him as a great businessman. But he puts his success down to the small team. He is fully aware that while he has a brilliant entrepreneurial brain, there are areas where he is weak, for example on legal issues. For Branson, success is not individual; it is built by a group of experts. By being fully aware of her own shortcomings, Julie could reach out for that external support and with it become a true high performer.

*Steven Hunt*



## Leading Organizations

### Confidence Comes from Strengths!

*"God don't make no junk"*

*Oprah Winfrey*

While it is easy to recognize a confident person, how would you recognize a confident organization? A more important question for leaders: how do you **create** one?

It is doubtful that one leader can serve as the corporate cheerleader who gives each member their daily dose of confidence but acting as a team, leaders can create the conditions in which followers experience both confidence in themselves and ultimately in the organization.



There has been a strong movement in the past 10 years towards strengths-based people development. This was spearheaded by Donald Clifton and a team of researchers at the Gallup organization. Not surprisingly, they also found a very strong correlation between leaders who focused on strengths, both their own and their followers, and levels of confidence in the organization.

The basic idea is best summarized by the question Clifton asked himself before embarking on the research that would define his career and start a movement "What if we studied what is right with people?" What a profound question! If we focus our attention on people's weaknesses - what they can't do, what they do wrong - they will lose confidence. Sadly, we know

that we spend a lot of time doing just that – both to ourselves and others. In their research Gallup found that most people have an extremely high awareness level of what their weaknesses are and almost none of their strengths. Astonishingly, the very act of increasing their awareness of what their strengths even are had a positive impact on people's confidence levels – before they even began systematically developing and using them!

Is this strengths-based approach alone enough? Three key elements which can only be defined at organizational level will also create the conditions for confidence:

1. **Clarity** – what do we aspire to become? How will we do it?
2. **Choice** – what are our enduring strengths and what do we choose to be truly great at?
3. **Courage** – what do we say "no" to in order to assure that we do the above?

These three "C's" added together with people who know and use their strengths regularly are a great recipe for a confident organization!

*Michael Couch*

## Food for Thought

**"Experience tells you what to do; confidence allows you to do it."**

*Stan Smith*

## Leadership Facts and Figures

The 2010 Leadership Confidence Pulse showed us these confidence statistics, compared with 2009:

Confidence in leadership teams overall fell from 82% to 72%.

Confidence that organizations have the ability to execute on vision decreased from 73% to 64%.

Confidence that firms have the ability to change as needed dropped from 60% to 55%.

Source TLNT.com

For more interesting **Leadership Facts and Figures** go to our Leader's Toolkit at [http://www.nvision-learning.com/leadersedge\\_toolkit.php](http://www.nvision-learning.com/leadersedge_toolkit.php)

## Challenging Situations?

What challenging situation would you like us to deal with in a future issue of Head & Heart? Get our perspective.

Send us an e-mail at: [headandheart@nvision-learning.com](mailto:headandheart@nvision-learning.com)

We will of course ensure that your challenging situation remains anonymous.